

# Phrases with Postposition *O* in *Minna No Nihongo Shokyuu* Textbook

## The Study of Role and Function of Syntax

Roni Roni\*

Universitas Negeri Surabaya, Indonesia

\*Corresponding author. Email: [roni@unesa.ac.id](mailto:roni@unesa.ac.id)

### ABSTRACT

Postposition *o* or particle *o* has various syntaxes' roles and functions. This article discusses the role and function of syntaxes postposition of *o* in consonant phrases in *Minna no Nihongo* textbook. The type of this study is descriptive qualitative. The study was started with the literature review of the syntaxes' role and function and to make sure its existence in the textbook. Theoretically, *o* postposition in consonant phrases fills the position as an object in two roles which are as a patient and arrival. Meanwhile, the phrase with postposition *o* which completes the complement has two roles which are as displacement role and situation role. In the role stated the displacement role has three sub-roles, those are the place of displacement, the place of passage, and the place of abandonment. From those syntaxes roles, the unfound syntaxes role in *Minna no Nihongo* textbook is the role of the place until it fills the object space and the role of the situation that fills the complement space. The cause was hypnotized that those two roles are relatively rare to appear in *Minna no Nihongo* textbook.

**Keywords:** Postposition, *O* particle, Verb predicate

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Based on language typology the order of words and morphemes in Japanese has OV type of order. In language, OV is usually a noun (noun phrase) that is followed by a verb predicate marked with *adposisi* in the form of postposition. It happens in Japanese. The noun phrase follows the verb predicated marked postposition.

Based on the present type in a sentence, there are types of marking *adposisi* in nouns which are the *adposisi* is should be present, should not present, and optional. It should present means that the *adposisi* should appear in the sentence. It should not present means when the *adposisi* appears in the sentence then the sentence is not grammatically correct; likewise it is optional which means the *adposisi* can appear or omit in the sentence. Both are grammatically correct and acceptable in the sentence.

*Adposisi* in Japanese language teaching is often mentioned as a particle (*joshi*). There are two kinds of particle, namely case particle (*kaku joshi*) and non-case particle (*kakari joshi*). Related to the case particle, Iori explained that there are ten kinds of it, those are *ga, o, ni, e, de, kara, made, to, yori*, and  $\emptyset$  (zero cases) [1]. On the

other hand, Koizumi [2]; [3] and Matsuoka [4] explained there are nine, which are *ga, o, ni, e, de, kara, made, to*, and *yori*. The difference between them is in the presence of zero cases. It is related to one of the present *adposisi* that is *adposisi* (particle) which should not be present. The example is the phrase that states time usually marked with postposition *ni* in Japanese, but in the sentence (1) the phrase *kinou* 'yesterday' should not be followed by the postposition *ni*. The phrase *kinou ni* 'yesterday' in (2) becomes grammatically incorrect.

- (1) 昨日先生に会いました。  
*Kinou sensei ni aimashita.*  
'Yesterday I met my teacher.'
- (2) \*昨日に先生に会いました。  
\**Kinou ni sensei ni aimashita.*  
'Yesterday I met my teacher.'

This article discusses the phrase postposition *o* in Japanese. Syntactically the postposition (particle) *o* are varied. It is because it has my roles. As a result, Japanese learners face difficulties to decide its syntactical function. The syntactic role, syntactic function, and syntactic category are the three most important aspects which cannot be skipped in the syntactic study [5].

Based on the explanation above, there are two main points to be discussed in this study, (1) how the types of syntactic roles carried by postposition *o* are, and (2) how its syntactic function is. This study will examine those problems in *Minna no Nihongo Shokyuu* textbook. As it has been known that the book has been widely used especially in universities in Indonesia even in lower levels.

### 1.1. Main Sentence and Syntactic Function

The main sentence is the predicate [6]; [7]; [8]; [9]. Verhaar [7] mentioned that predicate is the main constituent. In a sentence in which the predicate is filled with verbs means the verbs are the main of the whole sentence or independence sentence [7]; [10]. The counterbalance or it is dependence sentence. It means in a sentence in which the main sentence is a verb predicate, the phrases other than the predicate are positioned as a dependent sentence [9]; [11]. The problem is how far the construction is considered as a dependent sentence.

The counterbalances of a predicate are subject, object, and complement. Those four aspects are the syntactic function. However, some linguists do not accept that complement is a syntactic function. The examples are in Verhaar's theories that complement is not a syntactic function [7]. In that study, complement is not positioned as part of the syntactic function but as an equal construction as a syntactic function. To give more explanation about it, here are some examples:

- (3) 今晚友だちがおいしい寿司を食べたい (と言いました)。

*Komban tomodachi ga oishii sushi o tabetai (to iimashita).*

K            S            O            P

'My friend (told me that) he wants to eat delicious sushi tonight.'

The predicate in sentence (3) is *tabetai* 'want to eat', followed by noun phrase *tomodachi* 'my friend' which has a semantic role as an agent, and *oishii sushi* 'delicious sushi' as a patient in the semantic role. The role of agent and patient are the roles that come from the semantic feature *tabe* 'eat'. The meaning of eating needs more nouns and agents to play the role of eating and nouns which have a role as the patient to be the object of eating action. In this case, each meaning is carried by the noun *tomodachi* and *oishii sushi*. In other words, both roles come from the independent phrase *tabe*. The role of the agent is realized with postposition *ga* and the patient role is realized with postposition *o*. If the explanation is reversed the *poposisi* of *ga* and *o* in the form of meaning agent and patient; as well as an agent and patient which is constructed from the syntactic verbs characters *tabe* 'eating'. After that, *tomodachi ga* has a syntactic function as a subject and *oishii sushi o* fills the syntactic function as an object. Roni [5] relates this kind of constituent as a

dependent sentence. Linguistically the term is the main constituent. Meanwhile, *komban* 'tonight' has the semantic meaning as when the eating activity happened and has the position as a complement. The setting of time has no resource from the semantic meaning of the verb *tabe* 'eating'.

Therefore, it can be concluded that the role of syntax (sometimes just being called "role") is a grammatical meaning which is owned by the types of words in the position of the subject, object, and complement. The meaning can come from the verbs in predicate position or not. The one which comes from a verb has the position as a subject or an object, while the ones that do not come from the verbs are as a complement.

### 1.2. The Syntactic Role of O Particle

Based on the previous explanation, it can be summed up that the syntactic role (sometimes just being called "role") is a grammatical meaning which is owned by the types of words in the position of the subject, object, and complement. The meaning can come from the verbs in predicate position or not.

The noun *komban* "tonight" in example (3) is different from the other two nouns which have the character of the independent phrase *tabe* as what has been explained in the previous paragraph. The noun *komban* does not have the main phrase character. The presence completes the information about the time for the meaning of 'my friend wants to eat delicious *sushi*'. The constituent is associated with a foster child. Verhaar [7] mentioned it as a constituent outside the core or peripheral. On the syntactic function in Indonesian is called as complement.

The constituent complement is explained equally with the subject and object. However, the task of the complement is different from the task of *oishii* 'enak' on the noun *sushi* 'sushi' in the construction *oishii sushi* 'delicious sushi' which is called as a modifier. The type of complement like *~tar* on the verb *tabeni* in the construction *tabetai* 'want to eat' is called a qualifier.

In Japanese, the equal syntactic function and construction are called *jutsugo* (predicate), *shugo* (subject), *mokutekigo* (object), and *hogo* (complement) with notes that there are two types of *hogo*. The first function is as has been explained above. The second use is as the equal of *jutsugo*. Therefore, in *hogo* there is *shugo* and *mokutekigo*. In this discussion, *hogo* is used in the first definition and used in Indonesian as complement.

Particle *o*, as what has been used in the example above as patient. Is the noun phrase with postposition *o* have another role as well? This question will be answered using a theory by Sugimoto [12] in a book written by other authors, Okutsu Keiichiro and Numata Yoshiko entitled *Iwayuru Nihongo Joshi no Kenkyuu*. Besides having the role as patient, Sugimoto also explained that

particle *o* is also used with the role as moving place and situation role.

The role of the agent shows the target from action by the predicate of the verb. The role of moving place shows location which is related to the action of moving, which is the moving action by the predicate of the verb with moving nuance. Meanwhile, the role of situation refers to a situation when an action is stated as a happening verb predicate [12]. Look at the examples below:

- (4) アグスはバンバングを殴った。  
*Agus wa Bambang o nagutta.*  
'Agus beats Bambang.'
- (5) 去年ジャカルタを訪れた。  
*Kyonen Jakaruta o otozureta.*  
'Last year, I visited Jakarta.'
- (6) アグスは歩道を歩いた。  
*Agus wa hodou o aruita.*  
'Agus berjalan di trotoar.'
- (7) 大雨の中をスラバヤのバスターミナルに到着した。  
*Ooame no naka o Surabaya no basu taaminaru ni touchaku shita.*  
'Arrived in Surabaya bus station in the middle of heavy rain.'

In example (4), particle *o* in noun phrase *Bambang o* has the syntactic role as a patient which is the object of the verb predicate action *nagutta* 'beats'. It is in the category which is stated by Saeki (in Shin [13]) that there is *o* particle which stated the object of arrival from the action of verb predicate. In example (5), the phrase *Jakaruta o*, the *o* particle has a role as an object of arrival the action of verb predicate *otozureta* 'visit'.

In example (6), *o* particle in the phrase *hodou o* has the role as moving place in line with the moving verb predicate (*idou doushi*) *aruita* 'walking'. Moreover, in example (7), *o* particle in the phrase *ooame no naka o* has a situational role which is happened when the action in verb predicate is *ooame no naka o* 'arrive'.

In *o* particle that has movement role, Sugimoto [11] mentioned that there are three types, namely *keiro*, *keiyuuten*, dan *kiten*. *Keiro* tells the rute of the starting point when the action verb moves. In example (6), *hodou* 'sidewalk' is the route when there is a movement from the action verb *aruku* 'walk'. This role is differentiated from the setting of the place of an event, such as particle *de* 'di' in the phrase *resutoran de* 'in the restaurant' in the example (8) which is the place when the action of drinking coffee occurred. In this discussion, to differentiate them the *o* particle in example (6) used the term of place when the action occurred.

- (8) レストランでコーヒーを飲んだ。  
*Resutoran de koohi o nonda.*  
'Drinking coffee at the restaurant.'

- (9) 飛行機はスマラングを通り過ぎた。  
*Hikouki wa Semarang o toorisugita.*  
'The train has passed Semarang city.'
- (10) 大学の時から、田舎を離れて、スラバヤに住んでいる。  
*Daigaku no toki kara, inaka o hanarete, Surabaya ni sunde iru.*  
'Since college, I have left my hometown and live in Surabaya.'

*Keiyuuten* refers to the transit point crossed by the action as stated by the movement verb predicate. In example (9), *o* particle in the phrase *Semarang o* has a role as a place which is passed. Lastly, *kiten* refers to the role of starting point when the action verb moves. In example (10), *o* particle in the phrase *inaka o* as the role as the starting point when the action verb moves *hanarete* 'leave'. The starting point is left by the action verb of movement. To make it easier for this discussion it is called the role of a place to be left.

The verb of movement is the verb which stated action by moving from one place to another, such as run, go by, get out, pass, and so on. In *o* particle which has a role as situation, Shin [13] explained that besides the compliment of the situation in movement verb predicate sentence (11) it can be a situation compliment in a predicate sentence without movement predicate (12). The phrase *ame no naka o* 'in the middle of the rain' has a situation role that can follow the sentence with verb predicate (11) *hashitta* 'run' which is the movement verb. Meanwhile, the situation role in the phrase *samusa no naka o* 'in the cold' can be part of the sentence with verb predicate (12) *tatte* 'stand' is no longer movement place.

- (11) 雨の中をグラウンドを走った。(Shin)[13]  
*Ame no naka o gurando o hashitta.*  
'Run on the ground in the middle of the rain.'
- (12) 寒さの中を15分間立っていた。(Shin)[13]  
*Samusa no naka o 15funkan tatte ita.*  
'Stand for fifteen minutes in the cold.'

The verb *aruku* 'walk', *toorisugita* 'go by', *hanarete* 'leave', *otozureta* 'visit', and *hashitta* 'run' is the verb which stated moving nuance. Based on the preceding explanation, the type of *o* particle in noun phrase which follows moving verbs has the role as a place of moving action, a place to go by, a place to leave, and a destination.

### 1.3. *Jidoushi Tadoushi and Syntactic Function*

*Jidoushi* (intransitive verb) and *tadoushi* (transitive verb) are often explained in relation to the object position. This statement is not wrong. It is because the sentence in intransitive verb predicate will always "no" followed by an object. Different from the transitive verb,

a predicate sentence is always followed by an object. Furthermore, Transitive-intransitive verbs are related to the meaning of the verbs lexically. The verbs in a sentence commonly stand as predicates. The verb is followed by nouns (noun phrases) with a certain number depends on the characteristic of verb semantic lexically. Intransitive verbs are followed by one noun put in the subject. The transitive verb is followed by two or three nouns. In a transitive verb which is followed by two nouns, one of the nouns is put in the subject and the other in the object. In a transitive verb which is followed by three nouns, one of them is put in the subject and the others are on the object. Therefore, there are two objects. The transitive verb with two nouns is called monotransitive and the transitive verb with three nouns is called ditransitive/bitransitive. Sugimoto [12] mentioned each of them in Japanese as *tantadoushi* and *fukutadoushi*.

All nouns that have been explained above are the main constituent in this article which is like a biological child. The main constituent always fills the subject or object. How about the peripheral constituent or constituents which are like a foster child? The simple way is put in the complement. In the other words, the nouns followed do not because of the characteristics of the transitive-intransitive verbs which is called a peripheral constituent.

**1.4. The Theory Summary**

By paying attention to the literature review on every problem laid above, it can be sum up what kind of role and sub-role of the *o* particle is. The Syntactic function, equal constituent, and how to name it can be seen in the Table 1 below.

**Table 1.** Theory Summary

Types of <i>o</i> particle roles	Types of <i>o</i> particle sub-roles	Syntactic function and what is equal		Name
Target	Patient	Object	→	Object of patient
	Arrival	Object	→	Object of arrival
Moving Place	The place of moving	Complement	→	Complement of place Moving event
	The place to pass	Complement	→	Complement of place to pass
	The place to be left	Complement	→	Complement of place to be left
Situation		Complement	→	Complement of situation

**2. METHODS**

This study uses a descriptive qualitative approach. It is started with a literature review about the functions and roles of the syntactic role. Then, it is followed by the study to make sure the existence in the textbooks. The object of the study and the data are based on the theory of Sudaryanto [14] which is stated that the data of the study is the object plus the context of the study. The object is postposition (particle) *o*. The data is in the form of sentences in Japanese which contain phrases marked by *o* particle. The data is taken from Japanese textbooks *Minna no Nihongo Shokyuu (MNS) I* [15] and *Minna no Nihongo Shokyuu (MNS) II* [16] published by 3A Network. Both textbooks are compiled but split into two volumes. *MNS I* contains chapter 1 to chapter 25, while *MNS II* starts from chapter 26 to chapter 50. The data is analyzed to find out the syntactic role and syntactic function of *o* particle which appears and is used in both textbooks.

**3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

The syntactic function is a free space in a sentence. Some rooms are called predicate, subject, and object. Another room that is not syntactic function but it is equal to them is complement. The order of the rooms has several types. If the order only predicates (P), subject (S), and object (O) there would be six arrangements which are SPO, SOP, POS, PSO, OPS, and OSP. In Japanese the order is SOP. If the complement (C) is added in the order there will be more possibility of the arrangement.

The empty spaces are filled with a syntactic category such as verbs, nouns, adjectives, and so on. They have grammatical meaning from the predicate or not. The grammatical meaning is semantic additional meaning on the lexical meaning. It has many forms also it can be postposition, preposition, and transmission in the internal sound of words. Besides, postposition is the grammatical meaning attached to the nouns to fill the subject, object,

or complement. Therefore, this kind of grammatical meaning is called the syntactic role.

In this discussion, the syntactic function and construction are equal to the function. The syntactic name is equal to the syntactic role. As an example is the object-patient is a combination of names from the syntactic function object and syntactic role patient, or

complement-pass refers to the nouns which fill the complement and it has the role of the place to pass.

The object of this study is a noun phrase with postposition *o* in a clause or sentence with verb predicate. Based on the literature review and the result of the analysis on the data collected from the textbooks, the position of the function and the syntactic role can be classified as in the Table 2 below.

**Table 2.** Results of Data Classification of *Minna no Nihongo Shoho*

Syntactic Functions	Syntactic Roles		Data Presence		Verb Predicate	
	Roles	Sub-roles	Yes	No	Intransitive	Transitive
Object	Target	Patient	✓			✓
		Arrival		✓		✓
Complement	Moving place	The place of movement	✓		✓	
		The place to pass	✓		✓	
		The place to be left	✓		✓	

The classification points out the syntactic function and its equal construction, types of syntactic role, data presence, and identifies predicate verbs from their transitivity. Each classification will be explained below.

### 3.1. Patient Object

The phrase with postposition *o* which fills the object function shows the target. The target shows that the verb predicate in a sentence is a transitive verb. Nouns target can be differentiated into two kinds, which are target noun with patient nuance and target noun with place nuance. In noun phrases with target proposition *o* like in example (13) *pan o* ‘roti’ and (14) *tokei o* ‘arlock’, the postposition *o* has patient meaning, it is the action/event from the verb meaning *tabemasu* ‘eat’ (13) *kaimashita* ‘buy’ which follows the predicate.

- (13) 私はパンを食べます。(MNS 6:48)  
*Watashi wa pan o tabemasu.*  
 ‘I eat the bread.’
- (14) 私は東京で時計を買いました。(MNS 6:48)  
*Watashi wa Toukyou de tokei o kaimashita.*  
 ‘I buy the watch in Tokyo.’

### 3.2. Object of Arrival Place

Different from the object of the patient, the object of arrival is the target of the aim/goal from of an action which is stated by verb predicate with place nuance. The evidence can be found in *Minna no Nihongo* textbooks. In the data corpus as in BCCWJ [17] the target in the form of the noun is positioned as the arrival of the verbs. In

example (15) *2 ken no katei o* ‘two families’ is the target of arrival from the action of transitive predicate verbs *houmon suru* ‘visit’.

- (15) 午前2時間、午後2時間の時間割で、一日  
 2軒の家庭を訪問する。(BCCWJ) [18]  
*Gosen 2 jikan, gogo 2 jikan no jikan wari de,*  
*ichinichi 2 ken no katei o houmon suru.*  
 ‘In a day I visit two families with the schedule  
 of two hours in the morning and two hours in  
 the evening.’

### 3.3. Complement of the Place of Transfer

The description of the place of transfer can be differentiated into three types of roles, those are namely the place of displacement, the place passed, and the place left behind. The verbs fill predicate as the intransitive verbs which stated movement (*idou doushi*). The first role is explained in this section, the second and third roles will be discussed in the following section.

In the description of the place of transfer like in figure (16) the action stated is the verbs which are happened in that place. The noun phrase marked as postposition *o* becomes action place which is named as verb predicate. In example (17) the action verb *sampo shimasu* ‘take a stroll’ happened in a place named *kouen* ‘park’. In (18) the action verb *iku* ‘go’ happened in a place called *kono michi* ‘this road’. Therefore, the postposition *o* in the noun phrase *kouen o* states a role of place when taking a stroll happens (17) and in the phrase *kono michi o* states a place when the action goes (18).

- (16) OOOOOO> : an action which is a verb  
 ===== : moving place
- (17) 毎朝公園を散歩します。(MNS Joshi:217)  
*Maiasa kouen o sampo shimasu.*  
 ‘Taking a stroll in the park every morning.’
- (18) この道をまっすぐ行くと、駅があります。(MNS 23:190)  
*Kono michi o massugu iku to, eki ga arimasu.*  
 ‘If in this road (you) go straight and there is a station.’

### 3.4. Complement of the Passed Place

This role shows one point of place and a point of this place is passed by an action which is a verb. A place to pass can be pictured in (19). In the example of (20) the action stated by the verb *wataru* 'cross' passes a similar place of *michi* o 'road'. The postposition *o* is stated as a place to pass. The data also found that the place to pass is not only space but also time, such as in example (20). The verb *sugitara* 'if more' passes the time in the form of *yoru 11 ji o* '11 p.m.'.

- (19) OOOOOOOO> : action stated as a verb  
 ==== : a place to pass
- (20) 道を渡る時、左と右をよく見なければなりません。(MNS 23:196)  
*Michi o wataru toki, hidari to migi o yoku minakereba narimasen.*  
 ‘When crossing the road, you have to look closely to the right and left.’
- (21) 夜11時を過ぎたら、電話を掛けません。(MNS 36:90)  
*Yoru 11 ji o sugitara, denwa o kakemasen.*  
 ‘If more than 11 p.m., don't call.’

### 3.5. Complement of the Place Left

In the role of a place being left shows there a point in a place left by an action stated as a verb. The role of a place left is illustrated in (22). In the data example (23) of the noun phrase *koukou o* 'senior high school' is a place left by the action verb *sotsugyou shite* 'graduate'. In (24) the noun phrase *shigoto o* 'work' is a place left by the verb *yasumu* 'holiday/off work'. The *adposisi o* in both data is the example of place being left.

- (22) OOOOOO> : action as a verb  
 ===== : a place being left
- (23) 高校を卒業して、東京へ来てから、もう10年になる。(MNS 31:51)  
*Koukou o sotsugyou shite, Toukyou e kite kara, mou 10nen ni naru.*  
 ‘After graduated from senior high school and came to Tokyo has been 10 years.’

- (24) 仕事を休む時は、かならず連絡します。(MNS 36:90)  
*Shigoto o yasumu toki wa, kanarazu renraku shimasu.*  
 ‘When off work, I will call.’

In the example about the complement of movement (which includes a place of movement, a place to pass, and a place to be left), the verbs which fill the predicate are *sampo shimasu* 'take a stroll', *iku* 'go', *wataru* 'cross', *sugitara* 'more', *sotsugyou shite* 'graduate', and *yasumu* 'off work'. All the verbs are intransitive.

### 3.6. Complement of Situation

The role of situation which stated the condition when an action is stated by predicate happened. The data with situation complement are not found in *Minna no Nihongo Shoho* textbook. One of the examples stated in data (25) is taken from Sugimoto [18] and Shin [19]. The action verb *sagashita* 'look for' was done in the situation of *fubuki no naka o* 'snow storm'. The postposition *o* does not state the meaning of action looking for a mountain hut, but situational meaning in the time of looking for a mountain hut.

- (25) 吹雪の中を山小屋を探した。  
*Fubuki no naka o yamagiya sagashita.*  
 ‘I look for a mountain hut when there is a snowstorm.’

## 4. CONCLUSION

From the discussion in the sub-result of the study and discussion can be concluded as in Table 3 as follow.

**Table 3.** Syntactic Role and Function of Postposition *o* in *Minna no Nihongo Shoho*

Syntactic Function	Syntactic Role		Type of existence	
	Role	Sub-role	Theoretically	<i>Minna no Nihongo</i>
Object	Target	Patient	✓	✓
		Arrival	✓	×
Complement	Moving Place	Place of Movement	✓	✓
		Place to Pass	✓	✓
		Place to be Left	✓	✓
	Situation		✓	×

As in the Table 3, postposition *o* in noun phrase can complete two spaces non-syntactic function and equal constituent which are object and complement. The constituent of phrase with postposition *o* fills the object in two roles which are as the target patient and target of arrival. Meanwhile, the constituent phrase with postposition *o* which fills the complement in two ways is a place of movement and situation. In the role which stated movement of place, there are three sub-roles, those are a place of movement, a place to pass, and a place to left. Based on all syntactic roles, theoretically, the roles which cannot be found in *Minna no Nihongo Shokyuu* is the target of the place role in the object of space and the situation role which fills the space of complement. The absence of both types can be understood by the hypothesis that two of them are rarely used compared to the others. Therefore, the language features related to them are not taught in lower-level learners in *Minna no Nihongo Shokyuu* textbooks.

From this discussion, there are two things to be emphasized. First, the presence of an object in a sentence is always in line with the predicate transitive verb. Second, the presence of complement in a sentence does not correlate with whether the predicate fills with the transitive or intransitive verb. It means, the predicate can be filled with a transitive or intransitive verb.

This discussion ignores the use of the *o* postposition in the *o suru/shite* structure as in examples (26) and (27) below.

- (26) 彼は青い顔をしてるね。病気なのかな。  
*Kare wa aoi kao o shite iru ne. Byouki nanokana.*  
 'He was pale. Maybe sick.'
- (27) 日本語の勉強をしてね。  
*Nihongo no benkyu o shite ne.*  
 'Learn Japanese!'

What is the role of postposition *o* and its syntactic function in the underlined parts of sentences (26) and (27) needs further research.

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