

## Motivation Triggers the Attainment of Second Language Acquisition: A Theoretical and Conceptual Analysis

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### **Abstract**

*Among so many drivers functioning in the way of L2 acquisition process, motivation is considered as the best one by most of the scholars. Though there are many types of motivation, the integration of all sorts of motivational behavior accelerates the overall learning process of learners. Based on the importance of motivation, the current study aims to analyze the studies of famous scholars, their theories and concepts pertinent to the role of motivation in the field of SLA. Many empirical studies found that there is a big difference in terms of the attainment of the target language between the learners who are motivated and who are not motivated by any means. This paper will add value to the existing literatures based on the importance of motivation in the process of learning L2.*

**Keywords:** L2 Attainment, Motivation, Theories of Motivation, Conceptual Analysis

### **INTRODUCTION**

Successful second language acquisition depends on many things like good environment, well qualified teachers who can be the role model of the learners, good teaching materials, language lab and so on. But, as a matter of fact there is scarcity of these required things. As a result, English learners need high level of motivation either from teachers or from their parents that will drive them to become proficient in English.

In SLA, though language aptitude and intellectual capacity of the learners play a significant role (Gardner & Lambert, 1972), the role of motivation can be denied too which is considered as a driving force to make learners competent as stated by Gardner (1985), “the combination of effort plus desire to achieve the goal of learning the language plus favorable attitudes toward learning the language” (p. 10). According to Xu (2008), through a good motivation, learners can achieve linguistic competence with sufficient knowledge of vocabulary, pronunciation, grammar and the basic four skills of language such as speaking, reading, listening and writing.

### **CRITICAL REVIEW OF THE EXISTING STUDIES**

#### **Types of Motivation: Intrinsic and Extrinsic**

Motivation is such a driving force that forces a person to do the thing. Mainly motivation can be classified into two types, such as, intrinsic motivation and extrinsic motivation. The result of inner feelings of a person can be termed as intrinsic motivation. The doer of action gets no reward except the mental satisfaction itself that is the result of sense of autonomy and the desire is self-regulating and self-initiating. But on the other hand, in extrinsic motivation the doer of action gets reward from outside source and also gets motivation from an outside source rather than from his/her inner self. Both intrinsic/extrinsic motivation can be referred to the term locus of control which was initiated by Rotter (1966). When someone takes the responsibility of his/her life by his/her own self, he/she seems to have internal locus of control which is termed as intrinsic motivation. On the other hand, when a person takes the responsibility of his/her life motivated by others or by outside source that can be termed as extrinsic motivation. When a person is internally motivated, he/she can achieve the thing that people might think impossible to achieve. Anjomshoa & Sadighi, (2015) say, “In order to achieve internal locus and self-motivation, one should be eager to give up the security of making excuses and to take responsibility of all her/his decisions and actions” (p. 126).

Extrinsically motivated people always desire reward from others to do the work, but their works or actions

become slow when they do not get the expected reward or behavior. Maslow (1970) states that among these two types of motivation, intrinsic motivation carries more value than extrinsic motivation because we the human being are motivated to achieve "self-actualization". Bruner (1966) says that among many ways, one of the most efficient ways to assist learners in their education and career life is to make them free from the expectation of rewards from outward sources. In some respects, both these two types of motivation may overlap each other because one might get motivation from both the sources; an inside source and an outside source at the same time. Overall, both types of motivation play a very vivid role in achieving something and lack of motivation can reduce the learning spirit of a learner as motivation acts as the best driving force which makes people work enthusiastically and passionately. It can be said that presence of motivation accelerates the learning intension of the learners. So, the responsibility of teachers is to know different types of motivation and their sources so that they can meet different needs of their learners.

### **Types of Motivation: Instrumental and Integrative**

In L2 learning process, motivation again can be classified into two types; integrative motivation and instrumental motivation (Gardner & Lambert, 1972). When someone intends to acquire a foreign language primarily for a job or fulfilling an academic requirement, he or she seems to be driven by instrumental motivation. From another point of view, instrumental motivation is that kind of motivation which drives a person to learn a language considering it as a way of achieving the desired goals like, career development, promotion in the job or reading higher level texts for getting higher studies. On the contrary, integrative motivation drives the person to be accepted by the target language community which means that this type of motivation helps a person to be integrated within a culture to be considered as a part of that society where the person learns the language to enter into the original language community. Gardner and MacIntyre (1993) mention that based on the students' desire, various types of needs must be considered while teaching Foreign Language.

In the process of L2 acquisition, most of the scholars give more priority to integrative motivation than instrumental motivation. According to Graham (1984), integrative motivation is different from assimilative motivation though some scholars think them same. Integrative motivation drives the learners to learn the target language so that they can communicate with the people of the target language community and explore their cultural identity and other beliefs. This does not mean the direct contact with the L2 people, but in assimilative motivation learners want to engage themselves with the people of the target language and intend to become inseparable members of that community group. It should be noted here that these two types of motivation are not mutually exclusive. Rather it is very visible that some learners learn better when they are driven with integrative motivation while some learn better when they are instrumentally motivated and some become more successful when they are driven with the combination of both types of motivations.

Scholars think that extrinsic motivation and instrumental motivation are almost similar but not exactly the same. Extrinsic motivation refers to that state which is the result of outside reward, while instrumental motivation refers to that state when learners have their purpose of learning. It is to be noted here that intrinsic motivation and integrative motivation are also not exactly alike, but very close to each other. Intrinsic motivation creates a force or spirit inside the person which makes someone feel good or motivated to do any work while integrative motivation refers to the feeling of being the member of a particular speech community. It should be unwise not to mention one thing here that during the lengthy and tedious process of learning a language, motivation is not seen remaining constant or does not work in the same manner as seen in the beginning of the journey. Rather it is very closely allied with the mental processes and internal, external influences which learners undergo in the course of time. In other word, it can be said that time is considered as a very key aspect in the nature of learners' motivation.

### **Present Scenario of English in Bangladesh**

In the context of Bangladesh, English is predominantly thought to be the first foreign language which learning starts from the very early stage of a learner. Teaching-learning of English takes place at almost all the educational levels of Bangladesh, starting from kindergarten to universities, higher education institutions and in private language schools as well. Most of the Bangladeshi universities use English

language as their medium of instruction for most of their programmes. From grade I to grade 12, it has been designed as a compulsory subject. No student can escape this subject. Students cannot be promoted from one class to another class if they fail to secure the pass marks in this subject.

Nowadays, the demand of English language is sharply increasing since of a good number of students are going abroad for their higher studies. Mostly they are going to the English speaking countries where they plan to settle as well. In most of the job sectors in Bangladesh, those candidates are given more priority who have good command over English regardless of their areas of studies. That is why the demand of knowing English is augmenting in the course of time. "It means that people and particularly young generations usually have some kind of positive feelings towards English. Therefore, knowing and learning English has progressively become more prestigious and more popular, particularly among high school and university students" (Anjomshoa & Sadighi, 2015). For learning and teaching English, Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) has been used since the 1990s, but shockingly this method is not seen a very successful one to make learners competent in English language though this method has put the sign of success in most of the countries of the world where it is used in the field of language teaching. So, scholars feel the importance of motivation to make the learners communicatively competent.

## **THEORIES IN THE FIELD OF MOTIVATION**

The term motivation refers to the need or desire that grows spirit in a person and directs his/her behavior to do a certain task (Myers, 2001). Various types of theories from the field of psychology have a great influence on the study of motivation. All these theories show various aspects of motivational needs, and they all have their own paucities. In the following some of these theories are explained with their drawbacks that have been developed by the scholars over the years.

### **Motivation from Behavioral Views**

In the study of motivation, behavioral views refer to the extrinsic factors like, rewards or punishments and reinforcement of cherished manners. Students who are extrinsically motivated perform the tasks "in order to obtain some reward (good grades, teacher approval, etc.) or avoid some punishment external to the activity itself," which is the opposite of those students who are intrinsically motivated they undertake the task "for its own sake, for the enjoyment it provides, the learning it permits, or the feelings of accomplishment it evokes" (Lepper, 1988).

According to Skinner's operant conditioning theory, people can do any work with more spirit when they are reinforced by rewards and their will of accomplishing any task becomes weaker if they are neglected or given punishment instead of reward. In favor of learners, Skinner introduced programmed instruction, through which learners were reinforced in a positive manner for correct responses, and motivated them to step forward with their desired goals.

Though the behavioral views of motivation are limited, they give importance on external motivating factors, such as, admiration, good grades, rewards, etc., that might bring so many drawbacks, such as, students motivated in such a condition may be less likely to learn if they do not get any reward which they desired. In some respects, external rewards actually cause the decrease of intrinsic motivational behavior (Cameron & Pierce, 1994; Eisenberger & Cameron, 1996; Ryan & Deci, 1996).

### **Motivation in the Light of Cognitive Views**

In terms of motivation, cognitive views see that human behavior takes change with the change of the environment and self-perception. Cognitive views focus more on internal factors rather than external factors which is seen in behavioral views.

According to Jean Piaget's assimilation, accommodation, equilibration and schema formation, in the field of motivation, cognitive views refer to an innate desire of learners through which they can maintain a balance in their whole journey of learning or performing the task. If there seems an imbalance, the schema formations are modified to regain the expected balance. While talking about motivation, learners might be motivated to acquire something with a view to achieving their desired equilibrium, and gain a very good command over the given environment. According to cognitive dissonance theory which was introduced by Leon Festinger followed by Piaget's views on disequilibrium, doers of actions will act in such a manner as

they are going to resolve discrepancies between different beliefs or actions.

Like behavioral views, cognitive views also have some drawbacks which include difficulty in achieving the lack of balance (or disequilibrium) that is important to raise motivation among students to revise schema, and the difficulty in measuring the need for achievement in particular student.

Based on the cognitive views, behavior of human being is influenced by the way they see themselves and their environment. Influences may be in four ways: “the inherent need to construct an organized and logically consistent knowledge base, one's expectations for successfully completing a task, the factors that one believes account for success and failure, and one's beliefs about the nature of cognitive ability” (Anjomshoa & Sadighi, 2015).

### **Humanistic Views of Motivation**

In terms of the study of motivation, humanistic views can be referred to the scholar Abraham Maslow. Maslow (1970) draws a hierarchy of needs on which motivations are driven. Maslow, a very influential person, studied motivation very exclusively from different points views and based on his various writings of motivation, many scholars became interested to study motivation and developed grand theories of motivation.

Based on Maslow's hierarchy theory of motivation Anjomshoa & Sadighi (2015) state, “first, at the lowest level of Maslow's hierarchy, are physiological needs (need to satisfy hunger and thirst), second are safety needs (need for safety, security, organization and predictability), third comes belongingness and love needs, fourth comes esteem needs (self-esteem, achievement, competence, recognition, respect), and fifth, at the highest level, are self-actualization needs (living up to one's fullest potential).”

After analyzing Maslow's hierarchy of needs, it is obvious that it is the duty of the teachers to make sure that all lower hierarchical needs of the learners are fulfilled before achieving the competence. The limitation of Maslow's theory refers to the limited resources including money and time.

### **Self-Determination Theory of Motivation**

This theory was initiated by Edward Deci and Richard Ryan which sheds light on intrinsic motivation and considers it as the driving factor of human behavior. Similar to Maslow's hierarchical theory and other theories that are built on it, Self-Determination Theory (SDT) sees a natural tendency as a very important factor which brings growth and development of learners. However, SDT does not focus on any type of "autopilot" for achieving something, rather it requires an active encouragement from the environment that grow the tendency to achieve something. Here the key factors which enrich motivation and development are autonomy, competence, feedback and relatedness.

### **Social Cognitive Theory of Motivation**

Social Cognitive Theory (SCT) is the recent development in this field which was proposed by Albert Bandura, and was followed by Social Learning Theory, that has been in reality for few years. SCT focuses on social origins of behavior, and sees that cognitive factors play an important role. According to the notion of SCT, people learn from the observation of other people and from the world around them, as well as from printed books and materials.

The main focus of SCT is on the self-efficacy and cognitive development. The latest development in the theories of motivation is Temporal Motivation Theory which is very much integrative. It can be called as an integrative theory of motivation since it synthesizes all other forms and types of motivational theories into a single formulation that includes “Incentive Theory, Drive Theory, Need Theory, Self-Efficacy and Goal Setting. Notably, it simplifies the field of motivation considerably and allows findings from one theory to be translated into terms of another” (Anjomshoa & Sadighi, 2015).

## **THE ROLE OF MOTIVATION IN THE PROCESS LANGUAGE LEARNING**

In the field of language teaching and learning, we cannot deny the importance of motivation which is an issue worthy of investigation since it helps measure a learner how successful he is in target achievement. Efficient language learning cannot take place without motivation. Ellis (1994, p. 715) sees motivation as a

desired goal that learners use for learning the target language because of “their need or desire to learn it”. For many years, a good number of studies on motivation have been carried out by so many renowned scholars which were basically concerned with describing, measuring and classifying the role of motivation in theoretical models in the process of language acquisition (Ushioda, 1996). A sizable number of scholars, teachers and researchers concerned with second language teaching, have exclusively considered motivation as one of the prime factors which has a great influence on the success and development of second/foreign language acquisition. Besides that, motivation generates the basic tendency in the mind of learners to initiate learning the L2 and after that it becomes the main driving force to keep the learners constant in the long and tedious process L2 acquisition (Dörnyei, 1998). Motivation accelerates the active learning process of the learner. Research on language learning shows that motivation has an active influence to determine how often students become involved in L2 learning strategies, how many times they are in interaction with speakers of the target community and how long they persevere and maintain target language skills after they have finished their language study (Oxford & Shearin, 1994). Conversely, a very good student with high level of intelligence cannot achieve long term goal if he lacks proper motivation; even though there are excellent curriculum, good teaching staff and conducive environment as well (Dörnyei & Csizér, 1998).

### **Role of Motivation in the Field of Second Language Acquisition**

The necessity of motivation in the field of L2 is indescribable. It is an intricate, complex and multifaceted construct that drives someone to obtain something. When the mission of the learning outcome is to gain the mastery over the target language, the situation even seems to be more critical. Considering the unbeatable importance of motivation in the field of L2 learning, many theories have been developed by many scholars (Dörnyei, 2001b). Overview that is drawn in the following regarding L2 motivation studies takes place with a note to the influential motivation theory of Gardner.

### **Motivation Theory of Gardner**

Since the teaching of L2 is a compulsory subject taught in the school, learners should be taught the communication code in an explicit manner. In this case language is considered as a social and cultural element, which sees language a deeply social phenomenon that requires the integration of so many elements of the culture of L2 community group (Dörnyei, 2001). This view of language teaching had been exclusively studied by the scholars in the field of L2, resulting in the inclusion of an important social aspect in most comprehensive paradigms of second language motivation. The importance of such social aspect also illustrated why the study of motivation in the field of L2 teaching was primarily introduced in Canada where it was controlled by a social psychological emphasis (Dörnyei, 2003). The study of Gardner referring to socio-psychological motivation had a great impact in the field of L2 teaching-learning (Gardner & Tremblay, 1994a; Gardner & Tremblay, 1995). The review of Gardner’s studies has been explained in the following.

### **The socio-Educational Model**

This model initiated by Gardner (1985b) has a link with different individual variables like, affective variable and cognitive variable through which an integrated interpretation of language learning can be found. The key contribution of this model is seen in its clear distinction of four different aspects of the L2 acquisition process. These four aspects are, individual difference variables, language acquisition contexts, outcomes and antecedent factors (Dörnyei, 2001). According to Gardner and MacIntyre (1993), all these aspects are greatly dominated by social-cultural context, and they give a schematic representation of the socio-education model. This model shows that while we are planning to gain knowledge pertinent to the role of individual difference variables in the process of L2 acquisition, we need to focus on two main antecedent factors, such as, biological and experiential factors. Experiential factors refer to the language experiences of the learners that they have from the previous time which has an impact on language anxiety, language attitudes and motivation. Individual difference variables refer to both affective variables and cognitive variables which has an extensive role in this model. Language aptitude, intelligence and language-learning strategies are the areas of cognitive variables; whereas, language anxiety, motivation and language attitudes are considered as affective variables. All these variables of individual difference except language attitudes are directly related with formal learning environment, but only motivation is related with

the informal setting since a learner without any motivation cannot take part in this context.

Later on this model got expanded by Tremblay and Gardner (1995) by linking it with new components from expectancy-value and goal theories. According to Tremblay and Gardner, there are so many variables like, goal salience, valence, and self-efficacy, which are mediating the link between motivational behavior and language attitudes. All these three mediating variables motivate learners and subsequently they achieve their goal of the attainment of L2 acquisition. In conjunction to these expanded models, Gardner and Tremblay (1994) explored the other motivational theories with a view to expanding the motivation construct but found that such endeavor seemed meaningless in the absence of real and practical research.

Besides that, they also proved that the socio-educational model in the process of L2 learning was not an unchanged phenomenon; rather it was experiencing a change and expansion in a continuous manner (1994b). Finally, Williams and Burden (1997) drew an extensive framework of motivation in the process of L2 acquisition. They considered motivation in L2 as a complex and multi-dimensional construct thinking what type of motivation is necessary whether it is internal or external motivational influence (Dörnyei, 2001a).

### **Classroom-Friendly Models**

Classroom-friendly model is an extended model introduced by Dörnyei (1994) where he shows that L2 motivation is conceptualized on three levels. Later on he says "so much is going on in a classroom at the same time that no single motivational principle can possibly capture this complexity. Therefore, in order to understand why students behave as they do, we need a detailed and most likely eclectic construct that represents multiple perspectives." (Dörnyei, 2001a). To get the expected outcome from the L2 learners all sorts of motivation are important and they all are complementary to each other. When one type of motivational behavior is influenced by the other one, the outcome becomes more satisfactory.

Learners' interest of learning refers to intrinsic motivation and to inherent curiosity about the immediate environment around them. Relevance is related to the extent to which learners apprehend that course which is associated to needs, personal values and goals. Expectancy deals with learners' expectation that they will be successful in a course, and refers to task difficulty, the amount of effort they require to accomplish the course and the help they need etc. Gratification is seen as the result of a task. In the teacher-specific sub-components, affiliative drive deals with the learners' desire to do well so that they can meet the expectation of the teacher. Authority type refers to the function whether the teacher is considered as controlling body or the supreme authority. Besides that, the term motivation has been studied for long by many scholars and they all find different feedback from their research. In an examination of motivation considered as a socially mediated process, Ushioda (2003) says that "Collective motivation can all too easily become collective demotivation, boredom, or at the far end of the spectrum, collective dissatisfaction or rebellion, often in the form of classroom counter-cultures defined by rejection of educational aims and values" (p. 93-94).

Williams and Burden (1997) developed another classroom oriented model of motivation from a social-constructivist perspective where they showed that motivational factors are divided into two: internal and external factors. Their model is very different from Dörnyei's construct.

### **MOTIVATION A KEY DRIVER OF SECOND LANGUAGE ACQUISITION**

Among many other factors that drive the learners to achieve L2 acquisition, motivation is the most vital one. In the process of second language acquisition, motivation is "a complex phenomenon which can be defined in terms of two factors: learners' communicative needs, and their attitudes towards the second language community" (Lightbown & Spada, 2001 p. 33). Without motivation, L2 learning does not take place. Learners who are motivated more, they can acquire the language very quickly. On the other hand, those learners who are not motivated, cannot reach their goal, meaning that they cannot achieve the language in an expected manner. It is a kind of force that creates learners active to accomplish their work. So many studies were carried out in this connection.

In the 1990s, scholars of applied linguistics called for an enlargement of the motivational construct in L2 learning (Skehan 1991; Oxford & Shearing, 1994; Dörnyei, 1994). Based on this, many studies have been

carried out which continuation is still in action. Initial data has emerged in recent research, which not only determines the applicability of the new motivational paradigms in language learning, but also exhibits that integration of such new constructs with the existing models leads to more expanded models of language learning motivation (Tremblay & Gardner 1995).

Reece & Walker (1997), express that motivation is the main driving force in L2 acquisition process. They state that a less intelligent learner who is extensively motivated can show tremendous success than a more capable learner who is not perfectly motivated. Sometimes learners are seen very highly motivated, but the teacher cannot help students properly to retain their motivation level, then the outcome is seen very low. Apart from teaching the students, the duty of a teacher is to maximize the motivation level of the learners so that they never feel bored in their learning process. Shulman (1986), states that learners' learning of L2 is facilitated most effectively when learners are getting motivation from various sources, and their motivation level can be enhanced by creating a positive classroom atmosphere. Crookes & Schmidt (1991), defines the term motivation in terms of choice, engagement and persistence, which is determined by relevance, interest, outcome and expectancy.

The good rapport between teachers and students creates motivation among the students. In their empirical study in the context of Bangladesh, Alam et al., (2017) state that motivation that come from teachers acts as the most influential driving force that leads learners towards their success in the process of L2 acquisition. To create an effective learning environment, interaction between teachers and learners are more important (Cooper & McIntyre, 1998 as cited in Gomleksiz 2001). It can be said that friendly interaction helps learners solve their problems in the learning process. Good relationship between teachers and learners helps prevent the drop out of the students from their process of learning the language. In an empirical study of Milon et al., (2018) it is shown that motivation and friendly behavior from teachers prevent the students from discontinuing their education. Another study of Farzana et al., (2017) shows that while teaching language to learners with autism, well behavior with the tone of motivation is very important that leads them towards the expected success.

Sometimes good environment creates motivation among the learners to learn the language properly. Learners having excellent classroom environment and good teachers can learn the language more quickly than those learners without having a good classroom environment and teaching staff. In an empirical study of Milon et al., (2017) in the context of Bangladesh it is shown that students of English medium schools are learning the language very quickly than the students of Bangla medium schools since English medium students have good learning environment and good teaching staff compared to the students of Bangla medium students. These factors act as a source of motivation.

In the process of L2 acquisition, motivation from teachers' side cannot be denied. In this process if the teachers are seen successful, learners are also seen successful in the attainment of their L2 acquisition. Cooper & McIntyre (1998 as cited in Gomleksiz 2001) emphasize the role of teacher in learners' achievement. They add that if the teacher is more successful with the power of motivating the students, the learners can achieve their desired outcome. Teaching strategy is seen as an important source of motivation. The choice of teaching technique on motivation is underlined by Reece & Walker (1997). What types of teaching strategy is applied in the classroom creates an effect upon the motivation and interest of the student. If the classroom teaching technique becomes more interesting and learners' friendly, learners become highly motivated which subsequently leads the learners towards their desired success.

It is seen that language learners become more motivated in informal setting than in formal setting. In informal setting they do not feel shy, whereas in formal setting most of the time they cannot express themselves since they feel shy. For most psycholinguists, either in formal or informal situations of language learning, learner's attitudes, interest and motivation play a very vital role. Krashen's monitor model (1981) considers learners' attitudes and motivation as the most influential factors of language acquisition which he thinks as an affective filter hypothesis on language intake. According to Carroll's conscious reinforcement model (1981), language learning does not take place until or unless the learners feel motivated to communicate something to someone. According to Bialystok's strategy model (1978 as cited in Madrid et al. 1993), learners will seek language exposure only when they are motivated by any means. In his social

psychology model Lambert (1974) establishes causal links between attitudes, orientation and motivation, and proficiency in L2. In Schumann's acculturation model (1978), he also emphasizes the role of motivation in L2 learning process. According to Gardner's socio-educational model (1985), social anxiety, intelligence, motivation, aptitude, and attitudes of learners are functioning as influential aspects which control the feedback of learners. Therefore, from all the studies it is very transparent that motivation acts as a most influential driving force in the total process of L2 acquisition.

## CONCLUSION

Motivation is that kind of human construct which creates a strong desire among the human being to achieve something that sometimes seems to be impossible to gain. From psychological point of view, motivation can be described in a wide range of terms, from instincts, to needs, to conditioned behavior, to drives and as a consequence the term motivation cannot be narrowly explained, rather it is a very broad field. The study of motivation became more vibrant based on cognitive theories by educational psychology where it shows that to understand motivation clearly the role of mental processes and social factors are more prominent. In the course of time, with the need to translate theoretical concept into classroom application in the real world, educational psychologists, scholars and educators have been investing their countless efforts to design instructional modes of motivations. Though there seems to have many types of motivation, but a comprehensive outlook with the combination of all types of motivation can help learners achieve the most desired success in their learning process. All types of motivation are complementary to each other. They are intrinsically connected to each other. Motivation from teachers' side, parents' side, from classroom environment are seen to be more effective in the process of L2 acquisition. A good number of research has been carried out by many famous scholars in the area of motivation where they tried to find out why it is so significant to L2 learning process. The fundamental issues related to motivation are seen complex, but one thing is very transparent that every person's motivation to learn/achieve anything is not fixed rather it is flexible that can take many changes throughout the process.

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