

TESTING THE LANGUAGE COMPETENCE OF SAURASHTRA CHILDREN IN TAMIL

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1. Introduction

Language Testing involves both linguistics and psychology because it is concerned with language and learning. It is also experimental because it sets up learning tasks in order to study behavior and also evaluative because it makes use of statistical techniques in order to study that behavior.

Language testing is concerned with the measurement and evaluation of the learner's performance in a language course at a given time. To assess the language abilities or language competence of the learner before, during and at the end of the language teaching programme. The language tests designed generally try to elicit the knowledge of the examinee of the content, structure and language skills viz., Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing (LSRW). At least two linguistic components are involved in all language skills. In this paper, writing skill of the Saurashtra children in Tamil are analyzed through the data obtained from the middle school children.

2. Testing the Writing Competency

Writing is one of the two productive skills that a learner is expected to achieve in order to ensure his linguistic competence. Testing the writings of the learners implies identifying the errors and mistakes they committed. These errors are identified by using two methods. One is collecting their examination answer sheets of the students and another is Questionnaire. The Syntactic levels of errors are found out only in the free Composition, i.e. from answer sheets.

3. Data Analysis

The collected data was analyzed under

- a) Descriptive method
- b) Statistical method

4. Errors in Writing

Error is common in learning any language. The quantum of error varies according to the competence of the learners in learning a language. In academic domain, writing skill is widely used to evaluate the student's competence in learning a language. In this paper, the Saurashtra student's competence is analyzed through the test items i.e. Questionnaire. The

test items contain 72 objective type questions with the five point scale method. The students have to select an option from the given answers.

The 72 questions were given to test the linguistic levels viz., Phonological (spelling), morphological, syntactical, and semantic also vocabulary of Tamil language. The questions from 1-20 is given to test the Phonological (spelling) and 21 - 40 is used to test the morphological level. Questions from 41 - 57 is given to test the syntactic level and from 58 - 67 is given to test the semantic level and 68 - 72 is used to know about the vocabulary.

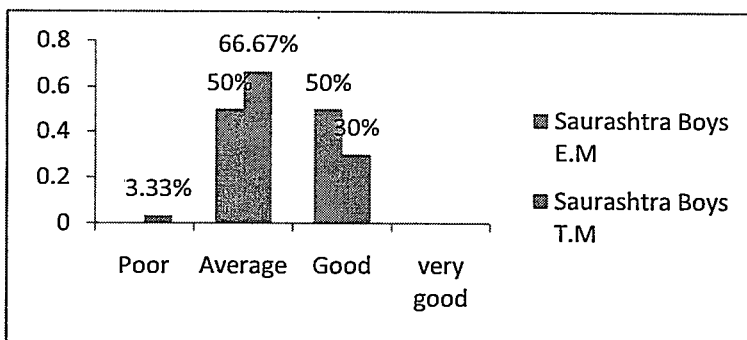
The 120 informants are Saurashtra children who are studying 6th, 7th and 8th Standards in the middle school are selected for this study. Data collected through the test items and marks obtained by the students in ability tests have been analyzed descriptively. The whole responses have been calculated by using the formula $S = R - W / (n - 1)$. The results obtained from the analyses are presented statistically and by using charts with the variables, Gender, Medium of Instruction and Standards are given below.

Competence of Saurashtra Students – Writing Skill in the Questionnaire

Table 1 and Chart 1

Competence of Saurashtra Boys in Writing Skill across Medium of Instruction

Saurashtra Boys		
score	E.M	T.M
Poor	0	3.33%
Average	50%	66.67%
Good	50%	30%
very good	0	0

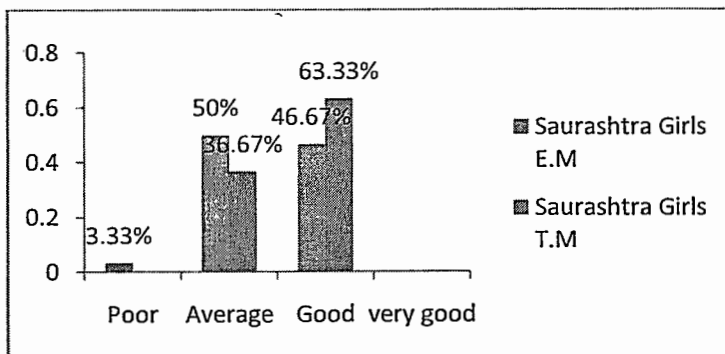


From the table 1 and chart 1 it has been revealed that in the case of English Medium Boys, maximum of 50 % of the boys score average marks, followed by 50 % of them are in the score range of good marks. In the case of Tamil Medium Boys, the majority of 66.67% of them are in the score range of average marks followed by 30 % of them has score good marks and 3.33% of the students has score in the range of poor marks correspondingly.

Table 2 and Chart 2

Competence of Saurashtra Girls in Writing Skill across Medium of Instruction

Saurashtra Girls		
score	E.M	T.M
Poor	3.33%	0
Average	50%	36.67%
Good	46.67%	63.33%
very good	0	0

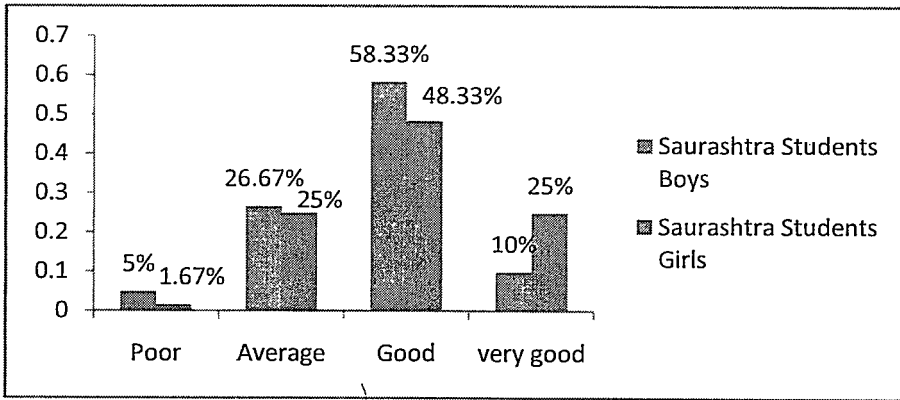


From the table 2 and chart 2 it has been revealed that in the case of English Medium Girls, maximum of 50% has score average marks, followed by 46.67% of girls has score good marks while 3.33% of girls scored poor marks range. In the case of Tamil Medium Girls, the majority of 63.33 % of girls has score good marks followed by 36.67 % of girls has score average marks respectively.

Table 3 and Chart 3

Competence of Saurashtra students in Writing Skill across Gender

Across Gender		
score	Saurashtra Students	
	Boys	Girls
Poor	5%	1.67%
Average	26.67%	25%
Good	58.33%	48.33%
very good	10%	25%

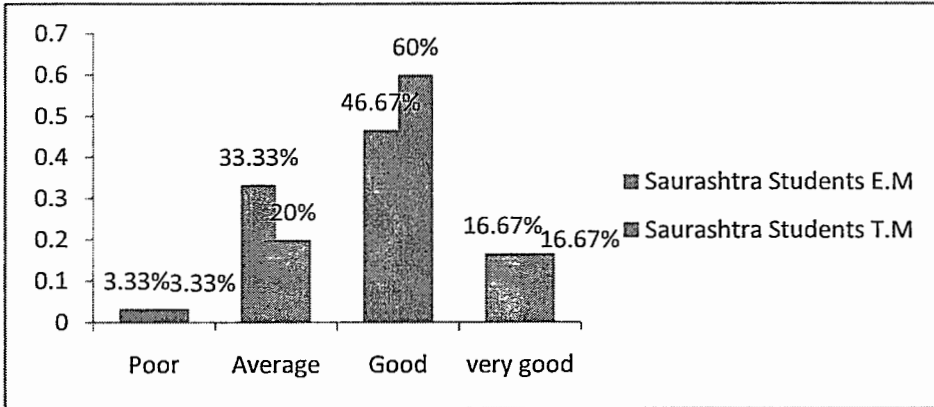


From the table 3 and chart 3 it has been revealed that in the case of Saurashtra Boys, out of 60 respondents, maximum of 58.33 % of the boys score good marks, followed by 26.67% of them score average marks while very good marks has score by 10% of the boys and 5% of boys score poor marks respectively. In the case of Saurashtra Girls, out of 60 respondents, the majority of 48.33 % of them score good marks followed by both 25% of them has score very good and average marks where 1.67% of the students has score in the range of poor marks correspondingly.

Table 4 and Chart 4

Competence of Saurashtra Children in Writing Skill across Medium of Instruction

Across Medium of Instruction		
score	Saurashtra Students	
	E.M	T.M
Poor	3.33%	3.33%
Average	33.33%	20%
Good	46.67%	60%
very good	16.67%	16.67%

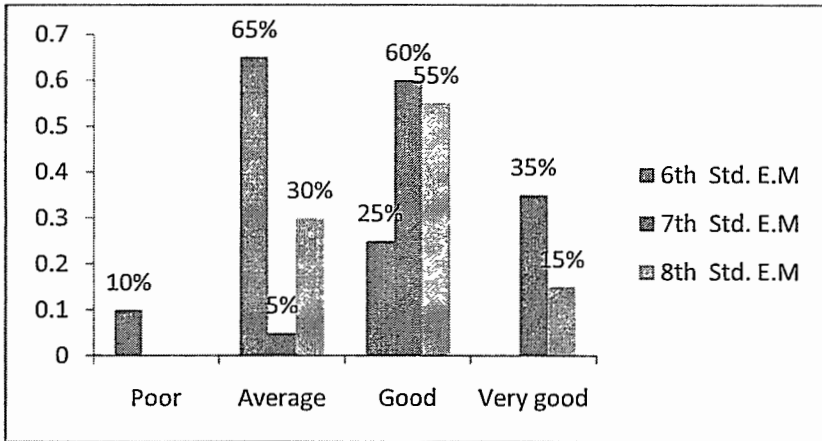


From the table 4 and chart 4 it has been revealed that in the case of English Medium Students, out of 60 respondents, maximum of 46.67 % of the students score good marks, followed by 33.33% of them score average marks, 16.67% and 3.33% of the students score very good and poor marks correspondingly. In the case of Tamil Medium Students, out of 60 respondents, the majority of 60 % of them are in the score range of good marks followed by 20 % of them has score average marks, 16.67% and 3.33% of the students has score very good and poor marks respectively.

Table 5 and Chart 5

*Competence of Saurashtra Children in Writing Skill
among English Medium Students*

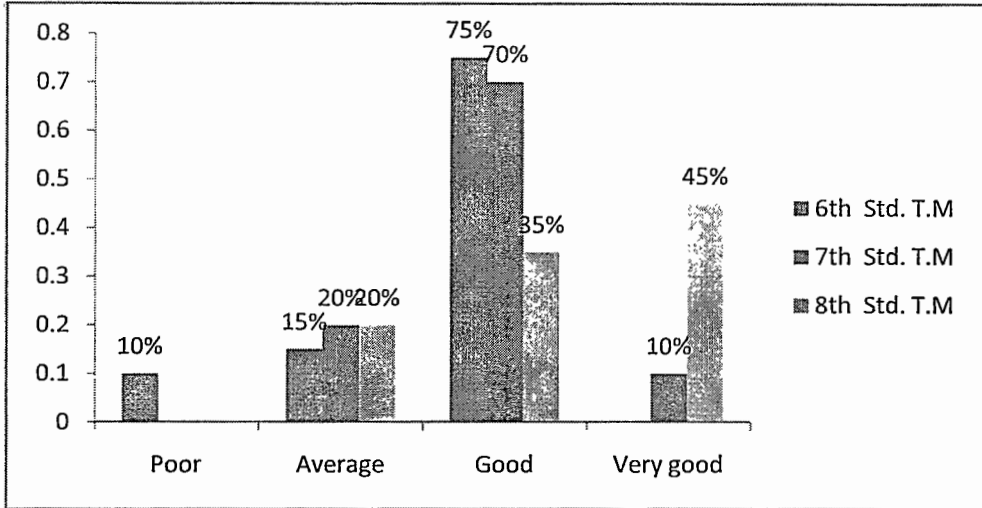
English medium Students			
Score	6 th Std.	7 th Std.	8 th Std.
Poor	10%	0	0
Average	65%	5%	30%
Good	25%	60%	55%
Very good	0	35%	15%



It is found from the table 5 and chart 5 that the English Medium Saurashtra Students, 65% of the students have score average marks, 25% of the students have score good marks, 10% of the students have score poor marks while in 7th std. English Medium Students, 60% of the students in the good mark range, 35% of the students score very good mark range, 5% of the students score average marks whereas 8th std. English Medium Students, 55% of the students score good marks, 30% of the students score average marks and 15% of the students score very good marks likewise.

Table 6 and Chart 6
Competence of Saurashtra Children in Writing Skill
among Tamil Medium Students

Tamil Medium Students			
Score	6 th Std.	7 th Std.	8 th Std.
Poor	10%	0	0
Average	15%	20%	20%
Good	75%	70%	35%
Very good	0	10%	45%



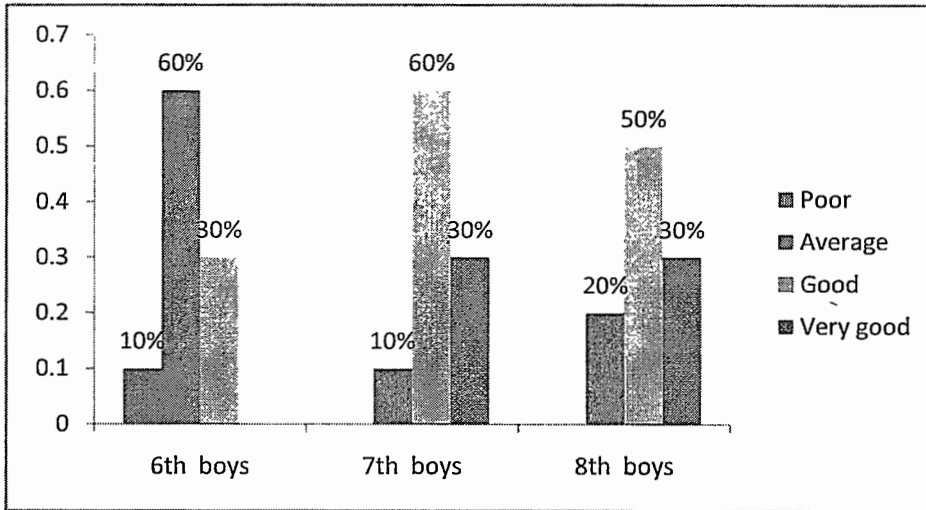
It is found from the table 6 and chart 6 that the Tamil Medium Saurashtra Students, maximum of 75% of the students have score good marks, 15% of the students have score average marks, 10% of the students have score poor marks in the case of 6th std. students. In the case of 7th std. students, 70% of the students score good marks, 20% of the students score good marks and 10% of the students score very good marks range. 45% of the students score very good marks, 35% of the students score good marks and 20% of the students score average marks by the 8th std. students.

Table 7 and Chart 7

Competence of Saurashtra English Medium Boys in Writing Skill

Across 6th, 7th and 8th Standard

English medium boys			
Score	6 th boys	7 th boys	8 th boys
Poor	10%	0	0
Average	60%	10%	20%
Good	30%	60%	50%
Very good	0	30%	30%

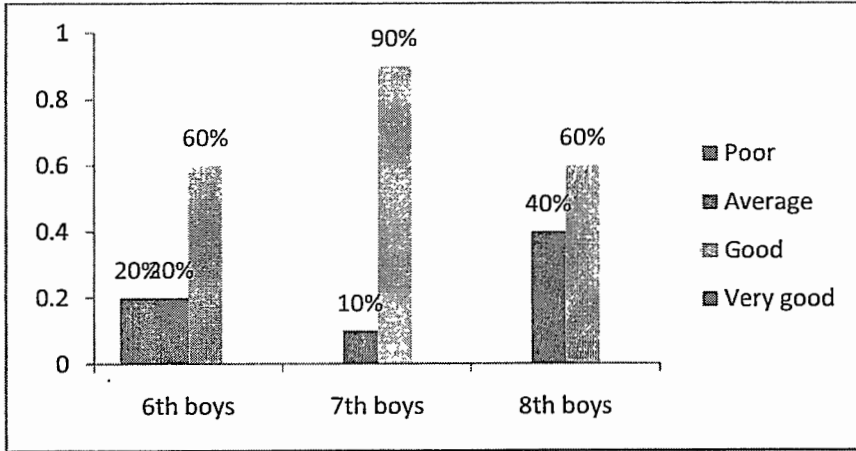


From the above table 7 and chart 7, it has been cleared that the 60% of the boys has score average marks followed by 30% of the boys has score good marks while 10% of the boys has score poor marks by the 6th std. Saurashtra English Medium Boys. In the case of 7th std. English Medium Boys, 60% of the boys has score good marks followed by 30% of the boys has score very good marks, 10% of the boys score average marks. In the case of 8th std. English Medium Boys, maximum of 50% of the boys score good marks followed by the 30% of the boys score very good marks whereas 20% of the boys in the average mark correspondingly.

Table 8 and Chart 8

*Competence of Saurashtra Tamil Medium Boys in Writing Skill
Across 6th, 7th and 8th Standard*

Tamil medium boys			
score	6th boys	7th boys	8th boys
Poor	20%	0	0
Average	20%	10%	40%
Good	60%	90%	60%
Very good	0	0	0

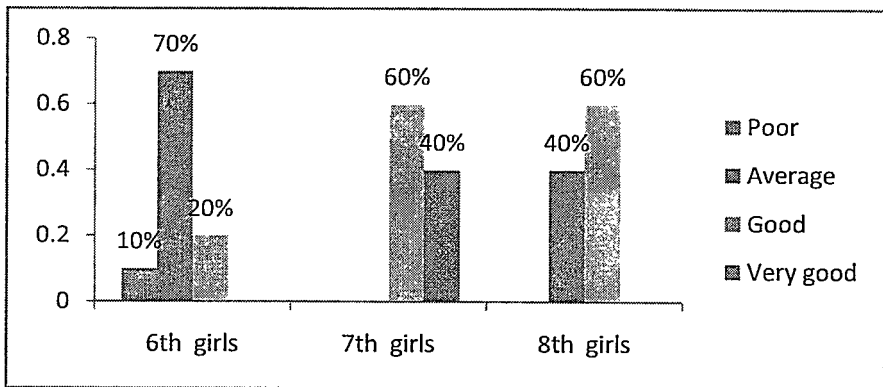


From the above table 8 and chart 8 , it has been observed that the maximum of 60% of the boys has score good marks followed by 20% of the boys has score average marks while 20% of the students has score poor marks by the 6th std. Saurashtra Tamil Medium Boys. In the case of 7th std. Tamil Medium Boys, 90% of the boys score in the good marks followed by 10% of the boys in the average marks. In the case of 8th std. Tamil Medium Boys, 60% of the boys score good marks followed by the 40% of the boys scored average marks in the same way.

Table 9 and Chart 9

*Competence of Saurashtra English Medium Girls in Writing Skill
Across 6th, 7th and 8th Standard*

English medium girls			
score	6 th std.	7 th std.	8 th std.
Poor	10%	0	0
Average	70%	0	40%
Good	20%	60%	60%
Very good	0	40%	0



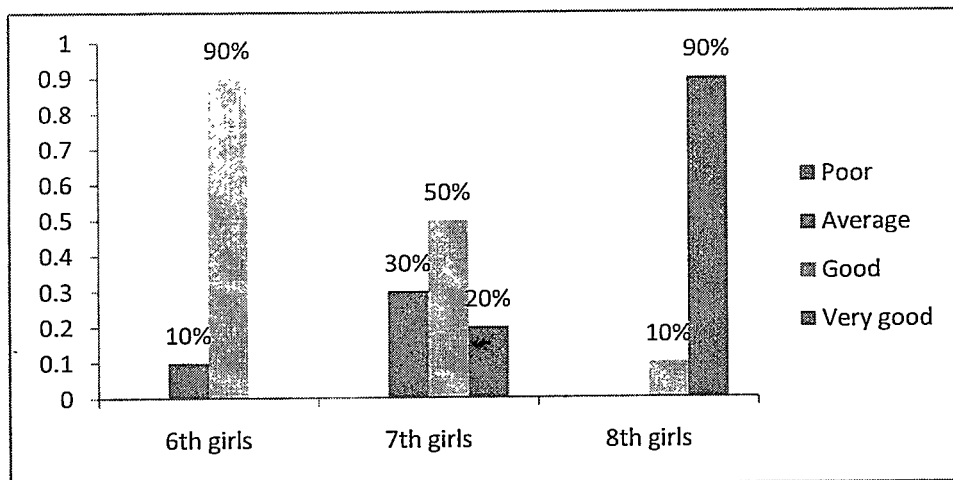
From the above table 9 and chart 9, it has been revealed that, the case of English Medium Girls, 70% of the girls has score average marks followed by 20% of the girls has score good marks while 10% of the girls has score poor marks by the 6th std. In the case of 7th std. English Medium Girls, 60% of the girls score in the good marks followed by 40% of the girls in the very good marks. In the case of 8th std. English Medium Girls, 60% of the girls are in the good marks range followed by the 40% of the girls are in the average marks correspondingly.

Table 10 and Chart 10

Competence of Saurashtra Tamil Medium Girls in Writing Skill

Across 6th, 7th and 8th Standard

Tamil Medium Girls			
score	6th girls	7th girls	8th girls
Poor	0	0	0
Average	10%	30%	0
Good	90%	50%	10%
Very good	0	20%	90%

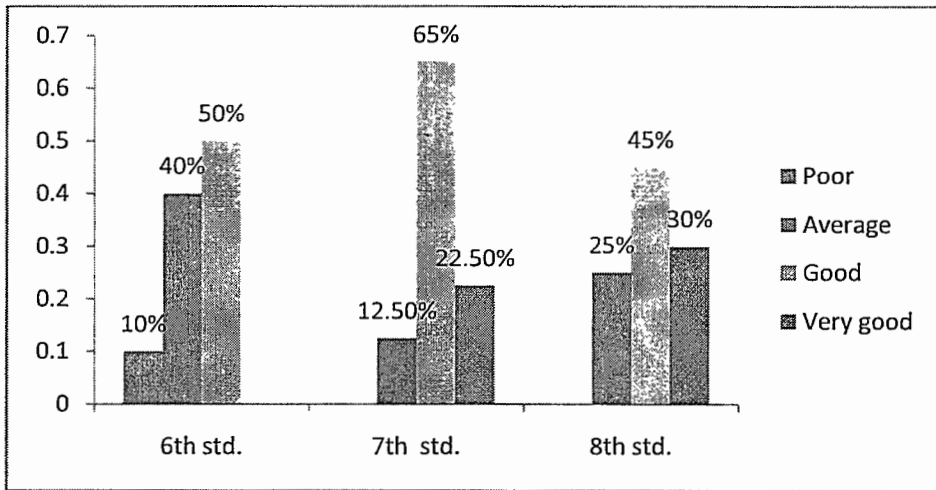


From the above table 10 and chart 10, it has been found that the 90% of the girls has score good marks while 10% of the girls score average marks by the 6th std. Saurashtra Tamil Medium Girls. In the case of 7th std. Tamil Medium Girls, 50% of the girls has score good marks followed by 30% of the girls in the average marks and 20% of the girls are in the very good marks. In the case of 8th std. Tamil Medium Girls, 90% of the girls are in the very good marks range whereas 10% of the girls are in the good marks respectively.

Table 11 and Chart 11

Overall students' competence of Saurashtra Students in Writing Skill

Saurashtra students			
Score	6 th std.	7 th std.	8 th std.
Poor	10%	0	0
Average	40%	12.5%	25%
Good	50%	65%	45%
Very good	0	22.5%	30%



From the above table 11 and chart 11, provides the information of total number of 120 students. Out of 40 students in the 6th std., 50% of the students score good marks followed by 40% of the students score average marks while 10% of the students has score poor marks. Out of 40 students in 7th std. students, 65% of the students score good marks followed by 22.5% of the students in the very good marks and 12.5% of the students are in the average marks. In the case of 40 students in 8th std. students, 45% of the students are in the good marks range followed by the 30% of the students are in the very good marks whereas 25% of the students are in the average marks in that order.

Findings:

From the above results based on the variables, we may conclude that,

- a) Girls performed better than the boys
- b) The E.M students performed better than the T.M. students
- c) The gradual percentage increase of vocabulary learning in Tamil by the 7th, 6th and 8th standard in order.

Suggestions:

Students should be practiced in different types of learning materials. It will help them to understand the text with contextual meaning.

To enhance the knowledge in a particular language, the language teacher should encourage the students to write and discuss among the students to make their vocabulary increase.

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