

Japanese Compliment Speech Act by The Native Speaker in Online Communication

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ABSTRACT

This research is intended to study about the realization of the compliment speech act by Japanese people through online communication. The data collection method was carried out by observing two data sources in the form of Japanese conversations uploaded in the Youtube channel. The data collected were compliment speech act which appear in the dialogue. The method used in this research is qualitative method. The theoretical of the compliment speech postulated by Holmes is used as the theoretical background for this research. The results of the analysis in this study are: 1) there are four types of compliment based on its content, namely compliment for ability, personality, possession and appearance; 2) The delivery strategy is in the form of unbound compliment, either directly or indirectly, and bound compliment; 3) Then the form of bound compliment can be in the form of admiration, contrast, surprise assumption, request, appreciation and want statement.

Keywords; *compliment; ability; personality; possession; appearance*

Introduction

Changing in habit that occur in almost all sides of life because of the pandemic has significantly influenced the way humans interact, especially in terms of interactional communication. The use of face-to-face online media has become a new way which makes the speech participants need to adapt to the complexities of communication technology. Nevertheless, one of the essences in communication is maintaining good relations among humans, and one of the realizations is a compliment speech.

Holmes (2003:177) states that compliment is a speech act of a good judgment to others either directly or indirectly with the category of compliment speech on ability, personality, appearance, and possession. Manes and Wolfson (1981:126) say that someone praises because of many reasons, such as expressing admiration, or respecting the work or activity that has been done by others, maintaining solidarity, and opening conversations and diluting communication so that the interlocutor will feel happy, valued, and comfortable. However, Furukawa (2010) states that speech acts of compliment can also be understood as a form of irony by the speech partner, so the meaning of the speaker conveyed must be understood contextually by the speech partner.

The above phenomenon deserves to be studied, namely the realization of Japanese native speakers' compliment speech in digital communication media. The scope of the research is in the form of Japanese speeches of compliment conducted by native speakers. To observe this phenomenon, the researchers took data through interactive dialogue videos between 2 native Japanese speakers.

Statement of the Problem

Based on the explanation above, it is known that in conveying compliment speeches, Japanese people pay attention to the context in saying compliment so that there is no sense of irony in a compliment speech, especially in a long-distance communication through digital media. Therefore, the problem raised in this study is how the realization of Japanese native speakers' compliment speech in digital communication media is.

This research is expected to be a reference for Japanese language learners in Indonesia in understanding the use of compliment expressions in fostering social relationships, so that Japanese language learners can convey Japanese compliment properly and correctly.

Literature review

Kim (2006) in his research found the fact that the Japanese language uses more compliment speech by using positive evaluative words such as the words "*ii*", "*sugoi*", "*kirei*", "*kakkooii*" and "*kirei*" in compliment speech. He also found the components in the compliment speech act among Japanese youth, such as to whom the compliment is spoken, the topic of compliment and the intention of compliment.

Maulida (2019), in her research on compliment utterances in films, used data on compliment utterances spoken by the characters in the film. The conclusion of the study is that the majority of compliment speech acts used by the characters in the *Kaze Tachinu* film are direct compliment.

Susanti (2020) in her research "Compliment Speech and Compliment Response in Japanese Society: A Book Review of Speaking Skills Learned Through Listening Japanese Live" studied about the compliment speech, the function of compliment and response to compliment and the data were taken from a Japanese textbook. In addition to speech, the author also examined the relationship between compliment and the status of the speaker and his interlocutor in responding to compliment.

Aryanto (2021) in his research on how the Japanese native speaker's perception about compliment responses by non-native speaker of Japanese (Japanese learners) in Central Java and Yogyakarta area. In the conclusion, there is an indication of impoliteness when a Japanese learner accepted a complimentary speech act and they seem cannot use *futsutai* and *keigo* properly.

The difference between this study and the three studies above is that the data taken from this study comes from the utterances of compliment that occurred from native Japanese speakers who do interactive dialogue, so that there is no use of scenarios in conversations between native speakers. The limitation of this study is that the compliment intended by the speaker as a good value owned by the interlocutor is the data in this study. Therefore, compliment which has the intention of satire is not included in this study.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Compliment

According to Holmes (1986: 485), compliment is a speech act that is spoken explicitly (directly) and implicitly (indirectly) that explains the good value given to someone, that person has a positive thing such as goods, traits, abilities and others, owned and appreciated by both parties, namely the speaker and the speech partner. Then, Holmes (1986:496) divides utterances of compliment based on the content of the speech into four categories, namely:

- 1) Possessions compliment; "What a lovely garden."
- 2) Appearance compliment; "I like your hair all curly"
- 3) Ability compliment;" You were skiing well today."
- 4) Compliment for personality or friendliness; "You're such a gentle person."

According to Yuan (2002: 192) forms of compliment can be categorized as follows:

- a) Unbound Semantic Formula. This unbound semantic formula is divided into 2 categories, namely explicit compliment and implicit compliment, or called as direct and indirect compliment.
 1. Explicit Compliment. This explicit compliment has generally been directed to the intended individual and is clear because of the existence of positive semantics. This explicit compliment can be called as a direct compliment.

2. Implicit Compliment. It is tangible as a general statement with or without a positive semantic form, that the intended individual is not mentioned directly but the meaning of compliment is given clearly about a certain context. Implicit compliment can also be called as indirect compliment.

b) Bound Semantic formulas. This bound semantic formula has things that must be related to one of the unbound semantic formulas to be interpreted as a part of the compliment. Based on research conducted by Huang and Tseng (2014:26), the category of indirect forms of compliment is divided into 14 categories: *admiration, assumption, contras, evaluation, explanation, joke, request, want statement appreciation, future expectation, knowing, pleasing, reward offering, surprises.*

METHODS

The data sources of this research were taken from two interactive dialogue videos between native Japanese speakers on the you-tube account "Miku Real Japanese". The first video is "Japanese learning tips from teachers | Part 1 (with *Akane-san*)" which was uploaded by the account owner on May 16 (duration 23.10). The next video is "Japanese conversation with *Ryouma-san* (about his life)" which was uploaded on April 11, 2021 (duration 43.34). This video was uploaded to increase the listening ability of Japanese language learners in daily conversation and as a solution for Japanese language students to be able to understand and apply Japanese knowledge in social life.

The data in this study are the compliment speeches in Japanese by the native speaker in the video. The data collection techniques are as follows: 1) Sorting out utterances containing direct and indirect utterances of compliment; 2) Categorizing the compliment expressions based on the compliment topic of Holmes theory; 3) Categorizing the types of bound and unbound compliment expressions.

The data were analyzed based on the topic of compliment speech by Holmes and were studied for the realization of bound and unbound compliment. The following are the stages for analyzing the data:

1. After the data had been found, each datum was described based on its context using Leech's (1993) theory.
2. Determine the realization of compliment by using Yuan's theory (2002)
3. Determine 14 forms of indirect compliment based on research by Huang and Tseng (2014)

For the presentation of the analysis results, it is carried out descriptively by describing various forms of compliment made by native speakers in videos on the Miku Real Japanese Youtube channel.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Data were obtained based on the topic of compliment according to Holmes's theory (1986: 496) and those data have 4 topics of compliment, namely compliment for one's abilities, compliment for other people's objects/possession of goods, compliment for clothes/appearance, and compliment for personality/friendliness. The data are described in the context of the speech situation so as to know the background of the compliment speech. Then, the data were analyzed by applying Yuan's theory (2002: 192), not only the unbound semantic formula which includes direct and indirect compliment but a bound semantic formula that is realized from a combination of direct and indirect compliment as well. Based on research by Huang and Tseng (2014:26), there are 7 categories which have the forms of indirect compliment expressions, namely contrast, assumption, admiration and surprise, request, appreciation, and want statement.

1) Unbound Compliment

a) Direct Compliment on the Topic of Compliment on Personality

Context

Participants (native speakers) in data 1 are Miku who is the owner of the Miku Real Japanese YouTube channel, and Ryouma who is a guest in the video interview. After talking for so long, Miku felt very close to Ryouma because of his friendliness.

data 1

Miku : (1) 「りょうまさん、はじめではなしたっていうかんじじゃないぐらいフレンドリーですごいはなしやすいですけど。」 29.18
"Ryouma-san, hajimete hanishitatte iu kanji jyanai gurai furendorii de sugoi hanashiyasui desukedo"
"It feels like it's not the first time talking to Ryouma, friendly, so it's easier to talk"

Analysis

In speech (1) there is a grammatical feature which belongs to the category of compliment. It can be seen from the words "*furendori*" and "*sugoi*". The terminology "*furendori*" based on *kokugojiten* is defined as "*yūkō-tekidearu sama. Shitashimi Yasui-sama. `Furendorna kankei`"* (friendly in friendship). The next marker is the word "*sugoi*" which is defined in the *kokugojiten* as "*bikkuri suru hodo teido ga hanahadashii, zotto suru hodo subarashii*" (as something extraordinary or amazing.)

In speech (1), the compliment is spoken directly, because there are evaluative markers, namely the words "*furendori*" and "*sugoi*". Miku expressed admiration for Ryouma's personality. According to Miku, Ryouma's personality is extraordinary and makes conversation easier. According to Yuan (2002), the form of compliment in data 1 are included as unbound compliment-direct compliments and the topic of compliment according to Holmes (1986) is compliment for personality.

b) Indirect Compliment on the Topic of Compliment on Ability

Context

Participants (native speakers) in data 2 are Miku and Akane who is a Japanese language teacher at a Japanese school. Because Akane had studied Chinese and told the difficulties in learning Chinese, Miku also told the difficulties in learning Spanish such as some changes in the word "*you*" in Spanish. Akane thought that learning Spanish is more difficult than she predicted. Akane is amazed at Miku's ability to speak Spanish.

data 2

Akane : (2) 「え、待って、覚えきれない覚えきれない。」 (17.56)
"e, matte, oboekirenai oboekirenai."
"uh wait, I can't remember everything"

Analysis

Speech data (2) is a compliment that is spoken indirectly because the compliment uses a form of contrast. Speech 2 has an element of comparing the difference in abilities that Akane can't do while Miku can. By saying speech (2), Akane indirectly tells that Miku's ability is a very extraordinary. According to Yuan (2002), the form of compliment in data 2 are included as unbound compliment-indirect compliment and the topic of compliment according to Holmes (1986) is compliment of ability.

2) Bound Compliment

a) Direct + Indirect Compliment - Appreciation On the Topic of Appearance Compliment

Context

At the end of the conversation, Ryouma corrected himself whether his speaking performance was good or still too fast. Then, Miku gave an assessment that his performance in the interview was very good.

Data 3

- Miku : (3.1) 「わあすごいほんとうにいい話が聞けました。」 (42.36)
"waa sugoi hontouni iihanashi ga kikemashita."
"wow cool, I really listened to a good talk."
- Ryouma : 「大丈夫かな？早かったかな？ 話すスピード。」
"daijobukana ? hayakattana ? hanashisupiido."
"Is it ok ? Am I talking too fast ?"
- Miku : (3.2) 「本当に良かったです、ありがとうございます。」
"hontouni yokatta desu. Arigatou gozaimashtia."
"very good. Thank you."

Analysis

In speech (3.1) there is a grammatical feature which belongs to the category of compliment. It can be seen from the word "*sugoi*". Then, in speech (3.1), compliment is spoken directly because there is an evaluative marker, namely the word "*sugoi*". Miku expressed admiration for Ryouma's appearance during the interview. According to Miku, the conversation with Ryouma was very extraordinary.

In speech (3.2), there is grammatical feature belongs to the category of compliment. It can be seen from the word "*yokatta*" which comes from the word '*yoi*'. According to the *Kokugojiten* dictionary, it is defined as "*Hito no kōdō seishitsu ya jibutsu no jōtai nado ga sui jun o koeteiru sama*" (behavior/characteristics of people and circumstances that exceed standards). Compliment speech (3.2) is spoken directly because there is an evaluative marker, namely the word "*yokatta*". Miku expresses admiration for Ryouma about speaking speed during interviews. According to Miku, Rypuma's speaking speed is very good.

Then in data (3.2) there is the word "*arigatou*". In *kokugojiten* it is defined as "*kansha shitari, rei wo ittari suru tokini mochiiru kotoba*" (a word that expresses gratitude). A gratitude speech is conveyed because the speaker acknowledges the speaker's contribution in making an extraordinary video interview. Speech (3.2) includes a compliment speech in a form of appreciation. According to Yuan (2002), the form of compliment in data 3 are included as bound compliment, direct-indirect compliment and the topic of compliment according to Holmes (1986) is compliment of appearance.

b) Indirect Compliment (surprise) + Direct Compliment On Topic of Compliment Ownership

Context

Ryouma explained that he didn't compose the song alone, but he had a team in the production of the song. Miku was impressed by Ryouma's amazing team when Ryouma told the story of his team during the song production process.

data 4

- Miku : (4) 「うわー！すごい。」 31.35
"uwaa! Sugoi."
"wow, great."

Analysis

Speech data (4) is a compliment, but it is spoken indirectly. The compliment uses the form of surprise. The expression “*uwa*” is described in the *kokugojiten* as “*kandō shitari odoroitari shita toki nado ni hassuru koe*” (the sound that comes out when impressed or surprised.). There is an element of positive statements towards Ryouma. Speech (4) indirectly indicates that Ryouma's team is very impressive, so that speech (4) can be considered as a speech of compliment in the form of surprise. Then, the expression “*uwa!*” followed by the word “*sugoi*” which further strengthens that speech 4 is a speech of compliment. The existence of evaluative and expressive markers in speech 4 can be categorized as direct compliment. According to Yuan (2002), the form of compliment in data 4 are included as bound indirect-direct compliment and the topic of compliment according to Holmes (1986) is compliment of ownership.

c) Direct + Indirect Compliment (contrast) on the Topic of Ability Compliment

Context

Ryouma was asked to speak Spanish by Miku. Then, Miku was surprised and amazed by Ryouma's Spanish ability.

data 5

- Miku : (5.1) 「すごい、はつおんきれいですねやっぱり。」 40.56
 “*sugoi, hatsuon kirei desune yappari.*”
 “cool, good pronunciation huh.”
- Ryouma : 「ありがとうございます。」
 “*arigatou gozaimasu.*”
 “thank you.”
- Miku : (5.2) 「日本人のはつおんじゃないですね。」 41.03
 “*Nihon-jin no hatsuon jyanai desuyone.*”
 “It's not Japanese pronunciation huh.”

Analysis

In speech (5.1) there is a grammatical feature which belongs to the category of compliment. It can be seen from the word “*kirei*”. According to the *kokugojiten* dictionary, it is “*iro. katachi nado ga kusayakana utsukushisa wo motte iru sama*” (color, shape and other things that have beauty).

Then, there is also grammatical feature that belongs to the category of compliment. It can be seen from the word “*sugoi*”. According to the dictionary, it is “*bikkuri suru hodo teido ga hanahadashii, zotto suru hodo subarasashii*” (something extraordinary or amazing).

Compliment speech (5.1) is spoken directly because there is an evaluative marker, namely the word “*sugoi*”. Miku expressed admiration for Ryouma's ability to speak Spanish. According to Miku, Ryouma had a beautiful pronunciation and very great ability.

The speech data (5.2) is a compliment, but it is spoken indirectly. The compliment uses a form of contrast. The sentence “it's not a Japanese pronunciation huh” contains an element of comparing the differences in Ryouma's abilities from the abilities of Japanese people in general. By giving a statement in speech (5.2), Miku told indirectly that the ability possessed by Ryouma was a very extraordinary ability.

According to Yuan (2002), the form of compliment in data 5 are included as bound compliment, direct-indirect compliment with contrasting strategy according to Huang and Tseng (2014). The topic of compliment according to Holmes (1986) is compliment of ability.

d) Direct + Indirect Compliment (request) on Ownership Compliment Topic**Context**

Ryouma told Miku about his song which can be enjoyed through digital platforms. Then, Miku explained that there was a subscriber who could speak Spanish. Ryouma thought that it was a wonderful thing and asked viewers' help to listen his music too.

data 6

Ryouma : (6) 「最高ですね。スペイン語けんの皆さん、よろしくお願ひします。」 40.20
"saikou desune, supeingoken no minas an, yoroshiku onegaishimasu"
 'That's great, for all of you who speak Spanish, please help.'

Analysis

In speech (6), there is also a grammatical feature which belongs to the category of compliment. It can be seen from the word "*saikou*". According to the *kokugojiten* dictionary, it means "*Monogoto no teido ga tokuni ichijirushi koto*" (something extraordinary or amazing)

In speech (6), the compliment is spoken directly because there is an evaluative marker, namely the word "*saikou*". Ryouma expressed admiration for Miku's audience who can speak Spanish. According to Ryouma, this is very extraordinary.

In speech (6), there is the word "*yoroshiku onegaishimasu*". The word "*negai*" in *kokugojiten* means "*kouatte hoshii to nozomu koto*" (things I want to happen). The utterance "*yoroshiku onegaishimasu*" was spoken because the speaker asked something from the interlocutor to help him in promoting his work. According to Yuan (2002), the form of compliment in data 6 are included as bound compliment, direct-indirect compliment with request strategy according to Huang and Tseng (2014). The topic of compliment according to Holmes (1986) is compliment of ownership.

e) Direct + Indirect Compliment (admiration) on the Compliment Topic of Ability**Context**

Miku said that she had seen Akane's Youtube video content which she thought it was good and useful. Since then, Miku has started paying attention to Akane through her you-tube account.

Data 7

Miku : (7.1) 「すごいなと思って、すごい日本学習者のかたに、役に立つコンテンツをアップロードされてるなと思って。」 00.38
"sugoi na to omotte, sugoi nihogakkushusha no kata ni, yaku ni tatsu kontensu wo apuroodo sareteruna to omotte"
 "I think it's great, uploading very useful content for Japanese learners."
 Miku : (7.2) 「ちょっとそのときから、あかねさんのことをねらってたんですよ。」 0.47
"chotto sono toki kara, akanesan no kotow o nerattetan desuyo"
 "From that moment on, I started admiring Akane."

Analysis

In speech (7.1) there is a grammatical feature which belongs to the category of compliment. It can be seen from the word "*sugoi*". According to the *kokugojiten* dictionary, it means "*bikkuri suru hodo teido ga hanahadashii, zotto suru hodo subarasashii*" (something extraordinary or wondrous).

Then in speech (7.1), the compliment is spoken directly because there is an evaluative marker, namely the word "*sugoi*". The utterance of compliment is then followed by an explanation of the reason for the speaker's compliment, namely Miku's interlocutor expresses the speaker's admiration for Akane's ability to create content. According to Miku, creating useful content for others is a very great ability.

Speech data (7.2) is a compliment, but it is spoken indirectly. The compliment uses the form of admiration. The sentence "From that moment on, I started admiring Akane" contains element of positive

statements. She made Akane you-tube content as a learning target. By giving a statement such as speech (7.2), the speaker told indirectly that the ability possessed by Akane was a very extraordinary ability. According to Yuan (2002), the form of compliment in data 7 are included as bound compliment, direct-indirect compliment with contrasting strategy admiration according to Huang and Tseng (2014). The topic of compliment according to Holmes (1986) is compliment of ability.

f) Indirect Compliment (appreciation) + Indirect Compliment (want statement) on the Compliment Topic of Ownership

Context

Ryouma told Miku about his music work. Because Miku knew that Ryouma's work was very good, he said to put a link of Ryouma's work in the description of his you-tube video.

data 8

- Miku : (8) 「そのリンクを下のがいようらんにのせておくので、皆さんぜひ聞いてみてください、私も聞いてみます。」 38.20
"sono rinku wo shita no gaiyouran ni nosete okunode, minas an zehi kite kudasai, watashimo kiite mimasu"
 "I'll put the link in the description column, you guys make sure to listen to it too, I'll listen to it too."
- Ryouma : 「ありがとうございます。」
"arigatou gozaimasu"
 "thank you."

Analysis

In speech (8), Miku indirectly praises the ownership of Ryouma, *"sono rinku wo shita no gaiyouran ni noseteokunode"* (I'll put the link in the description column). It is an indirect speech of appreciation, which means the speaker conveys belief that he admires the work of the speech partner who is able to entertain the speaker's viewer. Whereas in speech (8), *"watashimo kiite mimasu"* (I will also listen to it), the sentence is an indirect speech of compliment in the form of a Want statement. According to Yuan (2002), the form of compliment in data 8 are included as bound compliment, indirect compliment with appreciations and want statement strategy according to Huang and Tseng (2014). The topic of compliment according to Holmes (1986) is compliment of ownership.

g) Direct + Indirect Compliment (assumption) + Direct Compliment on Personality Compliment Topic

Context

Ryouma told about the time when he was going to Colombia and had to meet his parents. Then, the story was considered very funny to Miku.

Data 9

- Miku : (9.1) 「りょうまん本当におもしろいですね。」 35.35
"Ryouma-san hontouni omoshiroi desune."
 "That's cool Ryouma."
- Ryouma : 「ありがとうございます。」
"arigatou gozaimasu."
 "Thank you."
- Miku : (9.2) 「こんなひとないですよ、こんなひとなかなかないですよ。」 35.40
"Konna hito inai desuyo, konna hito naka naka inai desuyo."

- Ryouma : "There is no one like this you know, he's really rare you know."
「そうなのかなー。」
"sou nanokana?"
"so, yeah."
- Miku : (9.3) 「英語とスペイン語ペラペラだなんて思ったんですけど、なんかこの人絶対面白いだなんて思って。」 35.49
"eigo to supeingo perapera danatte omottetan desukedo, nanka kono hito zettai omoshiroi dana to omotte."
"Besides his English and Spanish are good, I think this guy must be cool too"
- Ryouma : 「ありがとうございます。」
"arigatou gozaimasu"
" Thank you."

Analysis

In speech (9.1), there is also grammatical feature belongs to the category of compliment. It can be seen from the word "*omoshiroi*". According to the *kokugojiten* dictionary, it means "*Me no mae ga akaruku naru kanji o itta go, kyōmi o sosorarete, kokoro ga hika reru sama*". *Kyōmibukai* is something that is attractive and gets people attention. Compliment is spoken directly, because there is an evaluative marker, namely the word "*omoshiroi*". Miku expressed admiration for Ryouma's personality which Miku finds very attractive.

Speech data (9.2) is a compliment, but it is spoken indirectly. The compliment is in the form of an assumption. The sentence "There is no one like this you know, it's really rare, you know". There is an element of positive statement towards Ryouma. By giving statement in speech (9.2), the speaker told indirectly that Ryouma's personality was very interesting.

In speech (9.3) there is grammatical feature which belongs to the category of compliment. It can be seen from the word "*perapera*". According to the *kokugojiten* dictionary, it means "*karugarushiku yoku shaberusama, gaikokugo o yodominaku jiyuuni hanasusama*" (can speak well). Compliment is spoken directly because there is an evaluative marker, namely the word "*perapera*". Miku expressed admiration for Ryouma's abilities. According to Miku as a learner of both Spanish and English, Ryouma's ability is extraordinary.

In speech (9.3) there is also grammatical feature which belongs to the category of compliment. It can be seen from the word "*omoshiroi*". According to the *kokugojiten* dictionary, "*Me no mae ga akaruku naru kanji o itta gokyōmi o sosorarete, kokoro ga hika reru sama. Kyōmibukai*" is something that touching the heart and grabbing attention. Compliment is spoken directly, because there is an evaluative marker that is the word "*omoshiroi*". Miku expressed admiration for Ryouma's personality which Miku found very attractive. According to Yuan (2002), the form of compliment in data 9 are included as bound compliment, direct-indirect compliment with assumption strategy according to Huang and Tseng (2014). The topic of compliment according to Holmes (1986) is compliment of personality.

CONCLUSION

The utterances of bound compliment and utterances of unbound compliment were found in the data of this study. In the utterances of unbound compliment, there are two types of compliment, namely direct and indirect compliment. Direct and indirect compliment are found in each topic of compliment, namely the topic of compliment for ability, possession, appearance, and personality.

In bound compliment, various bounds were found between direct and indirect compliment. On the topic of praising ability, there are 3 pieces, namely direct compliment + indirect admiration, direct compliment + surprise indirect compliment, and direct compliment + contrast indirect compliment. On the topic of compliment for ownership, there were 4 pieces, namely indirect compliment of appreciation + indirect compliment of want statement, indirect compliment of surprise + direct compliment, direct

compliment + indirect surprise, and direct compliment + indirect compliment request. On the topic of compliment for appearance, it was found 1, namely the bound between direct + indirect compliment, surprise appreciation. Meanwhile, on the topic of compliments on personality/friendliness, 2 speeches were found, namely the bound between compliments, indirect compliments, surprise + direct compliments, and direct compliments + assumption + direct compliments.

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