

**A Comparison of ICE Nigeria and ICE Ghana Using AntConc Software**

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**Abstract.** “World Englishes” is another concept used for emerging localised or indigenised varieties of English. This study compares the data from ICE Nigeria and Ghana respectively that are used the same way. A total of 240 data (120 NE and 120 GhE) were purposely selected for analysis using Bamiro’s classifications which are analogical creation, coinages or neologisms, loan shift, semantic under-differentiation, lexico-semantic duplication and redundancy, ellipsis, conversion, clipping and translation equivalents with the exception of acronyms. Corpus linguistics as a method of analysis is also used in the analysis. The study found out that the number of hits of each lexical item also varies. From the 15 NE lexical items in the table, 13 items have more hits in ICE Nigeria than ICE Ghana while only 1 kinship term “*uncle*” has more hits in ICE Ghana. The item “*exam*” has 45 hits each in both corpora. It is evident from the AntConc result that these NE lexical items have more hits in ICE Nigeria than ICE Ghana. On the other hand, 13 lexical items “*bride price, aha, brother, sister, bottom line, you people, bye bye, very very, can be able to, us we, so so, man u, bro*” have more hits in ICE Nigeria while 10 lexical items “*fufu, palm wine, koko, for real, feeding, connection, little little, big big, barca, sec*” have more hits in ICE Ghana than ICE Nigeria. It is evident from the AntConc result that these GhE lexical items have more hits in ICE Nigeria than ICE Ghana.

**Key words:** comparison, Nigerian English, Ghanaian English, ICE, Corpus linguistics

**Introduction**

The term “New Englishes” has been used since the early 1980s to refer to non-native varieties of English spoken in British colonies, mainly South-Asia, South-East Asia, West Africa and East Africa. They show a strong influence of the background or native languages spoken in those regions and the essential difference between these varieties and those in countries like the United States or Australia is that they do not derive from “settler” English. These varieties will continue to expand, given the role of English on the international level and its role as a lingua franca in countries with many native languages which are mutually incomprehensible.

The relationship between Nigeria and Ghana have been rewarding over the years. These activities include inter-group relations in the economic, political, cultural, religious, administrative and recreational fields of human endeavor. The two most outstanding elements that defined their relations before and during the colonial period were trade and migrations. The trade network facilitated largely by the Yoruba and Hausa of Nigeria and the Akan peoples of the Gold Coast motivated great inter-state migrations between the two countries. The film industry has been a major channel of recent of bringing actors and actresses from these two countries together. These have greatly influenced the varieties of English language spoken in the two countries. The similarities and differences of these two varieties of English are worth investigating.

This study compares the data from ICE Nigeria and Ghana respectively, bringing out words /phrases from each ICE that are used the same way in the other. Efforts have been made by various scholars, according to Adegbite, to prepare the ground in terms of defining terms and concepts, rather than carrying out the real research of lexicography and grammatical description (2016, p. 33). He observes that the major tasks of codification and

elaboration are the ones in current contention among scholars. According to Adegbite, the efforts made by scholars like Igboanusi (2016) in the compilation of distinctive NE expressions (which is perhaps the longest of all inventories), and Blench's draft compilation, among others are quite commendable but there is still a need because the "search for a comprehensive dictionary still continues" (2006, p. 34). Jowitt (1991, p. 29) recognizes the limitations of previous efforts and asserts that:

The task of differentiating variants from errors – of deciding which usage should be lifted out of the category of (merely) 'popular' expressions and exalted to the status of standard, and so prescribed expressions – is thus an interesting one. It is invidious for an individual, however, even if that individual is a Professor of English, to start making solo pronouncements. The task is one of delicacy and needs to be carried out by a team of experts, not by an individual.

Concerning GhE, "standard codification of GhE in the areas of lexis, syntax and phonology is required. This present study is thus a response to Adegbite's, Jowitt's and Owusu-Ansah's call for both NE and GhE.

Wolf says that Ghanaian English diverges considerably from the common West African English (WAE) prototype (2010). This study investigates and contests this claim, with the intention of assessing whether or not the similarities between these two varieties are strong enough to consider them as varieties of an umbrella variety; West African variety. This is in line with Omoniyi's view, who stresses that West African varieties, though unique in their features, are potential dialects of an "umbrella variety" which is "West African English", and recommends that efforts should be intensified in the codification and standardization of this "umbrella variety".

### Literature Review

Thorsten Brato in his article, "The Historical Corpus of English in Ghana (HiCE Ghana): Motivation, Compilation, Opportunities" discusses the aspects that are relevant to the compilation of the Historical Corpus in Ghana from the period 1966 to 1975. The corpus captures the written GhE in the early years of its nativisation phase and compares it to the relevant sections of the Ghanaian component of ICE. This made it possible to trace the structural nativisation in real time. Brato's paper also addresses the motivation for such a corpus, showing how methodological and theoretical concerns and challenges have affected the final corpus design. He rounded off his paper by giving contemporary examples of GhE. The present paper is also corpus-based in its approach. All data are elicited from the ICE, Nigeria and Ghana components.

Brato, in another article entitled "Lexical Expansion in Ghanaian English from a Diachronic Perspective: A Structural and Semantic analysis" provides a "real-time structural and semantic analysis" of lexical expansion in the Nativisation phase of GhE (2019, p. 259). His analysis is based on the Historical Corpus of English in Ghana (HiCE Ghana) and the written-printed sections of the Ghanaian component of ICE. Taking a comprehensive list of previously attested "Ghanaianisms" as a starting point, Brato in his paper shows that traditional word-formation processes like deviation or compounding play only a subordinate role and that semantic shift is the most important process used in both periods. He posits that while the corpora are comparatively small for lexical research, the results still provide a useful starting point to better our understanding of Ghanaian English has evolved over the past forty years. This article is quite relevant to the present study which describes the lexico-semantic features of GhE of which semantic shift is an aspect. The present study also discovers that semantic shift is a major process of word formation in NE and GhE.

The present study is different because it compares the data from ICE Nigeria and Ghana respectively that are used the same way. It discusses data from Nigerian English and Ghanaian English respectively.

### Methodology/ Framework

A total of 240 data (120 NE and 120 GhE) were purposely selected for analysis using Bamiro's classifications which are analogical creation, coinages or neologisms, loan shift, semantic under-differentiation, lexico-semantic duplication and redundancy, ellipsis, conversion, clipping and translation equivalents with the exception of acronyms. Corpus linguistics as a method of analysis is also used in the analysis. Corpus linguistics is one of the fast-growing methodologies in contemporary linguistics. Tognini-Bonelli states that "A corpus is a computerized collection of authentic texts, amenable to automatic or semiautomatic processing or analysis" (2001, p. 55). It is a collection of pieces of language text in electronic form, selected according to external criteria to represent, as far as possible, a language or language variety as a source of data for linguistic research (Sinclair). The International Corpus of English (ICE) has been designed for synchronic studies of World Englishes for instance, it comprises twenty different corpora with a million words in each (Birkner, 2015, p. 14). Despite this huge number, it is a tiny sample of the usage of a whole language community. Out of the 320 research data, the researcher runs each data, one after the other, into the AntConc software to search for hits of the same data in the ICE. This implies that all data from ICE Nigeria are run through ICE Ghana to search for same data and vice versa. The AntConc provides the hits for the data searched for and also the frequency and areas of usage to check if the hits in ICE Nigeria tallies with that of ICE Ghana and vice versa.

### Data Presentation and Analysis

The AntConc results below show the data from ICE Nigeria that have the same words/phrases in ICE Ghana. The table below shows this:

**Table 1. ICE Nigeria**

S/N	NE Words/Phrases	NE Frequency	GhE Frequency	NE Usage	GhE Usage
1.	General overseer	8 hits	3 hits	Acrolectal and non-acrolectal	Acrolectal
2.	Spiritual head	7 hits	1 hit	Acrolectal	Non-acrolectal
3.	Boko haram	23 hits	5 hits	Acrolectal and non-acrolectal	Non-acrolectal
4.	Uncle	15 hits	51 hits	Acrolectal and non-acrolectal	Acrolectal and non-acrolectal
5.	Big man	14 hits	5 hits	Acrolectal and non-acrolectal	Acrolectal and non-acrolectal
6.	Friend	35 hits	18 hits	Acrolectal and non-acrolectal	Acrolectal and non-acrolectal
7.	I'm coming	14 hits	6 hits	Acrolectal and non-acrolectal	Acrolectal and non-acrolectal
8.	Light	18 hits	4 hits	Non-acrolectal	Non-acrolectal
9.	Flash	8 hits	1 hit	Non-acrolectal	Non-acrolectal
10.	Credit	5 hits	3 hits	Non-acrolectal	Non-acrolectal
11.	Me, I	160 hits	55 hits	Acrolectal and non-acrolectal	Acrolectal and non-acrolectal

12.	And yet	30 hits	20 hits	Acrolectal and non-acrolectal	Acrolectal and non-acrolectal
13.	Bro	40 hits	10 hits	Non-acrolectal	Non-acrolectal
14.	Sis	8 hits	4 hits	Non-acrolectal	Non-acrolectal
15.	Exam	45 hits	45 hits	Acrolectal and non-acrolectal	Acrolectal and non-acrolectal

The AntConc result from this table shows that the 15 NE words/phrases that appear on the table are also present in ICE Ghana and used in the same contexts. They also generally occur in similar settings (same usages) except for few instances as follows: “general overseer” occurs in both acrolectal and non-acrolectal usage in NE but occurs only in acrolectal usage in GhE, “spiritual head” occurs in acrolectal usage in NE but occur in non-acrolectal usage in GhE and “book haram” occurs in both acrolectal and non-acrolectal usage in NE but occurs only in non-acrolectal usage in GhE.

The number of hits of each lexical item also varies. From the 15 NE lexical items in the table, 13 items have more hits in ICE Nigeria than ICE Ghana while only 1 kinship term “uncle” has more hits in ICE Ghana. The item “exam” has 45 hits each in both corpora. It is evident from the AntConc result that these NE lexical items have more hits in ICE Nigeria than ICE Ghana.

The AntConc results below show the data from ICE Ghana that have the same words/phrases in ICE Nigeria.

**Table 2. ICE Ghana**

S/1	GhE Words/Phrases	GhE Frequency	NE Frequency	GhE Usage	NE Usage
1.	Bride price	5 hits	7 hits	Non-acrolectal	Acrolectal and non-acrolectal
2.	Ahá	83 hits	116 hits	Acrolectal and non-acrolectal	Acrolectal and non-acrolectal
3.	Fufu	53 hits	15 hits	Acrolectal and non-acrolectal	Acrolectal and non-acrolectal
4.	Palm wine	4 hits	2 hits	Acrolectal and non-acrolectal	Acrolectal and non-acrolectal
5.	Koko	6 hits	4 hits	Acrolectal and non-acrolectal	Acrolectal and non-acrolectal
6.	For real	5 hits	3 hits	Acrolectal and non-acrolectal	Non-acrolectal
7.	Brother	36 hits	55 hits	Acrolectal and non-acrolectal	Acrolectal and non-acrolectal
8.	Sister	14 hits	36 hits	Acrolectal and non-acrolectal	Acrolectal and non-acrolectal
9.	Feeding	4 hits	2 hits	Non-acrolectal	Acrolectal and non-acrolectal
10.	Bottom line	3 hits	5 hits	Acrolectal and non-acrolectal	Acrolectal
11.	Connection	6 hits	2 hits	Acrolectal and non-acrolectal	Non-acrolectal
12.	You people	32 hits	46 hits	Acrolectal and non-acrolectal	Acrolectal and non-acrolectal

13.	Bye bye	7 hits	8 hits	Non-acrolectal	Acrolectal and non-acrolectal
14.	Little little	5 hits	2 hits	Acrolectal and non-acrolectal	Non-acrolectal
15.	Very very	131 hits	193 hits	Acrolectal and non-acrolectal	Acrolectal and non-acrolectal
16.	Big big	7 hits	4 hits	Acrolectal and non-acrolectal	Acrolectal and non-acrolectal
17.	Can be able to	3 hits	6 hits	Acrolectal and non-acrolectal	Acrolectal and non-acrolectal
18.	Us we	13 hits	24 hits	Acrolectal and non-acrolectal	Acrolectal and non-acrolectal
19.	So so	32 hits	60 hits	Acrolectal and non-acrolectal	Acrolectal and non-acrolectal
20.	Man u	4 hits	5 hits	Acrolectal and non-acrolectal	Non-acrolectal
21.	Barca	10 hits	1 hit	Acrolectal and non-acrolectal	Non-acrolectal
22.	Sec (security)	4 hits	2 hits	Acrolectal and non-acrolectal	Non-acrolectal
23.	Bro	10 hits	40 hits	Non-acrolectal	Acrolectal and non-acrolectal

The AntConc result from this tables shows that the 23 GhE words/phrases that appear on the table are also present in ICE Nigeria and used in the same contexts. They also generally occur in similar settings (same usages) except for instances as follows: “bride price” occurs in non-acrolectal usage in GhE but occurs in both acrolectal and non-acrolectal usage in NE, “for real” occurs in acrolectal and non-acrolectal usage in GhE but only in non-acrolectal usage in NE, “feeding” occurs in non-acrolectal usage in GhE but in both acrolectal and non-acrolectal usage in NE, “bottom line” occurs in acrolectal and non-acrolectal usage in GhE but in acrolectal usage in NE, “connection” occurs in acrolectal and non-acrolectal usage in GhE but occurs in non-acrolectal usage in NE, “bye bye” occurs in non-acrolectal usage in GhE but occurs in both acrolectal and non-acrolectal usage in NE, “little little” occurs in acrolectal and non-acrolectal usage in GhE but in non-acrolectal usage in NE, “man u, barca, sec” occur in acrolectal and non-acrolectal usage in GhE but occurs only in non-acrolectal usage in NE and “bro” occurs in non-acrolectal usage in GhE but occurs in both acrolectal and non-acrolectal usage in NE.

The number of hits of each lexical item also varies. 13 lexical items “bride price, aha, brother, sister, bottom line, you people, bye bye, very very, can be able to, us we, so so, man u, bro” have more hits in ICE Nigeria while 10 lexical items “fufu, palm wine, koko, for real, feeding, connection, little little, big big, barca, sec” have more hits in ICE Ghana than ICE Nigeria.

It is evident from the AntConc result that these GhE lexical items have more hits in ICE Nigeria than ICE Ghana.

### **Brief Explanation of the Lexical Items**

#### **1. Genaral overseer**

The coinage “general overseer” is a noun which means the person in charge of a church nation-wide or world-wide (mostly Pentecostal church). It is very popular in Nigeria.

#### **2. Spiritual head**

This term is coined from existing English words to mean a member of a clergy who is a spiritual leader of the Christian church. This is popular in Nigeria.

### 3. Boko haram

“Boko haram” is a Hausa expression which means western education is an abomination to Islam. In the local Hausa dialect, Boko Haram means “Western education is forbidden”. This sect is widely known in Nigeria due to its activities in terrorism.

### 4. Uncle

The loan shift “uncle” in NE is a kinship term that has the extended meaning of any elderly male.

### 5. Big man

The expression, “big man” has two main extensions of meaning in NE. The first meaning can be to be an influential/respectable man and the second to be a wealthy man. It differs from the SBE meaning of “big” which has to do with body size

### 6. Friend

“Friend” in NE extends from the SBE meaning of a person one has a bond of mutual affection to mean a person one has just met.

### 7. I’m coming

It means “I’ll be back”. This is usually uttered by a person who is leaving, thus expressing his intention to, at some point in time, return. This expression could also mean “wait a minute or sometime, I will be with you”. This is usually used when one is busy and someone needs your attention at the same time. This expression is also present in GhE which means to leave with the intent to come back.

### 8. Light

“Light” is an equivalent for “electricity” or “electric current” in NE. The expression “there is no light” is quite a common usage in Nigeria.

### 9. Flash

“Flash” implies “to call up” by telephone in NE. This means a hang-up after one ringtone. This implies that the person wants to talk to you but either does not have airtime or does not want to spend money for airtime.

The feature semantic differentiation is seen in the lexical item “credit”. It is used for airtime.

### 10. Me, I

The two words, “I” and “me”, are pronouns and refer to the same person or speaker. The use of both results to tautology in SBE as a case of substituting objective case for subjective. In NE however, it is a distinct feature.

### 11. And yet

These two conjunctions are used side by side by many Nigerian speakers of English language. This is same in GhE. SBE uses one conjunction at a time and considers such usage as mere redundancy. However, informal BE could use both.

### 12. Bro

“Bro” is the clipped form of “brother”. It is a common usage in Nigeria.

### 13. Sis

This is also a clipped word. The complete word is “sister”. It is a common usage in NE.

### 14. Exam

This is the clipped form of “examination”. This occurs in unofficial or informal usages in both American English and British English but could occur in acrolectal usage in NE and GhE.

### 15. Bride price

This is an analogical creation. In Ghana, the bride price forms a key part of the traditional wedding just as in Nigeria where the groom presents money, property or some

form of wealth to the bride's family in exchange for the loss of her labour and all that she has to offer.

#### **16. Ahá**

It is an exclamation that indicates or expresses affirmation. It is a discourse particle (interjection) which is also present in NE. It has a rising tone on the second syllable.

#### **17. Fufu**

"Fufu", also known as "foufou" in Ghana is a white and sticky pasta made of various staple foods such as yam, cassava, banana, taro or a mixture of any of those. It is coined from or a derivative of the Twi language of the Akan in Ghana; "foufou" meaning "white". This food item is not only peculiar to Ghanaian socio-cultural and linguistic environment but Nigeria and other West African countries. It is known in Nigeria as "ewe fufu" in Yoruba, made by boiling and pounding yam, plantain or cassava.

#### **18. Palm wine**

This lexical item means wine tapped from palm tree. It is usually enjoyed better when taken fresh before it ferments.

#### **19. Koko**

"Koko" is a Hausa spicy millet porridge commonly taken as breakfast. This is used especially in the northern part of the country.

#### **20. For real**

This loan shift means "certain or sure".

#### **21-22. Brother/sister**

The kinship terms, "brother and sister" have a wider semantic range in GhE. One's "brother or sister" does not necessarily mean you share the same parentage with the person.

#### **23. Feeding**

"Feeding me" has the extended meaning of "taking care my needs".

#### **24. Bottom line**

"Bottom line" extends from the SBE meaning of "the primary and most important point or consideration" to mean "the conclusion of a matter" in GhE. It is a common usage in GhE.

#### **25. Connection**

The word "connection" has an extended meaning of bribery and corruption especially in public life.

#### **26. You people**

This is an example of lexico-semantic duplication and redundancy. It is an example of wanting to create a second person plural pronoun. It is an example of reduplication/redundancy and a feature in GhE.

#### **27. Bye bye**

From the corpus evidence, here is a repetition of the word "bye" up to four times where SBE will say "bye or bye-bye". It is important to note that there is no "bye-bye|" in the entire corpus (written with a hyphen) but "bye bye".

#### **28. Little little**

This repetition is done for emphasis.

#### **29. Very very**

This repetition is done for emphasis. It has a way of portraying the intensity or magnitude of an issue. It is a common reduplication in NE.

#### **30. Big big**

This repetition is a common reduplication in GhE, done for emphasis.

#### **31. Can be able to**

The word "can" also means "be able to". This is a quite common reduplication in GhE.

#### **32. Us we**

The use of “us” and “we” is for emphasis. It is also common in NE. They refer to the same persons.

### 33. So so

This redundancy feature is a common Ghanaian usage and is for emphasis.

### 34. Man U

The syllables, “man” is a clipped form, got from the complete word, “Manchester. This type of clipping is also present in NE but used as “Man U”.

### 35. Barca

The word, “Barca” refers to Barcelona. This type of clipping occurs in NE also.

### 36. Sec

“Sec” here stands for “security and secondary”.

### 37. Bro

The word, “bro” is clipped from “brother”. This usage is common in both GhE and NE.

## Discussion of Findings

The results of the AntCont analysis show that quite a number of data analysed in ICE Nigeria are present in ICE Ghana and vice versa. There are a total of thirty seven lexical items that are in common in these two varieties. This cuts across analogical creation (four lexical items-general overseer, spiritual head, bride price and aha); loan words (four lexical items-boko haram, fufu, palm wine and koko), loan shifts (twelve lexical items-uncle, big man, friend, I’m coming, light, flash, for real, brother, sister, feeding, bottom line and connection); reduplication (ten lexical items- me I, and yet, you people, bye bye, little little, very very, big big, can be able to, us we and so so and clipping (seven lexical items- bro, sis, exam, man u, barca, sec and bro). These are only lexical items that occur exactly the same in ICE Nigeria and Ghana respectively. This reveals that there are more loan shifts and reduplications in common between these two varieties than other features.

The study reveals that NE is more “grounded” than GhE. This supports Wolf’s claim that NE “is certainly the most prominent and perhaps even most influential variety of WAE... NE has numerous nationally exclusive lexical items” (201). GhE does have exclusive lexical items, but not as numerous as that of NE. It is clear from this study that these two varieties are more effective for “local communication”; spoken and written, than the international varieties in both Nigeria and Ghana. The implication to researchers of both varieties is to endeavour to do a more detailed research into these varieties, so as to help in codifying, standardizing and harmonizing them for international intelligibility.

However, it has been observed from this research that there are some errors which are recorded in ICE Nigeria and Ghana as distinctive varieties of the two varieties. Such examples include:

1. There is wrong use of concord in many instances in both varieties (-): “one of the reason why the governor...” (bint 03), “The lawyer say he will give reasons” (leg 02) , “There was so many presentations” (S1A 095), “They were all Ghanaian” (S1A 091)
2. In both varieties of English, there are spelling errors including dinning for dining, interpret, strainous, non-challant, among others (-): “...you interpret in Yoruba...” (unsp 20), “...because of the strainous...”(W1B 004).
3. The parts of “be, been, being” are each sometimes used in place of the other to produce has, have, am, is, are, was, were, etc. in both varieties (-): “She have been with you” (cr 09), “...other staffs who has direct relationship with the organization...”(W2A 032).

Also, there are usages in ICE Nigeria and Ghana that are not distinctively NE and GhE but also commonly used in other varieties. Such should not be included as belonging exclusively to either of the varieties. Examples include: WASSCE in both ICEs, which is a West African Examination body among others.

It is important to always clearly differentiate between errors and distinctive features of a variety that marks it as unique (deviants and variants). This study has clearly differentiated between examples that are errors and those that are distinctive features. The data analysed are distinctly NE and GhE and not errors. These two varieties can be said to be largely variants with distinctive forms and flavours from sources like lexical improvisations, etc. that give these two varieties unique expressions that reflect the socio-cultural thoughts and artifacts which are not lexicalised in Standard English.

Also, there are lexical items which are registered in ICE Nigeria and Ghana as distinctive features of these two varieties but are not. This is because these lexical items are also used in either SBE or SAE or both. Some of them include: “gist”, “my Lord Sir”, “Mr. President”, among many others.

### Summary of Findings

1. This study recognises the role of ICE in the development of NE and GhE. The ICE captures conversations of “educated” Nigerians and Ghanaians who are at least eighteen years. This group of people has a great influence in the society generally and serves as a strong force in molding personalities, opinions and also influencing decisions on issues of national importance like the acquisition and use of language. This study has revealed that there are a lot of elements of NE and GhE in ICE Nigeria and Ghana respectively.
2. These two varieties have quite a number of words and expressions they share in common. The two varieties could be harmonised with other West African varieties to have an overall variety known as “West African English”.
3. Finally, Nigerians and Ghanaians (especially the educated group) should develop a positive attitude towards the acceptance and use of these varieties for their promotion.

### Conclusion

This work has identified some NE and GhE lexical items from ICE Nigeria and Ghana with their meanings which have not been mentioned in existing works in NE and GhE. The study has further provided raw materials for researchers interested in the study of these two varieties and also West African English. This research is of immense importance to the development of NE and GhE lexicon.

Since every language is peculiar in its features, the analysis of one language or variety cannot be used for others. Contrastive studies of languages or varieties of languages are of great help to students of English and linguistics, helping them to better understand various aspects and concepts in the languages or varieties under study. This is because contrastive studies expose similarities and differences between languages or varieties that could pose difficulties in the teaching and learning of the target language.

Jowitt asserts that “...English is our indispensable tool for the purposes of communication at the academic level, and that it should be taken with maximum seriousness” (English 6). This study is one of the numerous steps taken for developing the Nigerian and also Ghanaian varieties of English. This study provides a description of how NE and GhE differ and agree in terms of lexis and semantics. This study stresses the importance of lexis as a vital unit of every language. The study is an effort towards language standardization. The research, to the best of the researcher’s knowledge, is one of the early attempts at providing empirical data on the contrast in the lexis and semantics of Nigerian and Ghanaian English, which is of importance to speakers and learners of both varieties.

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