

Analysis of French Orthographic Errors Among Students at a Vocational School in Yogyakarta

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ABSTRACT

There are some elements of French orthography and mastering them is essential for proper writing and communication in the French language. This study aims to analyze French orthographic errors in essays written by students at a vocational school in Yogyakarta, where French is taught as a foreign language. The research focuses on errors related to self-introduction essays, covering aspects such as name, age, profession, address, nationality, and hobbies. Data collection involved students writing mini-essays about themselves, with errors noted during the process. The analysis followed language error theory, detailing error types, frequency, and patterns. Results revealed syntactic level errors among 30 participants, with 56 orthographic errors identified. The errors encompassed accents (é, è), apostrophes, capitalization, conjugation, and miscellaneous errors. These findings shed light on common challenges faced by beginner French learners, providing valuable insights for language teaching and curriculum development at vocational

INTRODUCTION

Spelling research has mostly concentrated on English spelling, although little is still known about the processes involved in learning other languages' spellings, such French (Reynolds, Robert & Janda, Laura & Nessel, Tore., 2022: 391). Mastery of French cannot be separated from listening, reading, writing and speaking skills. All of these skills are certainly interconnected with one another. However, there are still many mistakes found in practice. This research focuses on writing skills, because in French there are several aspects that must be considered. For example, the use of accents that vary often found errors in certain vocabulary in French. This is due to students' lack of understanding regarding the use of accent in a word. In addition, because Indonesian is the mother tongue whose writing does not use accents, so this also affects students' writing habits. Students need more understanding in learning French. In writing skills, the term orthography is known. The Indonesian Dictionary explains that orthography is a description of language sounds in the form of writing or symbols; the spelling system of a language. One example is when students are asked to introduce themselves in French in written form. The student wrote *Je suis Indonesien* (I am Indonesian) Based on this example, there is an orthographic error that should be *Je suis Indonésien*. The writing of the letter 'e' in the word *Indonesien* uses accent *aigu*.

Because they are made for native speakers, traditional spell-checking methods usually don't meet the needs of non-native users (Bressoux, P., Slusarczyk, B., Ferrand, L. et al., 2024: 391). Not only do the recommendations presume that the user knows which repair is the best, but they are frequently customized to match the kinds of mistakes that native speakers make on a regular basis. While non-native speakers can choose the correct version of the proposed adjustments, it is likely that they will not understand why this version is better than the one they have typed. Additionally, whereas the main goal of spell-checking for native speakers is to fix individual mistakes. Furthermore, spell checking for non-native users requires providing guidelines to follow going forward, while for native speakers the focus is mostly on fixing isolated, random errors. Errors Non-native writers frequently make systematic mistakes that lend themselves to language study and offer fantastic teaching points (Bressoux, P., Slusarczyk, B., Ferrand, L. et al., 2024: 391). This study examined phonological and orthographic mistake patterns in French spelling errors. The individual differences and growth in phonological and orthographic processing, as well as the vocabulary level risk factors for phonological and spelling challenges in more proficient speakers, were examined using student-centered and variable analyses based on this research. The results of recent research allow for the customization of instruction to meet the needs of each student.

A relevant study was once conducted by Debora Ancient Sion (2021) who analyzed the French-language work of rural senior high school students. Besides, there is also a study from Tita (2016) that analyzes the spelling of French language learners at the A1 level in Bandung. Another similar study is the analysis of French writing errors on online media forums Version Original

by Muftia Arifana Saputri (2017). These studies are considered relevant because they relate to French spelling, so can help researchers in obtaining theories that refer to the French language spelling error.

The author has chosen various subjects from classes X and XI of a vocational school in Yogyakarta. These subjects will be the focus of the research. Additionally, the study aims to delve into writing errors concerning accents, capitalization, and verb conjugation as exhibited by the students. By doing so, it intends to contribute to and enhance existing research on French spelling errors. The inclusion of students from specific classes ensures a targeted examination of the issues prevalent among them. Through this investigation, the study seeks to provide valuable insights into the linguistic challenges faced by these students. Furthermore, it aims to offer potential solutions or strategies for addressing these challenges effectively. By refining previous research, this study aspires to deepen our understanding of spelling errors in French and provide practical implications for language educators and learners alike. Therefore, it is anticipated that this research will offer a comprehensive and nuanced perspective on the identified linguistic issues within the context of the students' education.

The main objective of this research is to meticulously analyse and describe the various forms of spelling errors that are prevalent in the writing tasks completed by students in both Grades X and XI at a vocational school in Yogyakarta. By closely examining these errors, this study aims to provide comprehensive insights into the specific linguistic challenges faced by these students. The significance of this research extends beyond the classroom, as its findings can serve as a valuable benchmark for foreign language learners, particularly those studying French, to help them better understand the intricacies of spelling in written communication. In addition, the results of this research are of immense value to educators. By identifying the most common errors in students' writing, teachers can tailor their teaching approaches to address these shortcomings more effectively and efficiently. Armed with a deeper understanding of their students' linguistic hurdles, educators can implement targeted interventions and teaching methods aimed at minimising spelling errors and promoting overall writing skills. Ultimately, this research aims not only to improve students' learning experiences, but also to provide teachers with the tools and strategies they need to facilitate meaningful improvement in their students' writing skills.

LITERATURE REVIEW

French Orthography

Orthography mistakes are not uncommon among beginners of French, and their occurrence significantly impacts the meaning conveyed in writing. In the French language, spelling errors are intricately linked to the spelling system and accent marks used in reading. The significance of spelling extends beyond mere orthographic correctness; it plays a pivotal role in shaping both the pronunciation and interpretation of written text. Understanding the intricacies of spelling is thus paramount in mastering the nuances of French language learning. Indeed, spelling serves a multifaceted function in the acquisition of French proficiency. A single spelling mistake has the potential to alter not only the sound but also the entire meaning of a word. This underscores the critical importance of meticulous attention to spelling accuracy. For instance, the omission or misplacement of diacritical marks such as accents can lead to misinterpretations and misunderstandings

In essence, spelling proficiency is integral to the mastery of French language skills. By recognizing the importance of spelling accuracy and investing effort in honing this skill, beginners can enhance their linguistic competence and confidently navigate the complexities of French writing and communication. The use of accents is widely used in French vocabulary writing. Types of accents in French include: Understanding the nuances of accents in French is crucial for accurate pronunciation and comprehension. The three primary accents - aigu (´), grave (`), and circonflexe (^) - each serve distinct purposes in altering the pronunciation of certain vowels Explanation of theory here:

- (1) The aigu accent, denoted by ´, typically appears on the letter "e" and modifies its sound to resemble the "e" in English words like "effect," "editor," and "effective." Examples include "l'école," "écrire," and "café." By adding the aigu accent to the letter "e," French speakers produce a distinct sound that distinguishes words and contributes to clear communication.
- (2) In contrast, the grave accent, represented by ` , primarily affects the pronunciation of the letter "e." When applied to "e," it produces a sound akin to the "e" in English words such as "kader," "administrator," and "shrimp." Notably, the grave accent also appears on the letters "a" and "u," but in these cases, it does not alter their pronunciation. For instance, in words like "père," "mère," and "frère," the grave accent merely serves as a marker of orthographic distinction.
- (3) The circonflexe accent, symbolized by ^ , can be applied to various vowel letters (â, ê, î, ô, û) and typically elongates their sounds. For instance, in words like "bâtiment," "rêve," "l'île," "rôle," and "sûr," the circonflexe accent modifies the pronunciation of the affected vowels, indicating a lengthened or emphasized sound. Additionally, the circonflexe accent is commonly observed in certain words and contexts, such as "Pâques" (Easter), where it serves both orthographic and phonetic functions

By understanding the distinct roles of the aigu, grave, and circonflexe accents, learners can navigate the intricacies of French orthography and enhance their proficiency in spoken and written communication. In mastering the French language, understanding the diverse array of diacritical marks, such as the tréma (`), cédille (¸), and apostrophe, is indispensable for accurate pronunciation and comprehension. Each of these marks serves distinct functions in altering the pronunciation and meaning of words.

- (1) The tréma, symbolized by ` , is employed on the second or successive vowels within a word to signify that each vowel should be pronounced separately. For instance, in words like "Noël," "Haïti," and "paranoïa," the tréma accentuates the pronunciation of the accented letters, ensuring clarity and precision in speech.
- (2) Similarly, the cédille, denoted by ¸, is positioned beneath the letter "c" to produce the "s" sound before the vowels "a," "o," or "u." This diacritical mark transforms the pronunciation of the letter "c," as observed in words like "le français," "le garçon," and "reçu," where the cédille enables the correct enunciation of the preceding vowels.
- (3) Moreover, apostrophes play a pivotal role in indicating the presence of élision, the omission of certain vowel letters (a, e, and i) before words beginning with a vowel or a silent "h." This linguistic phenomenon streamlines pronunciation and facilitates fluid speech. Examples include "J'étudie" (I study), "l'homme" (the man), and "jusqu'à" (until), where the apostrophe signifies the omission of vowel letters to enhance phonetic cohesion.

Understanding and correctly applying these diacritical marks are essential for achieving proficiency in spoken and written French. Mastery of the tréma, cédille, and apostrophe enables learners to articulate words accurately, convey nuanced meanings, and navigate the intricacies of French orthography with confidence. By recognizing the significance of these diacritical marks and incorporating them into their language practice, learners can enhance their linguistic competence and effectively communicate in French-speaking contexts.

French Conjugation

While the use of capital letters in French is not the same as in Indonesian. Writing the names of the days, months, and nationalities in French in small letters (lundi, mardi, janvier, octobre, française). Then the French recognize the word conjugation, which means that every verb changes, according to its subject. The use of time or time also affects the form of the verb used. For example, on the following table:

Table 1. Conjugation of *Manger* (V)

Présent	Passé Composé
je mange	j'ai mangé
tu manges	tu as mangé
il mange	il a mangé
nous mangeons vous mangez	nous avons mangé
ils mangent	vous avez mangé
	ils ont mangé

In French, the passé composé (compound past tense) is used to talk about actions that were completed in the past but have a connection to the present. In the Table 1 above, to conjugate the verb "manger" (to eat) in the passé composé, you use the auxiliary verb "avoir" (to have) followed by the past participle of the verb. Examples of sentences in the passé composé with "manger":

1. *J'ai mangé une pomme ce matin.* (I ate an apple this morning.)
2. *Tu as mangé au restaurant hier soir.* (You ate at the restaurant last night.)
3. *Il a mangé tout le gâteau.* (He ate the whole cake.)
4. *Nous avons mangé ensemble la semaine dernière.* (We ate together last week.)
5. *Vous avez mangé trop de chocolat.* (You ate too much chocolate.)
6. *Elles ont mangé avant de partir.* (They ate before leaving.)

The passé composé (table 1) is used for specific actions completed in the past: "Il a mangé à midi" (He ate at noon). Also repeated actions in the past that are now finished: "Pendant mes vacances, j'ai souvent mangé des glaces" (During my vacation, I often ate ice cream) and actions that have a consequence or connection to the present: *Elle a mangé, elle n'a plus faim maintenant* (She has eaten, she is no longer hungry now). It's important to correctly choose the auxiliary verb and the past participle to properly conjugate verbs in the passé composé. For "manger," the auxiliary is always "avoir" and the past participle is "mangé."

METHODOLOGY

The research methodology employed in this study is qualitative descriptive research. As defined by Moleong (2018:6), qualitative research aims to comprehend phenomena experienced by research subjects, including behavior, perception, motivation, and actions, in a holistic and descriptive manner using words and language. The study utilizes data derived from French extracurricular assignments with the theme "Se Présenter," completed by 30 students from classes X and XI. Data collection employs documentation, observation, and recording techniques. The process of data analysis involves several steps: firstly, students are tasked with writing about their name, date of birth, address, and nationality in French. Subsequently, the researcher meticulously scans the collected assignments, identifying spelling errors. These errors are then categorized according to specific criteria such as accent usage, capitalization, and verb conjugation. Finally, the researcher presents potential solutions aimed at minimizing spelling errors among students participating in

extracurricular French activities at a vocational school in Yogyakarta. Through this comprehensive approach, the study aims to shed light on the prevalent spelling challenges faced by French learners and propose effective strategies for improvement. By analyzing and addressing these errors, educators can enhance the quality of language instruction and support students in their language learning journey.

RESULT AND RECOMENDATION

The research result focuses on orthography errors identified in students' work on the theme "Se Présenter." These errors were collected, analyzed, and categorized into grammatical and lexical spelling errors. Through careful scanning and analysis of the data, the researchers identified instances belonging to both categories. The aim of the discussion is to highlight these errors and propose strategies for minimizing their occurrence among students. By addressing these issues, educators can ensure that students improve their spelling proficiency and avoid repeating similar errors in the future. As has been revealed in the above theoretical framework that spelling errors are divided into two, i.e. *grammaire* and *lexical* spelling error. After the data is scanned and analyzed then the researchers found data that belongs to the two categories of spelling mistakes, among them are as follows:

Errors in the Use of Accent

(1) Error in the Use of Accent Aïgu

In the results of data collection that has been analyzed, 12 orthographic errors were found in the use of the *aïgu* accent. The following are some examples of mistakes made by students.

Data No. 1: *Je suis etudiant(e)*

Correction: *Je suis étudiant(e)*

The data findings reveal a common issue in student assignments where the accent *aïgu* (´) is omitted on the first letter "e." According to French writing rules, the accent *aïgu* should be used in words like "*étudiant(e)*" regardless of the gender of the subject. This inconsistency in accent usage is a prevalent issue observed in student submissions. Errors in the use of the *aïgu* accent were also found in the following data:

Data No. 2: *Je suis indonèsienne*

Correction: *Je suis indonésienne*

In the data, a common error is the misuse of accents, particularly the confusion between the *aïgu* (´) and *grave* (`) accents, as seen in the word "*indonésien(ne)*." Students often fail to distinguish between these two types of accents, likely due to their similar appearance. This lack of differentiation indicates a fundamental misunderstanding of accent usage rules. Given the visual similarity between the *aïgu* and *grave* accents, students may struggle to discern the correct application of each. Addressing this issue is crucial to improving students' spelling accuracy and reinforcing their understanding of French accentuation rules.

(2) Error in the Use of Accent Grave

Regarding errors in using accent graves in students' writing assignments, researchers have analyzed and found 4 data on errors made by students. The errors in using the grave accent are all the same, in the following sentences:

Data No. 3: *J'habite a Yogyakarta*

Correction: *J'habite à Yogyakarta*

Based on the data found, all of them experienced the same error. Students forget not to use the accent grave on the preposition à which refers to a place. So the correct writing should be *J'habite à Yogyakarta*.

Errors in the Use of Apostrophe

In the *Se Présenter* theme, the apostrophe sign is frequently employed in writing assignments. However, the analysis of this research revealed 10 instances of errors in its usage. It appears that the average student still struggles to grasp the appropriate placement and application of the apostrophe sign. Consequently, some students have used the apostrophe incorrectly in their assignments. This indicates a need for further instruction and clarification on the rules governing the use of apostrophes in French writing. By addressing these errors, educators can help students improve their understanding and proficiency in utilizing apostrophes accurately in their written work. As in the following data example:

Data No. 4: *J'mappelle Jamal*

Correction: *Je m'appelle Jamal*

The data presented reveals errors in the placement of apostrophes in words such as "je," "me," and the verb "appeller." Specifically, the possessive pronoun "me" and the verb "appeller" should be abbreviated when used with the subject "Je" (singular). The correct placement of the apostrophe would be on the last letter of "me" and the first letter of "appelle" due to the meeting of two vowels. Therefore, the accurate sentence should read as "Je m'appelle Jamal." These errors underscore the importance of understanding and applying the rules governing apostrophe usage in French writing to ensure grammatical accuracy. Another error was also found in the writing of the following sentence:

Data No. 5: *Je habite à Yogyakarta*

Correction: *J'habite à Yogyakarta*

In the provided data, students omitted the apostrophe sign in their writing. However, in French grammar, when the subject "Je" ends with a vowel and is followed by a verb beginning with a silent "h," such as in the verb "habiter," the correct usage necessitates the insertion of an apostrophe. Hence, the accurate rendition of the sentence would be "J'habite à Yogyakarta." This error highlights a common misconception among students, stemming from the difference in the treatment of the letter "h" between French and Indonesian. In French, the silent "h" is considered similar to a vowel, dictating the use of the apostrophe. Conversely, in Indonesian, "h" is perceived as a consonant, leading to confusion for students accustomed to Indonesian grammar rules. Addressing this misunderstanding is crucial in enhancing students' grasp of French grammar and punctuation conventions

Errors in the Use of Capital Letters

The distinction between the use of capital letters in French and Indonesian is notable. While Indonesian capitalizes names and months of the year, French employs lowercase letters for days of the week, months, and nationalities (e.g., lundi, mardi, janvier, octobre, française). In French, capitalization is reserved for proper nouns such as names of individuals, countries, and specific places. This contrast underscores the importance of understanding language-specific conventions to ensure accurate written communication. Students transitioning from Indonesian to French may encounter challenges in adapting to these differences, particularly regarding the appropriate use of capitalization. Educators play a vital role in guiding students through these nuances, emphasizing the rules governing capitalization in French and providing ample practice opportunities to reinforce understanding. By mastering these conventions, learners can enhance their written proficiency and effectively navigate the intricacies of French language usage. Errors in the use of capital letters in this study were found in 16 pieces of data, with examples as follows:

Data No. 6: *Je suis née le 24 Avril 2006*

Correction: *Je suis née le 24 avril 2006*

In the provided data, students mistakenly capitalized the name of the month "Avril." However, according to French orthographic conventions, the names of months are written in lowercase letters. This error suggests that students may still be influenced by the Indonesian writing system, where capitalization is required for the names of months. Understanding and adhering to French orthographic rules, including lowercase usage for months, is crucial for accurate written communication. Educators can address this misconception by reinforcing the correct capitalization rules in French and providing practice opportunities to help students internalize these conventions. Other capital letter usage errors were also found in the following data:

Data No. 7: *Je suis Indonésien*

Correction: *Je suis indonésien*

According to the French spelling rules outlined previously, nationalities are typically written in lowercase letters. Consequently, errors were observed in the data where the word "Indonesia" was capitalized. This indicates that students' habits rooted in Indonesian language conventions indeed influence their French writing skills. The analysis reveals that the most prevalent errors in capitalization in this study were related to nationalities and other proper nouns. Addressing these common mistakes is crucial for students to develop a deeper understanding of French orthographic rules and enhance their proficiency in written communication. Educators can play a pivotal role in guiding students through these differences and providing targeted instruction to facilitate mastery of French spelling and grammar conventions.

Errors in the use of conjugation

In French, a fundamental grammatical rule mandates that every verb must be conjugated according to the subject and tense used. In basic writing skills at the senior high school and vocational school level, the present tense is typically employed. Common verbs utilized in this context include être (to be),

avoir (to have), appeller (to call), and habiter (to live). Mastery of these verbs is essential for learners to effectively introduce themselves, which is a key milestone in their language proficiency journey. By understanding and applying proper verb conjugation in conjunction with the appropriate tense, students can articulate accurate and coherent self-introductions, thereby demonstrating their competence in basic French writing skills. In this study, 10 data were found as follows:

Data No. 8: *Je suis indonésian*
Correction: *Je suis indonésien(ne)*

Based on this data, there are errors in writing conjugations in the national context. The tense used is present and the verb used is être. Writing national identity in the data above is influenced by English so that students do not really understand the conjugations that should be used. The correct writing is *Je suis indonésien* for male subjects or *Je suis indonésienne* for female subjects. Conjugation writing errors were also found in the following data:

Data No. 9: *Je suis étudiont*
Correction: *Je suis étudiant(e)*

In a professional context, errors in conjugating the verb "être" often occur due to students being influenced by the sound of the word "étudiant" [etydjã]. Consequently, they may mistakenly follow the sound they hear when conjugating the verb. The correct conjugation should be "étudiant" for men and "étudiante" for women. This common error underscores the importance of understanding proper verb conjugation rules in French, particularly in professional communication settings. Educators can address this misconception by emphasizing the correct forms and providing practice opportunities to reinforce students' understanding and application of verb conjugation rules.

Other Writing Errors

In addition to the orthographic errors detailed above, researchers identified various other writing errors in extracurricular French assignments at a vocational school in Yogyakarta Yogyakarta. These errors encompassed instances where letters were omitted from certain words and where letters were incorrectly used within a word. While these errors may not fit neatly into the category of orthographic mistakes, they nevertheless contribute to overall inaccuracies in written communication. By grouping and analyzing these additional errors, researchers gained a comprehensive understanding of the challenges faced by students in mastering French writing skills. Addressing these diverse errors is essential for fostering greater proficiency and accuracy in written French among students. There are at least 4 pieces of data included in this writing error, the following is an example:

Data No. 10: *Je suis née le 19 favrier 2006*
Correction: *Je suis née le 19 fevrier 2006*

The data above shows that students have not memorized how to write the names of the months in French. So students make writing errors like the case above, there is an error in writing the month of Favrier which should be Fevrier. However, the mistakes made by the students were not too fatal and the meaning they wanted to convey was still acceptable. Other data found are:

Data No. 11: *Je m'apelle Mila*
Correction: *Je m'appelle Mila*

Different from the previous data for number 10, this time the writing error is related to the lack of the letter 'p' in the word m'appelle. However, this writing error also does not affect the meaning to be conveyed. So writing errors are still understandable.

DISCUSSION

It is common for beginners in French to make writing errors as they navigate the transition from their mother tongue to the target language. In this transitional phase, learners often encounter challenges in mastering the intricacies of French orthography. As facilitators of teaching and learning activities, teachers play a crucial role in responding to these errors wisely, while also not dismissing them lightly. The findings and discussions above reveal the presence of orthographic errors at the syntactic level among students participating in French extracurricular activities at a vocational school in Yogyakarta. Recognizing these errors as a natural part of the learning process, educators can implement targeted interventions to address them effectively, fostering continuous improvement in students' French writing skills.

In analyzing the students' essays, a total of 56 orthographic errors were identified. These errors were categorized into different types, including punctuation errors (26), capitalization errors (16), conjugation errors (10), and miscellaneous errors (4). Several factors contribute to these orthographic errors, including students' limited understanding of French language rules, influence from their mother tongue, and suboptimal teaching methods. These findings underscore the importance of addressing these challenges systematically within the educational framework. Teachers must provide comprehensive instruction on French language rules and offer targeted interventions to support students in overcoming these obstacles. Additionally, creating an immersive language learning environment and providing ample opportunities for practice and feedback can help students strengthen their orthographic skills and achieve greater proficiency in written French. By addressing these factors, educators can facilitate more effective language learning experiences for students at a vocational school in Yogyakarta Yogyakarta participating in French extracurricular activities.

Based on the findings of this research, it is suggested that French language learners prioritize enhancing their understanding of French language rules. They can achieve this by actively engaging with the material, asking questions to their teachers, and dedicating time to independent writing practice outside of class. Additionally, teachers can utilize the findings of this research as evaluation material to identify students' specific difficulties in French writing skills and tailor instruction accordingly. Moving forward, it is recommended that future researchers conduct similar studies on language errors pertaining to other language skills or languages spoken worldwide. By expanding research efforts to encompass a broader scope of linguistic challenges, educators can

gain valuable insights into effective strategies for language instruction and support learners in their journey towards proficiency in diverse languages.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The analysis of students' essays in a French extracurricular program at a vocational school in Yogyakarta highlights the prevalence of orthographic errors at the syntactic level. These errors, categorized into punctuation, capitalization, conjugation, and miscellaneous mistakes, reflect the challenges students face in transitioning from their mother tongue to French. Factors contributing to these errors include limited understanding of French language rules, mother tongue influence, and suboptimal teaching methods. To address these issues effectively, educators should implement targeted interventions that focus on comprehensive instruction in French orthography. By providing clear explanations, practice opportunities, and constructive feedback, teachers can foster continuous improvement in students' writing skills.

It is recommended that French language learners actively engage with the material, seek clarification from teachers, and dedicate time to independent writing practice to strengthen their understanding of French orthography. Teachers should also use the findings of this research to tailor instruction to address specific difficulties in students' writing. Creating an immersive language learning environment with ample opportunities for practice will further support students in overcoming these challenges and achieving greater proficiency in written French. Additionally, ongoing evaluation and adaptation of teaching methods will ensure that students receive the necessary support to succeed.

FURTHER STUDY

Future research should expand beyond orthographic errors in French to explore language errors in other linguistic skills, such as speaking and listening, or in different languages altogether. By investigating a wider range of linguistic challenges, researchers can uncover patterns and strategies that are effective across languages and contexts. This broader approach will provide valuable insights for educators, helping them develop more comprehensive and effective language instruction methods that can be applied in diverse learning environments.

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