Function of Aizuchi in The Podcast as One of Digital Communication Media

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Received: 28-09-2022; Revised: 22-10-2022; Accepted: 24-11-2022
Available online: 25-11-2022; Published: 01-12-2022

Abstract

Communication is a process of interaction that affects one human to another either intentionally or unintentionally. Because communication is essential, the use of language becomes the main thing for social life. In line with this, the use of language in each nation also has its characteristics. One is in Japan, which has a unique way of communicating, Aizuchi. Aizuchi is a form of response so that the speaker feels heard and understood by the listener. In this era of globalization, when technology is increasingly sophisticated, it is also easier for humans to communicate through podcast media as one of the audiovisual media that can be listened to anywhere and anytime because the platform for listening or watching it is straightforward to access. This study's data source was taken from the Yuyu no Sekai Podcast in the episode "[Gesuto: Chō-san] Vol. 01 - Myanmā tte don'na kuni?". This study aims to find out the differences in the use of aizuchi in Japanese and Myanmar people fluent in Japanese in the episode "[Gesuto: Chō-san] Vol. 01 - Myanmā tte don'na kuni?". The theory used in this research is the theory of Mayumi Kutoba. This research method uses a descriptive qualitative type, with the collection method being the listening and Simak Bebas Libat Cakap listening techniques. The data contained in this study amounted to 51 data divided into 10 Kiiteiru to iu shingou functions, 14 Rikaishiteiru to iu shingou functions, 10 Doui no shingou functions, 9 Kanjyou noshingou functions, 6 Ma wo motaseru shingou functions, 1 Hitei no shingou function and 1 Jyouhou wo tsuika, teisei, youkyuu no shingou function.

Keywords: Aizuchi; Communication; Function; Japanese; Podcast

How to cite (APA): Perdana, S. P., & Nurohmah, H. (2022). Function of Aizuchi in The Podcast as One of Digital Communication Media. IZUMI, 11(2), 173–182. https://doi.org/10.14710/izumi.11.2.173-182

1. Introduction

Communication is a process of human interaction that influences each other both intentionally and unintentionally and is not limited to verbal forms of communication but also nonverbal ones such as facial expressions, paintings, art, and technology Wiryanto (2004). In this definition, the use of language is essential for life in society. Of course, each nation has its own characteristics in terms of language and culture that reflect the nation’s identity (Nurohmah, Amalia, & Kuraisen, 2020) One of them is the Japanese nation, which has uniqueness in communication, namely aizuchi.

According to Maynard in (Horiguchi, 1997), aizuchi is a short phrase sent by the listener in response after the speaker has taken a turn in the middle of the audience to exercise their right to speak. In Japanese culture, aizuchi is significant because it shows that the listener understands or listens to the other person. However, this sometimes makes foreigners who hear aizuchi misunderstand because they think their speech is being interrupted.
Therefore, researchers are interested in discovering more about the form and function of aizuchi expressions. When speaking, Japanese people reply or respond to their interlocutors using words such as 「ええ」 ee, 「そうです」 soudesu, 「はい」 hai, 「うん」 un, 「なるほどね」 naruhodone, 「いえ」 ie, and others according to Edizal (Hamida, 2019).

Communication between native Japanese speakers and foreigners is seen in these different ways of responding. The way aizuchi is used does not hinder Japanese learning but can cause discomfort in communication, especially for native Japanese speakers who are used to using aizuchi. The researcher found an example of aizuchi expression in one of the podcasts, Yuyu no Sekai Podcast, entitled "[Gesuto: Chō-san] Vol. 01 - Myanmā tte don'na kuni?".

The researcher is interested in researching this podcast because, in this podcast, a Myanmar person who is fluent in Japanese explains how the country of Myanmar uses Japanese, and also the researcher is interested in knowing more about the functions and differences in the use of aizuchi and functions in foreigners and Japanese. Although foreign speakers are fluent in Japanese, some things must be different from native Japanese speakers when communicating.

The researcher observed several applications of aizuchi by foreign speakers in the podcast and saw some differences in usage between foreign speakers and native Japanese speakers, where native speakers use more aizuchi in every pause of conversation and foreign speakers only when responding to statements and questions asked by native speakers.

The following is an example of the application of aizuchi referred to in this study found in the Yuyu no Sekai Podcast titled "[Gesuto: Chō-san] Vol. 01 - Myanmā tte don'na kuni?".

Example 1:

Context: Yuyu-san welcomes Chou-san as a guest star on his podcast to introduce himself to the viewers who will be watching her podcast.

チョウさん: はい、初めまして！チョウと申します！
Chou-san: Hai, hajimemashite! Chou tomoshimasu

Chou-san: Yes, please introduce my name is Chou.

ゆゆさん: うん！
Yuyu-san: Un!

The phrase 「はい」 hai and 「ウン」 un in the dialog above are what is meant by aizuchi. From this conversation, it can be concluded that aizuchi is an expression that responds to what is said by the speaker as a form of response and expression that we, as listeners, are listening to the other person.

Example 2:

Context: Chou-san explains that she is in Myanmar.

チョウさん: いまミャンマーに住んでいるんですけどれもー
Chou-san: ima Myanmar ni sundeirundesu keredomo-

Chou-san: I am now in Myanmar.

ゆゆさん: うん
Yuyu-san: Un

The expression 「はい」 hai and 「ウン」 un in the dialog above indicates that Yuyu-san understands what Chou-san is saying. The aizuchi used by Yuyu-san in the above example is one of the aizuchi functions called 理解しているという信号 Rikai shiteiru to iu shingou which translated into Indonesian means that the interlocutor understands the topic or discussion that the speaker is talking about.

In example 2, we can see the use of aizuchi by nihonjin or native Japanese speakers. When there is a pause in the conversation, nihonjin will use aizuchi to...
fill the break in the conversation. With the aizuchi response, the speaker will feel cared for, the atmosphere of communication that takes place looks smooth, and there is no awkwardness in the conversation.

The previous research conducted by Yunita Septia (2019) in her thesis entitled "Analysis of aizuchi in the Akane-teki Nihongo Kyoushitsu vlog with the title "(Nihongo Kaiwa) Dagashi Ba- de Taberu Toki" in her research analyzed the form and function of aizuchi found in the Akane-teki Nihongo Kyoushitsu vlog. Another research conducted by Arini Ambarwati (2014) in her thesis entitled "Aizuchi by Dansei and Josei in Anime Hyouka Episode 1-5 by Yasuhiro Takemoto" analyzes the differences in the use of aizuchi against Dansei and Josei in the anime Hyouka.

There is a difference between this research and previous research. Namely, the author examines the difference in the use of aizuchi in Gaikokujin and Nihonjin. In comparison, the research above examines along with the form of aizuchi. In addition, the object chosen for research is different. Previous research used Vlogs and Anime, while the author used Podcast media as the object to be studied.

From the description above, it can be concluded how important the use of aizuchi is in communication in Japanese culture. Therefore, in this study, the author wants to see how the function and differences in the use of aizuchi on podcasts as one of the digital communication media.

2. Methods

This study uses a descriptive qualitative approach because it observes the use and differences of aizuchi by foreign and native speakers of Japanese in a podcast that introduces the country of Myanmar using Japanese. According to Jane's opinion in (Khotimah, 2019) qualitative research has data sources that are not through numerical calculations but in the form of observations of speech, dialogue, and actions.

The method used in this research is the pragmatic pairing method for analyzing data. This research also uses the listening method with the basic, Simak Bebas Libat Cakap technique. The researcher applies this method by listening to the use of aizuchi in the Yuyu no Sekai Podcast entitled "[Gesuto: Chô-san] Vol. 01 - Myanmâ te don'na kuni?". In presenting the results of data analysis there are two techniques: formal and informal. The formal technique is the presentation of the effects of data analysis using signs and symbols (Sudaryanto, 2015). In this study, researchers will use formal techniques because it presents tables.

According to (Mahsun, 2017), Simak Bebas Libat Cakap technique is used to collect data in the form of Japanese foreign speakers' speech that contains aizuchi in the data source using Podcasts. The presentation of data will use non-probability sampling techniques that are qualitative. Because non-probability sampling techniques will be more appropriate and can be more useful in the data collection process (Nurdiani & Applications, 2014).

The data source used in this research comes from the Yuyu no Sekai Nihongo podcast entitled "Yuyu no Sekai Podcast: "[Gesuto: Chô-san] Vol. 01 - Myanmâ te don'na kuni?". With the youtube link https://youtu.be/m_tb9wr1FwQ. The aizuchi data collected were 51 data. In this study, researchers took several steps in analyzing the data. The following are the steps of analyzing the data findings: 1) Determine the source of data to be examined; 2) Identifying data sources obtained using the Simak Bebas Libat Cakap technique; 3) Classify the aizuchi function according to the theory by Mayumi Kubota; 4) Analyzing aizuchi utterances used by gaikokujin and nihonjin based on aizuchi function with the existing theory; 5) From the results of the data
findings, the following conclusions can be drawn.

3. Result and Discussion
3.1 Podcast
In this era of technological development and highly sophisticated communication, many technologies make it easier for humans to find information and communicate, one of which is podcast media. According to Sheldon (Susilowati, Dwi, Sutama, & Faiziyah, 2020) podcasts are digital audio documents produced and distributed online through various platforms for distribution to the public.

Listening to podcasts is also very easy, because it can be accessed through various platforms often used by the public, including Spotify, YouTube, Anchor, Google Podcast, and Apple Podcast, Cin & Utami (Imarshan, 2021) Podcasts on the Spotify platform are podcasts that only have audio media. In contrast, on the YouTube platform, there are usually Visual Audio media where people talk in the podcast.

3.2 Japanese Communication
Communication is a process of sorting, selecting, and sending symbols in such a way as to help the listener evoke a meaning or response from his mind that is similar to that intended by the communicator, according to Raymond in (Mulyana, 2010). So, in general, communication can be interpreted as the delivery of messages, both verbal and non-verbal, that contain specific meanings so that the delivery of information from the speaker to the listener is channelled.

Human communication styles are different in each country, one of which is Japanese society which requires aizuchi when having a conversation as a form of reciprocity. According to Mayumi (Ambarwati, 2014) throwing aizuchi has become a habit of Japanese society. Both speakers and listeners expect aizuchi when they are talking.

According to Maynard (1990) the Japanese respond more than twice as much as Americans, and this could be evidence that aizuchi is ingrained or obligatory in Japanese communication. This communication culture will have a good value and harmony because Japanese society is concerned with how relationship with each other (Kubota, 2001)

3.3 Aizuchi
According to Kenji Matsura (Ambarwati, 2014). Aizuchi means to agree, nod, nod in agreement, agree to his words, a nod to his words. Meanwhile, according to Edizal (Rahmawati, 2021) the word aizuchi is formed from the phrase ai「相」 which means 'together or mutually', and tsuchi「槌」 which means 'hitting or forging,' so it can be interpreted as two blacksmiths forming a sword by stamping or punching the iron repeatedly in turn to create a distinctive and pleasing rhythm to be heard. Mayumi Kutoba (Ambarwati, 2014) mentions aizuchi as 'listener's responses' or answers given by the listener that is appropriate to the topic.

Horiguchi (Ambarwati, 2014) defines aizuchi as follows:

Aizuchi wa hanashite ga hatsuwaken wo koushi shite iru aida ni kikite kara okurareta. Jyouhou wo kyouyuushita koto wo tsutaeru hyougen”.

‘Aizuchi is an expression that the listener uses to respond to the speaker's information while the speaker is exercising his/her right to speak.’

Thus, it can be concluded that aizuchi is a short form of response or reaction when having a conversation in Japanese. It is essential as a form of communication in Japanese because it facilitates relationships in Japanese society.

According to (Kubota, 2001), the functions of aizuchi expressions are divided into seven functions:
1) 聞いていると言う信号 Kiiteiru to iu shingou
As a sign that the listener is listening. The expression is the use of words such as はい hai, ええ ee, and so on.

2) 理解しているという信号 Rikai shiteiru to iu shingou
Indicates that the listener understands the topic of conversation. The expression is like はいった wakatta.

3) どういの信号 Doui no shingou
As a sign of agreeing with the speaker. Examples include そうですね soudesu, はい hai.

4) 否定の信号 Hitei no Shingou
A sign that the listener rejects or disagrees with the subject of discussion. Examples include いいえ iie, いや yes.

5) 情の信号 Kanjou no Shingou
Expression of feelings such as surprise, pleasure, inferiority, anger, etc.

6) 間をもたせる信号 (Ma wo motaseru Shingou)
As a pause mark. Examples such as ん n.

7) 情報を追加、訂正、要求の信号 (Jyouhou wo tsuika, teisei, youkyuu no shingou)
As a sign to add, correct and request information.

After analyzing the Yuyu no Sekai Podcast episode "[Gesuto: Chō-san] Vol. 01 - Myanmar tte don'na kuni?", Fifty-one aizuchi expressions used by Gaikokujin and Nihonjin were obtained. The researcher focused on how many aizuchi were used in the podcast. The following is the finding data obtained by researchers after collecting data.

This podcast is about the introduction of the country of Myanmar, which Chou explains - san as a foreign language speaker using Japanese. What is interesting about this podcast is that listeners from foreign countries can also learn Japanese while knowing how Myanmar is from Chou-san, who lives there.

Table 1 Number of Aizuchi used by Gaikokujin* and Nihonjin** in the Yuyu no nihongo Podcast with the title "Yuyu no sekai Podcast: "[Gesuto: Chō-san] Vol. 01 - Myanmar tte don'na kuni?"

| No. | Speaker  | Total |
|-----|----------|-------|
| 1.  | Gaikokujin | 23    |
| 2.  | Nihonjin  | 26    |
| Total |          | 51    |

Note: * Foreign speakers of Japanese  ** Native speakers of Japanese

Table 2 Number of Aizuchi Functions in the Yuyu no nihongo Podcast with the title "Yuyu no sekai Podcast: "[Gesuto: Chō-san] Vol. 01 - Myanmar tte don'na kuni?"

| No. | Function  | Total |
|-----|-----------|-------|
| 1.  | (Kiite iro to iu shingou) listening | 10    |
| 2.  | (Rikai shitei to iu shingou) understands | 14    |
| 3.  | (Doui no shingou) agree | 10    |
| 4.  | (Kanjyou no shingou) feelings | 9     |
| 5.  | (Hitei no shingou) rejections | 1     |
| 6.  | (Ma wo motaseru shingou) pause mark | 6     |
| 7.  | (Jyouhou wo tsuika, teisei, youkyuu no shingou) add, correct and request information. | 1     |
| Total | Function of Aizuchi | 51 |

Table 1 and 2 show the number of aizuchi utterances used by gaikokujin and nihonjin. The total number of aizuchi functions in the Yuyu no Sekai Podcast episode "[Gesuto: Chō-san] Vol. 01 - Myanmar tte don'na kuni?" 23 used by gaikokujin, 26 used by nihonjin, the total number of aizuchi functions is 51 pieces. From the overall data, it can be concluded that nihonjin use aizuchi more than gaikokujin. And the use of aizuchi uttered by nihonjin is more diverse than gaikokujin.
In analyzing the functions of *aizuchi* expressions listed in table 2, they will be classified again according to the functions of *aizuchi*.

In analyzing the function of *aizuchi* expressions, there are 51 data above, which will be classified in the table as follows.

**Table 3 Function of *aizuchi* in Podcast**

The following podcast episode is "[Gesuto: Chô-san] Vol. 01 - Myanmâ te don'na kuni?"

| No. | Function of *Aizuchi* | *Aizuchi* |
|-----|----------------------|----------|
| 1.  | 聞いていると言う信号 Kiiteiru to iu shingou | うん そうですね はい へえ |
| 2.  | 理解しているという信号 Rikai shiteiru to iu shingou | はい そうだね なるほどね うん ああ わかりました |
| 3.  | どういの信号 Doui no shingou | はい そうですね うん ああ わかりました |
| 4.  | 否定の信号 Hitei no Shingou | いい |
| 5.  | 情の信号 Kanjou no Shingou | はい ごめんな ああ ありがとう うわ ええ あー いやーいいね へえ |
| 6.  | 間をもたせる信号 Ma wo motaseru Shingou | うん あー そうですね へえ |
| 7.  | 情報を追加、訂正、要求の信号 Jyouhou wo tsuika, teisei, youkyuu no shingou | ああもちろん |

Following table 3, the explanation of the function of each *aizuchi* above is as follows:

1) 聞いていると言う信号 *Kiiteiru to iu shingou*

This function is a sign that the interlocutor heard what the speaker said and can be expressed by using the words うん un, はい hai, へえ hee, etc. Here is the explanation:

Data 1

ゆゆさん：えーと、チョウさんはどうやって日本語の勉強を始めたの？

Yuyu-san: E - to, Chou - san wa dou yatte nhongo no benkyou wo hajimetano?

Chou-san: sou desune. Koukousei no toki wa nihon no anime, One Piece to iu anime ga.

Chou-san: That's right. I watched One Piece anime when I was in high school.

ゆゆさん: はいはいはい Yuyu-san: hai hai hai Yuyu-san: Yes, yes, yes

Chou-san: maa mi hajimetete.

Chou-san: so, first look

ゆゆさん：はい Yuyu-san: un Yuyu-san: yes (YNSP, 1:19–1:39)

Analysis:

In data 1, there is an *aizuchi* uttered by Yuyu-san, which is included as a function (*kiiteiru to iu shingou*) as a sign that she is listening to what Chou-san is talking about. In data 1, Chou-san and Yuyu-san talked about how Chou-san first learned and became interested in Japan. After answering, Chou-san was about to explain, and Yuyu-san uttered "un" which shows that Yuyu-san was listening to Chou-san's story.

2) 理解しているという信号 *Rikai shiteiru to iu shingou*

This function indicates that the interlocutor is hearing and understanding the information that the speaker is saying. This
function can be expressed by using aizuchi so desu, nanro ho naruhodo, wakarimashita, etc.

Data 2

チョウさん: そのアニメのおかげで日本語勉強できました

Chou-san: sono anime no okage de nihongo benkyou dekimashita

Chou-san: thanks to that anime, I was able to learn Japanese!

ゆゆさん: なるほどね。

Yuyu-san: naruhodo ne...

Yuyu-san: OK OK

(YNSP, 2:47 - 2:52)

Analysis:

In data example 2 there is an aizuchi uttered by Yuyu-san. In data 2, Yuyu-san spoke aizuchi "naruhodo" as a sign that she understood or comprehended what Chou-san told her about how Chou-san first learned Japanese because of the anime One Piece. Data 2 proves that "naruhodo" is included in the function (rikaishite to iu shingou) which indicates that the interlocutor understands what the speaker is saying.

3) どういの信号 Doui no shingou

This function indicates that the interlocutor has the same opinion as the speaker. This function can be expressed through the use of the words hai, so desu soudesu, sounanda, etc.

Data 3

ゆゆさん: 9 年か。すごいね。

Yuyu-san: 9 nen ka... sugoi ne.

Yuyu-san: 9 years old... cool.

チョウさん: そうですね。9 年もなりました

Chou-san: soudesu. 9 nen mo narimashita.

Chou-san: That's right, it's been nine years.

Data 3 shows that Chou-san agreed or confirmed what Yuyu-san said about Chou-san having studied Japanese for nine years. In data 3, the aizuchi uttered is "soudesu." This utterance is included in the function (doui no shingou), which means that it expresses agreeing or agreeing with what the speaker is saying.

4) 否定の信号 Hitei no shingou

This function shows denial or disagreement with the speaker's talk. It can be expressed by the use of words such as ie, uun, iya, and others.

Data 4

ゆゆさん: ちょっと質問あるんだけど。

Yuyu-san: Chotto shitsumon aru ndakedo kokoro katsudou ga aru ndakedo. Ooko katsudou no mae ni chiisai katsudou mo aru jyan kore de iriguchi?

Yuyu-san: I have a question about this enormous building. There's a small building in front of the big building. Is this the entrance?

チョウさん: いえ、入口ではないんですね。

Chou-san: ie, iriguchi de wa nai ndesune.

Chou-san: No, that's not the entrance.

(YNSP, 8:26 - 8:43)

Analysis:

In data 4, Yuyu-san and Chou-san are talking about the Pagoda. Yuyu-san asks about the small building in front of the prominent structure of the Pagoda, whether it is the entrance to the Pagoda or not. Chou-san utters aizuchi in the form of "ie," which enters the function (Hitei no shingou), which means he denies or says that it is not true because the small building in front of the big building is not the entrance.

5) 情の信号 Kanjou no shingou
As a sign of expressing the interlocutor's feelings, such as pleasure, surprise, anger, etc., to what the speaker has said, this function can be described with the words へえ hee, ごめん gomen and others.

Data 5
チョウさん: だからミャンマーはどこにあるか？まず紹介なければいけない状況が多かったんですよ。日本に行ったときは
Chou-san: dakara Myanmar wa doko ni aru ka? Mazu shoukai nakereba ikenai joukyou ga ookattan desu yo. Nihon ni itta toki wa
Chou-san: So where is Myanmar? First of all, there are many situations to be introduced when going to Japan.

ゆゆさん: ごめんね。僕もよくわかってないや。
Yuyu-san: gomen ne... boku mo yoku wakatte naiya...
Yuyu-san: I'm sorry... I didn't know that either...

チョウさん: そうですか
Chou-san: Soudesu ka.

Analysis:
In data 5, it can be seen that Yuyu-san utters aizuchi "gomen ne" which includes the function (Kanjyou no shingou) because Yuyu-san feels guilty because she also does not know where Myanmar is located, just like what Chou-san said when he explained Myanmar to his Japanese friends.

6) 間をもたせる信号 Ma wo motaseru Shingou
In this function, it serves as a pause during a conversation between the interlocutor and the speaker. This function can be expressed by the use of the words なに nani, ん n, あー a—and others.

Data 6
チョウさん: まあ日本と比べて、比べたら1.8倍ぐらい大きさですね。
Chou-san: maa nihon to kurabete, kurabeta 1.8 bai gurai ookii sa desu ne.
Chou-san: compared to Japan, it's 1.8 times bigger.

ゆゆさん: あ、日本より大きいんだ
Yuyu-san: a, nihon yori ookii nda
Yuyu-san: a, bigger than Japan.

チョウさん: そうですね1.8倍ぐらい大きいですね。
Chou-san: Soudesune. 1.8 bai gurai ookii desu ne
Chou-san: That's right. 1.8 times bigger.

ゆゆさん: へえーそう思うと結構おっきいにだね。
Yuyu-san: Hee - sou omou to kekkou okkii kuni da ne.
Yuyu-san: Hee - I think this country is quite big.

(YNSP, 4:27 - 4:39)

Analysis:
In data 6, Yuyu-san and Chou-san are talking about the size of Myanmar which is bigger than Japan. In data 6, the aizuchi utterance "hee" indicates that Yuyu-san is pausing before continuing the conversation. The function (ma wo motaseru shingou) has a function as a pause connector so that the conversation does not feel stiff when there is a void in communication.

7) 情報を追加、訂正、要求の信号 Jyouhou wo tsuika, teisei, youkyuu no shingou
Sign to add, correct, or request information by the interlocutor to the speaker. This can be expressed by using the words あ a, え ee, いや iya, まさか masaka, およ oo, etc.

Data 7
チョウさん: 今ですね。あの、まずパゴダ、2500年前建てられたパゴダを紹介してもいいですか?
Chou - san : ima desu ne. ano, mazu pagoda, 2500 nen mae taterareta pagoda wo shoukaishite mo ii desu ka?
Chou - san: Now, first of all, may I introduce the pagoda that was built 2500 years ago?

ゆゆさん: ああ、もちろんもちろん見たい見たい。

Yuyu-san: aa, mochiron mochiron mitai mitai

Yuyu-san: aa, of course I want to see

チョウさん:わかりました。

Chou-san: wakarimashita.

Chou-san: I understand.

(YNSP, 6:17 - 6:32)

Analysis:
In data 7, Chou-san wants to show the Pagoda building that was built 2500 years ago, and the response from Yuyu-san is throwing aizuchi "aa mochiron mochiron" which indicates that she needs more information and wants to see the Pagoda that Chou-san has mentioned earlier. So the example in data 7 shows that data 7 is included in the function (Jyouhou wo tsuika, teisei, youkyuu no shingou).

4. Conclusion
According to the result of questionnaire shown above, the following conclusions can be made.

While most of the graduated students who went through internship program during their education in our university seem to show their satisfaction which indicates that the subject and material taught to them before their internship period is relevant and useful to them to some extents, there are still several parts and aspects that need to be improved or added in order to improve the quality of Bijinesu Nihongo course. Namely, the availability of solid, hard printed modules/books, native Japanese speaker specialized in office and business manners and/or etiquettes, and teaching media such as audio/video materials for students to practice their Japanese skills in office and business environment.

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