INDONESIAN TO ENGLISH USAGE IN HOSPITALITY STAFF COMMUNICATION: A LINGUISTIC INTERFERENCE ANALYSIS

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze the interference of the Indonesian language with the use of English by hotel and restaurant staff in the tourist area of Jakabaring Sport Center, Palembang. The focus of the study includes grammatical and phonological interference patterns influenced by the use of regional languages, especially the Palembang dialect, in professional communication. The results showed that interference occurred significantly, with four main points of word selection inference, phonological interference, grammatical inference, and cause of inference. The discussion identified that the leading causes of interference were the lack of formal training, the dominance of regional languages, and the lack of a work environment that supports English language practice. These findings highlight the importance of locally-based English training design to improve staff communication competencies. The study concluded that language interference can be minimized through continuous training and the integration of learning technologies, ultimately improving the service quality of the hospitality and restaurant sectors.

Keywords: Language Interference, Language Errors and Analysis, Professional Communication, Restaurant and Hospitality Industry.

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INTRODUCTION

English proficiency plays a crucial role in the hospitality industry, where effective communication is essential for delivering high-quality service. As a global language, English is commonly used by international travelers, making it a fundamental skill for hospitality staff to interact with guests from diverse linguistic backgrounds. The ability to communicate clearly in English enables staff to provide accurate information, respond to guest inquiries efficiently, and create a welcoming atmosphere that enhances the overall guest experience. Without sufficient English

proficiency, miscommunication can occur, leading to misunderstandings that may affect customer satisfaction and service quality.

In the hospitality industry, guest satisfaction is directly influenced by the effectiveness of communication between staff and customers. Clear and professional communication helps guests feel valued and understood, contributing to a positive impression of the establishment. Whether it involves explaining hotel policies, providing recommendations, or handling guest complaints, the way staff communicate can determine the level of trust and comfort guests experience. Poor communication, especially due to language barriers, can result in frustration, service delays, and negative reviews, which ultimately impact the reputation of the hospitality business.

Hospitality staff in Indonesia often face challenges in using English effectively in their daily interactions with guests. Many employees come from educational backgrounds where English is not the primary medium of instruction, leading to limited exposure to real-life English communication. Additionally, the lack of structured English training in some hospitality establishments makes it difficult for staff to develop confidence and fluency in using the language. As a result, employees may struggle with pronunciation, grammar, and vocabulary, which can hinder their ability to communicate professionally and efficiently.

One of the significant linguistic challenges in bilingual or multilingual environments like Indonesia is linguistic interference, where elements of a speaker's native language influence their use of a second language. This phenomenon can manifest in various forms, including pronunciation errors, incorrect sentence structures, and direct translations that may alter the intended meaning of a message. For instance, Indonesian hospitality staff may apply Indonesian grammar rules to English sentences, resulting in awkward or incorrect expressions that can confuse international guests. Such interference is common among second-language learners and can significantly impact the clarity and accuracy of communication in professional settings.

Understanding linguistic interference and its effects on hospitality staff communication is crucial for improving English language training programs in the industry. By identifying common patterns of interference and their underlying causes, hospitality establishments can implement targeted strategies to minimize language barriers and enhance staff proficiency. Addressing these challenges through structured language training, practical conversation exercises, and exposure to real-world communication scenarios can help hospitality employees develop the confidence and skills needed to provide exceptional service. In turn, this will contribute to a better guest experience and strengthen the overall competitiveness of Indonesia's hospitality sector.

In the hospitality industry, effective communication is crucial in ensuring excellent service delivery and customer satisfaction. Given the global nature of the industry, English is often the primary language used for communication between staff and international guests. However, in countries where English is not the first language, such as Indonesia, hospitality staff frequently encounter challenges in using English accurately and appropriately. This issue is particularly evident in

Indonesian hospitality workers' use of English, where interference from their native language, *Bahasa Indonesia*, is prevalent.

Linguistic interference occurs when elements of the native language influence the use of a second language, leading to errors in pronunciation, grammar, and meaning. In the context of hospitality, such interference can affect the clarity of communication, potentially leading to misunderstandings and a decrease in the quality of service provided to guests. The interference phenomenon has been widely studied in various fields, including second language acquisition, but its specific impact on the hospitality sector remains underexplored, particularly in Indonesia.

English has become necessary in the hotel and restaurant industry, especially in tourist areas such as Jakabaring Sport Center and Palembang City. As one of the leading sports and recreation destinations in South Sumatra, this area is often visited by domestic and foreign tourists. However, many hotel and restaurant staff still need help communicating in English. This is due to interference from the Indonesian language, especially those influenced by local dialects such as Palembang. Lock (1995) said everyday language patterns that tend to be simple and flexible in their grammar are often carried over into the use of English, resulting in errors in grammar, phonology, and sentence structure. This condition shows the need for a deep understanding of language interference to improve cross-cultural communication competence in tourism.

Linguistic interference significantly impacts effective communication in the hospitality industry, particularly among staff who use English as a second language. When elements of the Indonesian language influence English communication, misunderstandings can arise, leading to service inefficiencies and guest dissatisfaction. Hospitality staff who struggle with linguistic interference may have difficulty conveying information clearly, responding to guest inquiries accurately, or maintaining a professional tone in their interactions. These challenges not only affect individual employees but also influence the overall reputation and service quality of hotels and restaurants.

Linguistic interference can occur in various linguistic aspects, including phonology, morphology, syntax, semantics, and pragmatics. Phonological interference manifests in mispronunciations due to differences in sound systems between Indonesian and English, which can make certain words difficult for guests to understand. Morphological interference happens when incorrect word formations are used, often resulting from direct translation or inappropriate application of affixes. Syntactic interference occurs when Indonesian sentence structures are applied to English, leading to grammatically incorrect expressions. Semantically, words may be used in inappropriate contexts due to direct translations that do not carry the intended meaning. Pragmatic interference, on the other hand, can affect politeness strategies, cultural nuances, and the ability to convey appropriate tones in professional communication.

These forms of interference directly impact guest experiences by creating confusion, delays, and frustration. When guests receive unclear or incorrect information, they may find it difficult to navigate hotel services, understand policies, or receive timely assistance. This can result in negative reviews, decreased customer loyalty, and a loss of trust in the service provider. Additionally, ineffective

communication may lead to operational inefficiencies, as staff may require repeated explanations or corrections from supervisors, slowing down service delivery. In high-pressure hospitality environments, where speed and accuracy are crucial, linguistic interference can become a significant barrier to smooth and professional interactions.

To ensure high-quality service and guest satisfaction, it is essential to address the issue of linguistic interference among hospitality staff. Without targeted language training and awareness of interference patterns, employees may continue to face difficulties in communicating effectively. By identifying specific areas where interference occurs and implementing structured language development programs, hospitality establishments can enhance staff proficiency, improve service efficiency, and create a more seamless and pleasant experience for international guests.

Several previous studies have highlighted the issue of language interference. A survey by Derakhshan and Karimi (2015) It was shown that interference occurs when the grammar rules of the first language (L1) are applied to the second language (L2). Furthermore, O'Reilly & Norman (2002) emphasized the importance of comprehensible inputs in minimizing interference. Then, Iman's (2020) research identified the interference of Indonesian grammar with English among students while SAS et al. (2020) examined the impact of regional dialects on English pronunciation in South Sumatra. A study by Ariani and Artawa (2022) in Bali, it was found that a lack of formal training often causes grammatical errors. Finally, another study by Elfers and Stritikus (2013) revealed the importance of a work environment that supports English language practice.

This study aims to analyze the pattern of Indonesian interference with English used by hotel and restaurant staff in the Jakabaring Sport Center area. In particular, this study focuses on grammatical and phonological interference influenced by the use of regional languages, such as Palembang. By understanding the patterns and causes of interference, this study is expected to provide strategic recommendations to improve English language competence in the hospitality and restaurant sectors.

The research illustrates the existence of common grammatical errors, such as the omission of to be, the wrong use of tenses, and the influence of the language structure of the Palembang region on the preparation of English sentences. This research makes a scientific contribution to understanding the dynamics of language interference in a multilingual work environment. It offers practical recommendations for the development of English language training that is appropriate to the local context. The analysis also shows that the work environment and the use of learning technologies can be a solution to reduce the impact of language interference in professional communication.

RESEARCH METHOD

Research Design

This study used a qualitative approach with a descriptive method to analyze the pattern of Indonesian interference with English used by hotel and restaurant staff. This approach was chosen because it is appropriate to explore language phenomena in specific social contexts, especially in the tourist area of Jakabaring Sport Center, Palembang. The focus of the research is directed at the analysis of grammar and phonology that emerges in the daily communication of the staff, taking into account the influence of regional languages such as Palembang on the use of English.

Research Participants

The sample of this study involved 20 hotel and restaurant staff who worked in the Jakabaring Sport Center tourist area. The sampling technique used is purposive sampling, where respondents are selected based on specific criteria, such as their level of interaction with foreign tourists and direct involvement in English communication. This method allows researchers to obtain relevant and in-depth data related to the patterns of English use by staff in a professional context. The research instruments include semi-structured interview guidelines, observation sheets, and field notes. The interview guidelines are designed to explore the staff's experiences, difficulties, and strategies in using English—observation sheets to record patterns of grammatical and pronunciation errors in everyday interactions. Meanwhile, field notes record the context of language use and environmental factors that affect communication.

Technique for Collecting the Data

Data is collected through two main stages: interviews and direct observation at the workplace. Interviews were conducted face-to-face with each respondent to understand the interference patterns they experienced. Observations are performed for two weeks to record patterns of English usage in real-life work situations, such as when serving guests or providing explanations about facilities. Researchers also collected supporting documents, such as English language training manuals to strengthen the data analysis

Technique for Analyzing the Data

The data obtained were analyzed using the thematic analysis method. This process begins with the transcription of interviews and observation notes. Then, the data is categorized based on key themes, such as grammatical interference, phonology, and causative factors. The analysis is carried out iteratively to identify patterns and relationships between themes. The analysis results are compared with previous studies findings to assess the research's relevance and contribution to the existing literature. The final findings are presented as a descriptive narrative that comprehensively describes the phenomenon of language interference.

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

Finding

Word Selection Interference

In word selection, there was interference between Indonesians in using English by hotel and restaurant staff in the Jakabaring Sport Center tourist area of Palembang City. Several times, the staff used English vocabulary, which was influenced by Indonesian vocabulary. Indonesian vocabulary is translated into English and immediately used in sentences.

One example that can be taken from a recording of a conversation between the words **used** is used for all meaningful speech: "menggunakan dan memakai."

The word needs to be appropriately used for specific meanings. In the sentence, "You cannot use that cloth to the temple," the word used should be replaced with a more appropriate word, wear. The mistake made by this staff occurred because, in Indonesian, the words "menggunakan" and "memakai" can be used interchangeably without causing a difference in meaning. This happens because the word used in English is considered the same regardless of the context and meaning to be conveyed.

Another example of the use of **the word use**, which is an interference of the Indonesian language to the use of English, is in the sentence, "You can go there use car...". The word used in this sentence is inappropriate and should use the word "by" so that the sentence becomes "you can go there by car...". In everyday Indonesian conversations, people often express this by "anda bisa kesana menggunakan mobil" atau "anda bisa kesana naik mobil". Even in the use of Indonesian, the correct grammar of the word "dengan" (by) is a more appropriate choice so that the sentence becomes "...anda bisa ke sana dengan mobil". This example clarifies the occurrence of Indonesian language interference, especially in spoken language, which Indonesian speakers often use daily.

In addition to the word **use**, words that are often misused are the words some, any, much, a few. In Indonesian, the words **some**, **any**, **much**, **and** a **few** are usually expressed with only one word: "beberapa." Thus, when the speaker wants to say the word 'beberapa' In English, they tend to face difficulties and end up using one of these words: **some**, **any**, **much**, a **few**, while in English, the use of these words has different rules. Sometimes, they can use it appropriately, but often, they also choose words that are not appropriate to use. Therefore, a sentence or expression conveyed by the staff appeared, namely the following sentence: "You have many money," "many people..." and so on.

The carrying of Indonesian habits in the English language that is being used generally occurs due to a need for more language control and mastery of a second language. This can happen because they have not mastered English. When using a second language, understanding its use must be correct and accurate. Because of bilingualism, sometimes, when speaking or writing using a second language, it appears when using words or expressions as they use their mother tongue because the mother tongue is already known and mastered by them.

Phonological Interference

Phonological interference includes intonation, pausing rhythm, and articulation. This type of Interference is straightforward to observe because all key informants whose conversations are recorded have intonation, rhythm, and articulation of the Palembang language or regional language from the thick one. In English, Palembang interference can be a marked accent, but in Indonesian, it can still be easily recognized.

Some of the frequent patterns of phonological interference in the use of English by hotel and restaurant staff can be explained as follows:

Consonant Sound Substitution

• The language of Palembang tends not to have sounds [v] and [f]. This causes substitution to become sound [p]. Example: Word very pronounced to *pery*, or fish pronounced to *pish*.

• Final consonants such as [s] or [z] are often omitted or replaced with the sound [h]; for example, *business* is pronounced to *bisneh*,

Vowel Reduction

• The Palembang language uses more limited vowel sounds, so the varied English vowels are often simplified. Example: Word hotel can be pronounced as *hutel*, replacing vowels [o] with [u].

Stress and Intonation

• The intonation in English tends to be diverse and stress-based words. However, the intonation tends to be flat in the regional language of Palembang. This affects how staff pronounce words or sentences in English, so they sound monotonous or don't match the original pattern.

The Influence of Indonesians on Local Dialects

• In everyday conversation, Indonesians with the local dialect of South Sumatra often omit or add certain sounds. For example, the addition of global sounds ([?], as at the end of the word *kan?*) can affect the pronunciation of words in English, stop pronounced to *sto*.

Addition or Removal of Sound

• There is a tendency to add vowel sounds at the end of consonants due to the influence of local language—for example, Word desk pronounced to *desek*.

These patterns reflect how the local language affects the staff's phonological ability to speak English, which needs to be addressed through proper phonetic training.

Grammartical Inteference

Grammatical interference occurs when the grammatical structure or pattern of the first language (L1) affects how a person uses the second language (L2). In the context of the regional language of Palembang or the South Sumatra region, grammatical Interference in the use of English by hotel and restaurant staff can be explained through the following aspects:

Use of Prepositions

• In the regional language of Palembang, prepositions are often less complex than in English, so staff tend to use the wrong prepositions or directly translate them from Indonesian.

Example: Saya di hotel translated into I am in a hotel, not at the hotel.

Omission (Removal of Subject or Object)

• The Palembang language often omits subjects or objects that are already understood from the context of the conversation. This is carried over to the use of English.

Example:

Bahasa Indonesia: Sudah selesai makan?

Affected English: Already finished eating?

Even though the correct form is, have you already finished eating?

Word Order

• English uses a strict word order (S-V-O), while Palembang's word order can be more flexible. This affects the sentence structure in English.

Example:

Bahasa Palembang: nak beli Kopi?

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Affected English: want to buy coffee?

Even though the correct form is, **Do you want to buy coffee?**

Word Reduplication

 The regional language of Palembang often uses reduplication (repetition of words) to indicate intensity or plural form, while English does not have a similar concept.

Example: *Jingokla menu dulu* translated into **Look-look the menu first**, when it should be enough **Take a look at the menu first**.

Pronoun

• In the Palembang language, pronouns are often different, for example, you, dak, kito. When translating to English, there are often errors in using the appropriate pronoun.

Example: *Kito duduk di sini* translated into **We sit here**, even though maybe he meant **Let us sit here**.

Literal Translation

The Palembang language has a distinctive idiom or phrase that is difficult to translate directly into English. When the staff tries to translate literally, the grammar becomes wrong.

Example: *Kaki ayam ini keras* translated into **the chicken's feet is hard**; even though it is more appropriate, **The chicken's feet are** rigid.

Omission of To Be or Auxiliary Verbs

In the regional language of Palembang, there is no concept of auxiliary verbs (to be) as in English. This causes staff to often omit is, are, or am.

Example: Dia pelayan hotel translated into **He waiter hotel** instead of **He is a hotel waiter.**

Incorrect Tense Usage

The regional language of Palembang, or Indonesian, in general, does not have a change in the form of verbs to indicate time, as in English. As a result, staff often use primary verb forms without paying attention to tenses.

Example: *Kemarin dia ke restoran* translated into **Yesterday he go to restaurant**, not **Yesterday he went to the restaurant**.

This grammatical Interference reflects the need for specific training that can improve hotel and restaurant staff's understanding of the grammatical structure of English to suit the professional context better.

Causes of Inferencing

Grammatical interference in the use of English by hotel and restaurant staff from Indonesian-speaking regions, such as South Sumatra, occurs due to fundamental differences between the grammatical structure of Indonesian and English. Indonesian, which is more flexible in word order and does not have a change in the form of verbs based on time (tenses), often makes it difficult for native speakers to adjust to stricter English rules. In many cases, Indonesian grammar patterns are applied directly to the English language, resulting in sentence structures that do not conform to English grammar rules.

The Indonesian language, which often omits subjects or objects in everyday sentences, creates a habit carried over to English. On the other hand, local dialects such as Palembang, which have high flexibility in their grammar, exacerbate this

tendency (Agustin & Purwanto, 2023). The combination of a lack of understanding of English grammar and the dominance of simpler Indonesian grammar patterns makes this Interference challenging to avoid (Agustinasari et al., 2022), except through structured and intensive language training (Aisyah et al., 2024; Purwanto, 2021).

Discussion

This study explores the interference of Indonesian grammar with the use of English by hotel and restaurant staff in the tourist area of Jakabaring Sport Center, Palembang City. The results showed that the majority of staff experienced significant grammatical Interference, especially in word selection in pronunciation, such as the use of the words use, get some, any, much, and a few, then inaccuracies in the use of omission and tenses, omission to be, and preposition errors. This is mainly due to the need for formal training in English and the dominance of Palembang regional languages that affect the language structure. In addition, it was also found that staff often use Indonesian grammatical patterns directly when speaking English, such as ignoring the correct word order. These results reflect the urgent need for intensive English grammar training for hospitality and restaurant staff.

Furthermore, the study found that phonological interference also plays a significant role in communication difficulties faced by hospitality staff in the Jakabaring Sport Center area. Mispronunciations, influenced by the phonetic structure of the Indonesian language, often lead to misunderstandings between staff and international guests. For instance, difficulties in pronouncing certain English sounds, such as $/\theta/$ in *think* or /v/ in *very*, contribute to unclear communication. Additionally, intonation patterns in Indonesian, which differ from those in English, may sometimes make expressions sound overly direct or impolite to non-Indonesian speakers, affecting the perceived professionalism of the staff.

To address these challenges, the study suggests the implementation of structured English training programs tailored to the specific needs of hospitality staff. Regular practice sessions focusing on grammar correction, pronunciation drills, and situational dialogues can help minimize interference and enhance overall fluency. Additionally, fostering an English-speaking environment in the workplace, such as encouraging the use of English during internal meetings or guest interactions, can significantly improve staff confidence and competency. By addressing linguistic interference proactively, hospitality businesses in Jakabaring and other key tourist areas can enhance service quality, ensuring a more positive experience for international visitors and boosting the overall competitiveness of the local tourism industry.

The implications of this research are very relevant for developing staff competencies in the tourism industry. The grammatical interference found can affect the quality of service to foreign tourists, ultimately impacting the customer experience. This study shows that grammar-based English training programs should be a priority for hotel and restaurant management, especially in strategic areas such as the Jakabaring Sport Center. In addition, the development of training modules that are integrated with the local context will help staff understand the grammatical

differences between Indonesian and English (Prihandono et al., 2017) so that they can improve their communication skills (M. Bambang Purwanto. et al., 2024; Ridayani & Purwanto, 2024).

In addition to the need for grammar-based English training programs, this study also highlights the importance of creating an English-speaking work environment to support continuous language development. Hospitality businesses in strategic tourist areas such as the Jakabaring Sport Center should implement policies that encourage daily English practice, such as requiring staff to use English in guest interactions, providing English signage and materials, and conducting regular language workshops. By fostering an immersive language environment, staff will have more opportunities to refine their communication skills and reduce grammatical interference over time.

Furthermore, the findings of this study have broader implications for tourism development in Palembang. As the city continues to attract international visitors for sports events and cultural tourism, language proficiency among hospitality staff will play a crucial role in enhancing the city's global reputation. Collaboration between tourism stakeholders, educational institutions, and hospitality businesses is essential to design targeted language training programs that address the specific needs of hospitality professionals. Investing in language development not only improves service quality but also contributes to the overall competitiveness of Palembang as a premier tourist destination.

The results of this study reveal that grammatical interference reflects deep linguistic habits in local communities. Hotel and restaurant staff comfortably use English, although it often does not conform to English grammar rules. These findings show that English learning in the Palembang area needs to be focused on strengthening grammar and practical training. In addition, motivational factors and the work environment also affect the ability of staff to use English correctly (Ho, 2016; Situma & Iravo, 2015). A work environment that encourages daily English practice can be one solution to reduce interference (Aisyah et al., 2024; Purwanto et al., 2024; Rosyidin & Purwanto, 2024).

Several previous studies have highlighted similar linguistic interference patterns in bilingual and multilingual communities, reinforcing the findings of this study. For example, Charunsri (2017) examined grammatical interference among hospitality staff in Bangkok and found that the omission of auxiliary verbs and tense inconsistencies were common due to the structural differences between Thai and English. Similarly, a study by Muklas et al. (2024) revealed that the influence of native languages led to frequent syntax errors and direct translations, affecting professional communication in the hospitality sector. These findings align with the current study's observations in Palembang, where local linguistic habits shape the way English is used in professional settings.

In contrast, research in countries with strong English immersion programs, such as Singapore and the Philippines, suggests that structured training and workplace language policies can significantly reduce linguistic interference. Hospitality staff in environments where English is actively promoted tend to exhibit fewer grammatical errors and better fluency in professional interactions (Purwanto et al., 2024). This supports the argument that improving English language policies

and daily practice opportunities in hospitality workplaces, such as hotels and restaurants in Jakabaring, could mitigate interference and enhance overall communication quality. By integrating successful language training models from other regions, hospitality businesses in Palembang can strengthen staff competency and provide a more seamless experience for international guests.

This research aligns with previous findings suggesting that grammatical Interference is common in multilingual communities. For example, a study conducted in Bali also found a similar pattern of Interference among hotel staff, especially in the use of prepositions and word order (Sari et al., 2021). However, the study in Bali highlighted the impact of exposure to foreign tourists on improving English language skills (Farooq et al., 2012; Kusumawati, 2009)The study in Jakabaring revealed these limitations because most tourists are domestic. This shows that geographical and demographic contexts also affect grammatical interference (Farooq et al., 2012; Pashayeva, 2023).

This study recommends the development of further studies to explore effective English training methods for hotel and restaurant staff, especially in the Palembang area. In addition, a longitudinal study is needed to measure the impact of the training on the English language skills of staff. Further research can also expand the scope to various other tourist areas in South Sumatra to understand interference patterns more comprehensively. Technology, such as digital-based language learning applications, is also suggested as an innovative solution to improve English language competence in the hospitality and restaurant sectors.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

This study reveals that the interference of Indonesian grammar with the use of English by hotel and restaurant staff in the Jakabaring Sport Center area of Palembang City occurs significantly. The dominant interference patterns include omitting the to-be, tense errors, incorrect prepositions, and literal translations from Indonesian to English. The main factors causing this interference are the need for formal training, the dominance of regional languages in daily communication, and a work environment that is less supportive of the consistent practice of English. These findings highlight the challenges in cross-language communication in the hospitality and restaurant sectors in strategic tourist areas such as Jakabaring. This research contributes to the academic world, especially applied linguistics and English language education. This finding enriches the literature on language interference, especially in the local context of Palembang, which is rarely studied in depth. This research also provides a foundation for developing grammar-based English training strategies relevant to the hospitality industry's needs. In the long term, the results of this research can be used to design practical English language training modules that improve communication skills and the competitiveness of local workers in the tourism sector. However, this study has some limitations. First, the scope of the study only involved hotel and restaurant staff in the Jakabaring area, which made it difficult to generalize the results to other tourist areas in Indonesia. Second, this study focuses more on grammatical aspects without exploring phonological or sociolinguistic elements that can also affect interference. In addition, the data collected mainly through observation and interviews may need

to be more in-depth to capture the dynamics of English use in more complex work situations. Further research with a broader approach and more diverse methods is required to provide a more comprehensive picture.

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