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Arguments for the Argument Structure of Relational Nouns

ICSH9

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1. Introduction (1)

- Laczkó (2009) – LFG'09, Cambridge
- loose LFG framework
- preliminary assumption: the lexical form of a predicate contains two interrelated dimensions
 - (ii) **lexical conceptual structure (LCS):** { ... }
 - cf. Bresnan's (2001) lexical semantics – in a Chomskyan framework, cf. Grimshaw (1990)
 - (i) **argument structure (AS):** < ... >
 - cf. Bresnan's (2001) a-structure – in a Chomskyan framework, cf. Grimshaw (1990)

1. Introduction (2)

(1) *kick*, V { x , y } – LCS
< agent, theme > – AS
[-o] [-r] – mapping
: : features
(SUBJ) (OBJ) – GFs

goal: to argue that a clearly identifiable group of underived relational nouns has AS in addition to LCS – at least in languages like Hungarian

1. Introduction (3): structure of the presentation

1.(4-5) some previous (English) accounts

2. relational nouns, typology, and LCS

3. arguments for AS-s in Hungarian

- *kéz₁* 'hand₁'

4. extending the analysis

- *kéz₂* 'hand₂'
- *szomszéd* 'neighbour'

5. POSS in AS

- Bresnan (2001), Laczkó (2004,2007), Lødrup (2009), Sells (2009)

1. Introduction (4)

- previous accounts of English underived relational nouns like *hand* and *neighbour*: a whole range of radically different approaches
 - just like in the case of derived nominals like *destruction* and *assassination*
- Hungarian underived relational nouns: much less attention

1. Introduction (5)

- underived relational nouns do **not** have **ASs** at all: they only have **LCSs**, cf. Uriagereka (1995)
- **strict ASs**
 - similar to those of verbal predicates, and the predictable optionality of (some of) their arguments is due to **lexical processes** (e. g., suppression), trivially taken to apply to genuine verbal predicates, cf. Barker (1995), cf. also Dowty & Barker (1993)
 - no such processes, so **fewer** noun types have **ASs**, cf. Castillo (2001)
- the **LCS** complements are **optional AS** arguments to begin with, cf. Asudeh (2005)

2. Relational nouns, typology, and LCS (1)

- the behaviour of relational nouns across languages has been extensively discussed in the typological literature
- fundamentally in the context of inalienability and the semantics of possessive constructions
- the most salient types of these nouns include
 - kinship terms
 - body parts
 - part–whole relationships

2. Relational nouns, typology, and LCS (2)

- in a great number of languages these inalienable nouns typically exhibit distinct formal (morphological or syntactic) properties
- for an overview, see Nichols (1988)
- e. g. in Nanai if a relational noun, which by default has an inalienable interpretation, is used in a non-inalienable/alienated sense then it has to be used with a special possessive paradigm including a morpheme encoding **non-inalienable possession (NIP)**

(2)	a. naj-dili-ni	b. naj-dili- ŋo -ni
	person-head-3SG	person-head- NIP -3SG
	'(the) person's (own) head'	'(the) head in the possession of the person'

2. Relational nouns, typology, and LCS (3)

- **these well-attested cross-linguistic phenomena minimally call for a clearly definable LCS approach to the nouns in question – otherwise it would be hardly possible to formulate the relevant rules for the relevant processes**
- **the following Hungarian facts point in the same direction**

2. Relational nouns, typology, and LCS (4)

(A) There are nouns in the relevant categories which practically can only be used in possessive constructions; therefore, in possessive inflectional forms (head-marking). This especially holds for part-whole nouns, cf.

- (3) a. a víz szín-e
the water surface-3SG
'the surface of the water'
- b. a kör közep-e
the circle middle-3SG
'the middle of the circle'

2. Relational nouns, typology, and LCS (5)

(B) There are a few nouns that have two different stem variants when they are inflected in the possessive paradigm, depending on whether they are used in an inalienable or in an alienable sense. For instance, *gyapjú* 'wool' has different stem versions when it is taken to belong to a sheep inalienably and when it is interpreted as alienably belonging to a shepherd (also cf. *tető* 'roof').

- (4) a. a juh gyapj-a b. a juhász gyapjú-ja
the sheep wool-3SG the shepherd wool-3SG
'the sheep's wool' 'the shepherd's wool'
- (5) a. a ház tete-je b. az ács tető-je
the house roof-3SG the carpenter roof-3SG
'the roof of the house' 'the carpenter's roof'

2. Relational nouns, typology, and LCS (6)

(C) In Hungarian, too, it is only a part—whole inalienable noun that can be used as an “extra” argument (English examples: *John kicked Peter’s leg* – *John kicked Peter on the leg*). In Hungarian this extra argument can be expressed either as a fully-fledged possessive noun phrase or as a reduced constituent, a bare noun.

- (6) a. János megrúg-ta Péter lábá-t.
John.NOM kick-PAST.3SG.DEF Peter.NOM leg-ACC
‘John kicked Peter’s leg.’
- b. János megrúg-ta Péter-t a láb-á-n.
John.NOM kick-PAST.3SG.DEF Peter-ACC the leg-3SG-on
‘John kicked Peter on his leg.’
- c. János láb-on rúg-ta Péter-t.
John.NOM leg-on kick-PAST.3SG.DEF Peter-ACC
ca. ‘John kicked Peter on the leg.’

2. Relational nouns, typology, and LCS (7)

- part—whole inalienability is a necessary but not sufficient condition on the existence of these constructions, many of which are set phrases and not infrequently are used figuratively

(7) fül-ön fog valaki-t
ear-on grab somebody-ACC
literally: 'grab somebody on the ear'
figuratively: 'catch somebody (to make them do something)'

(8) szív-en üt valaki-t
heart-on hit somebody-ACC
literally: 'hit somebody on the heart'
figuratively: 'affect somebody emotionally'

- the analysis of such constructions is left to future research

3. Arguments for AS-s in Hungarian (1)

(A) Intuitively, the generalization that quite a few such nouns practically can only be used in possessive constructions (with the possessive inflectional paradigm), can be captured in a most principled manner by assuming that they have an AS which contains a possessor argument, and if this argument is not realized, the principle of **completeness** is violated.

(3) a. a víz szín-e b. a kör közep-e
the water surface-3SG the circle middle-3SG
'the surface of the water' 'the middle of the circle'

- The presence of the possessor always triggers the use of possessive inflection on the noun head in Hungarian (cf. head-marking).

3. Arguments for AS-s in Hungarian (2)

(B) A closely related property of relational nouns is that when they occur within possessive noun phrases, **without a strongly influential linguistic or situational context**, the possessor constituent is, as a rule, interpreted as the salient element of the **inalienable** relationship.

- Again, this fact can be most naturally captured by assuming that the possessor is a genuine argument of the noun.

3. Arguments for AS-s in Hungarian (3)

kéz₁ 'hand₁'

(C) Most importantly, certain types of Hungarian relational nouns in clearly definable constructions must not be used in non-possessive noun phrases on the relevant reading.

(9) a. Péter fel-emel-te a kez-é-t.
Peter.NOM up-raise-PAST.3SG.DEF the hand-POSS.3SG-ACC

'Peter_(i) raised his_(i) hand.'

b. Péter fel-emel-te a kez-et.
Peter.NOM up-raise-PAST.3SG.DEF the hand-ACC

'Peter raised the hand. / *Peter_(i) raised his_(i) hand.'

3. Arguments for AS-s in Hungarian (4)

*kéz*₁ 'hand₁'

- (9b): *Peter* raised someone else's hand or an "alienated" limb, e. g., an artificial hand in a hospital
- → the relationship between *Peter* and *the hand* in (9b) is strictly non-inalienable /alienated
- for the inalienable interpretation to be available the noun must be used in a possessive construction, as in (9a)
- → **key assumption**: *kéz*₁ 'hand₁' in its inalienable use has an AS and its possessor argument must be realized; hence the ungrammaticality of (9b) in the relevant sense

(10) *kéz*₁ 'hand₁', N: { body , body part } ← informal labels
< whole > ←
[-r] ← (internal, theme-like argument)
(POSS)

- for my treatment of the grammatical use of *kéz* 'hand' in (9b), see 4.(2)

4. Extending the analysis (1)

(9b): *kéz*₂ 'hand₂'

- Barker's (1995) approach to English relational nouns
 - an AS is attributed to several groups of relational nouns in their relevant uses
 - how about cases in which no argument is present in the construction, cf. (9b)?
 - Barker's (1995) solution: suppression (cf. passivization): the suppressed argument is existentially bound in the AS

(11) *kéz*₁ 'hand₁', N: { body , body part }
< whole >
[-r]
(POSS)
∅
∃x

- this treatment is not feasibly applicable to cases like (9b), because if the existentially bound argument is present in the AS then it is a mystery why its trivial, most natural interpretation is strictly prohibited

4. Extending the analysis (3)

kéz₂ 'hand₂'

- if the salient element in the basic inalienable relationship is present in LCS (whether it is also linked to a suppressed argument in AS, as in a Barker (1995) style solution, or not) then there is no principled explanation for the unavailability of the starred interpretation in (9b)
- this radical change creates a noun that is used in a **non-inalienable, non-relational sense from the relevant perspective** – for instance, (9b) can have a reading on which Peter raised John's inalienable hand, but in this situation the hand was non-inalienable from Peter's perspective
- interestingly and surprisingly – Herslund & Baron (2001: 13): *nose* et al. are non-relational to begin with

4. Extending the analysis (4)

szomszéd 'neighbour' et al.

- these relational nouns (*apa* 'father' *nagymama* 'grandmother', etc.) behave rather differently in a significant respect, cf.:

(13) Péter bosszant-ja a szomszéd-ok-at.

Peter.NOM annoy-PRES.3SG.DEF the neighbour-PL-ACC

'Peter is annoying the neighbours.'

- this sentence, as opposed to (9b), can be felicitously interpreted in such a way that Peter annoys his own neighbours (despite the fact that the relational noun occurs in a non-possessive construction)
 - interestingly, (13) can also mean that Peter annoys the speaker's (and/or, perhaps, the listener's) neighbours
 - **however:** *szomszéd* 'neighbour' **cannot** be used inalienably
- (14) [**Hermit A to Hermit B:**] John saw a neighbour downtown.
#It wasn't his neighbour, though. (Asudeh 2005)

4. Extending the analysis (5)

szomszéd 'neighbour' et al.

there are at least three different solutions that can be considered in this case

- A. it can be assumed that these relational nouns have no AS: they only have LCS, in the spirit of Uriagereka (1995), for instance
- B. it can be postulated that they have both LCS and AS, but the AS argument is optional, cf. Asudeh (2005)
- C. in the spirit of Barker (1995), we can assume that *neighbour*₁ is a relational noun with LCS and obligatory AS and we derive *neighbour*₂ from it by suppressing, that is existentially binding, the argument in AS

4. Extending the analysis (7) the proposal (i)

- in languages like Hungarian underived relational nouns come in two major varieties
 - (A) *kéz* 'hand' et al. – inalienable & alienable, and this is grammaticalized in the language
 - (B) *szomszéd* 'neighbour' et al. – always inalienable
 - type (A) requires an AS analysis + complement deletion in LCS
 - type (B), for the sake of as much uniformity as possible, is best analyzed along the AS & suppression lines
- (A): AS & LCS complement deletion
- (B): AS & suppression (uniformity: AS)

4. Extending the analysis (8) the proposal (ii)

- body part nouns typically follow the (A) pattern completely (*fül* 'ear', *szem* 'eye', etc.)
- social (and similar) relational nouns typically follow the (B) pattern completely (*apa* 'father', *főnök* 'boss', etc.)
- many part—whole relational nouns appear to have the AS use exclusively (*közép* 'middle', *szín* 'surface (of water)')
- others seem to admit suppression in AS (*perem* 'edge', *sarok* 'corner')

4. Extending the analysis (9) the proposal (iii)

(17) (*Lődd le azt a korongot!* 'Shoot that disk.')

*A közep-et céloz-d!
the middle-ACC aim-IMPER.2SG
'Aim at the middle.'

(18) (*Mosd le az ablakpárkányokat!* 'Wash the window
sills.')

Figyel-j a perem-ek-re!
pay.attention-IMPER.2SG the edge-PL-onto
'Pay attention to the edges.'

4. Extending the analysis (10) the proposal (iv)

- (19) a. *A kazán ledob-ta
the furnace.NOM throw.off-PAST.3SG.DEF
az alj-at.
the bottom-ACC
'The furnace threw off its bottom.'
- b. Ez-ek-et az új alj-ak-at
this-PL-ACC the new bottom-PL-ACC
kidob-juk. (in a bucket factory)
throw.away-PRES.1PL.DEF
'We'll throw away these bottoms.'

5. POSS in AS (1) Bresnan (2001)

- **a reviewer:** It is dubious, in general, that "possessor arguments" are listed in the argument structure of ANY nominal head.

(A) **Bresnan (2001):** even originally non-relational nouns in possessive constructions have ASs: a possessive predicative template augments their lexical forms

- (20) a. *hat*₁, N 'HAT < >' →
b. *hat*₂, N 'HAT-OF <(↑POSS)>'

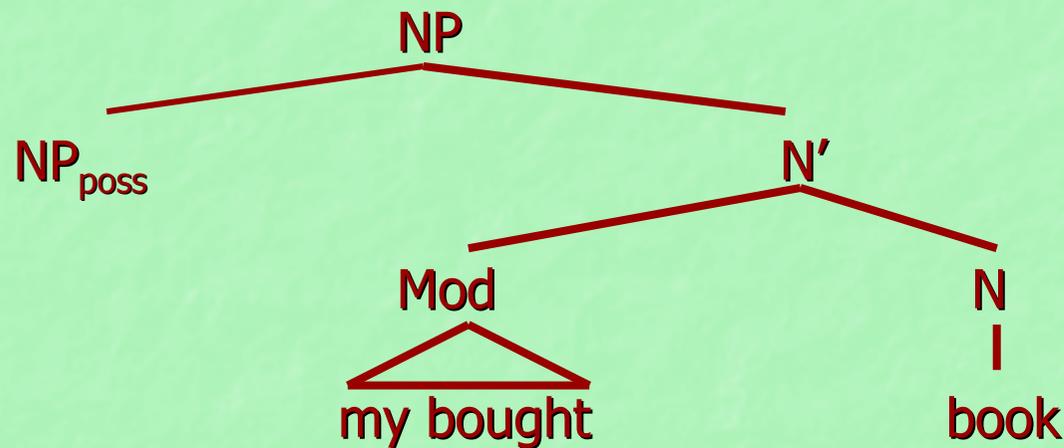
5. POSS in AS (2)

Sells (2009)(i)

(B) Sells (2009) on the treatment of adnominal clauses with genitive subjects in Altaic and East Asian languages

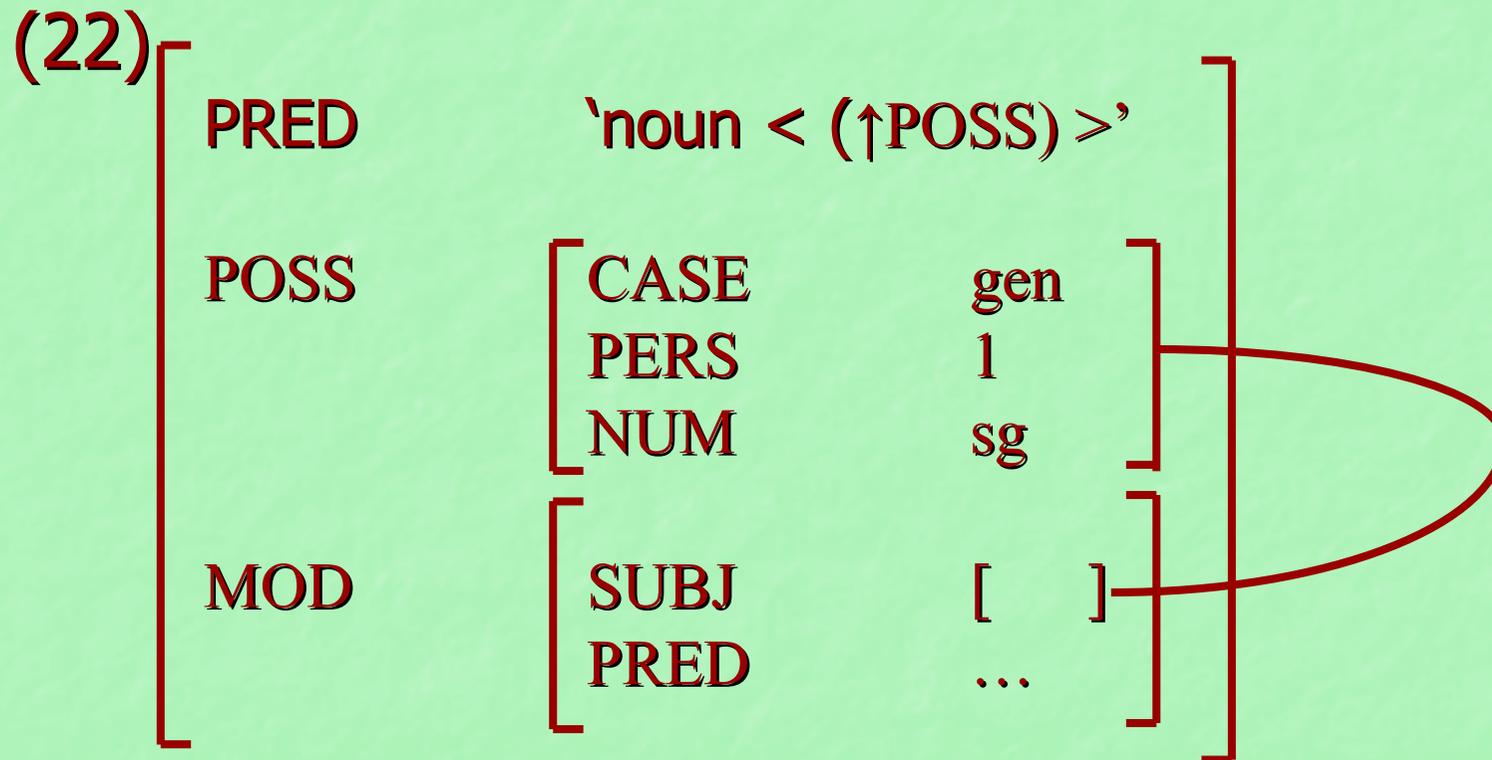
- informally, *my bought book* means that *I* stand in some relation **R** to *book* and in this case the relation is that 'I bought it' (Ackerman et al. (2004))

(21)



(NP_{poss} is empty)

5. POSS in AS (3) Sells (2009)(ii)



- the ordinary noun has a possessor argument

5. POSS in AS (4) Lødrup (2009)(i)

(C) Lødrup (2009): possessor raising in Norwegian

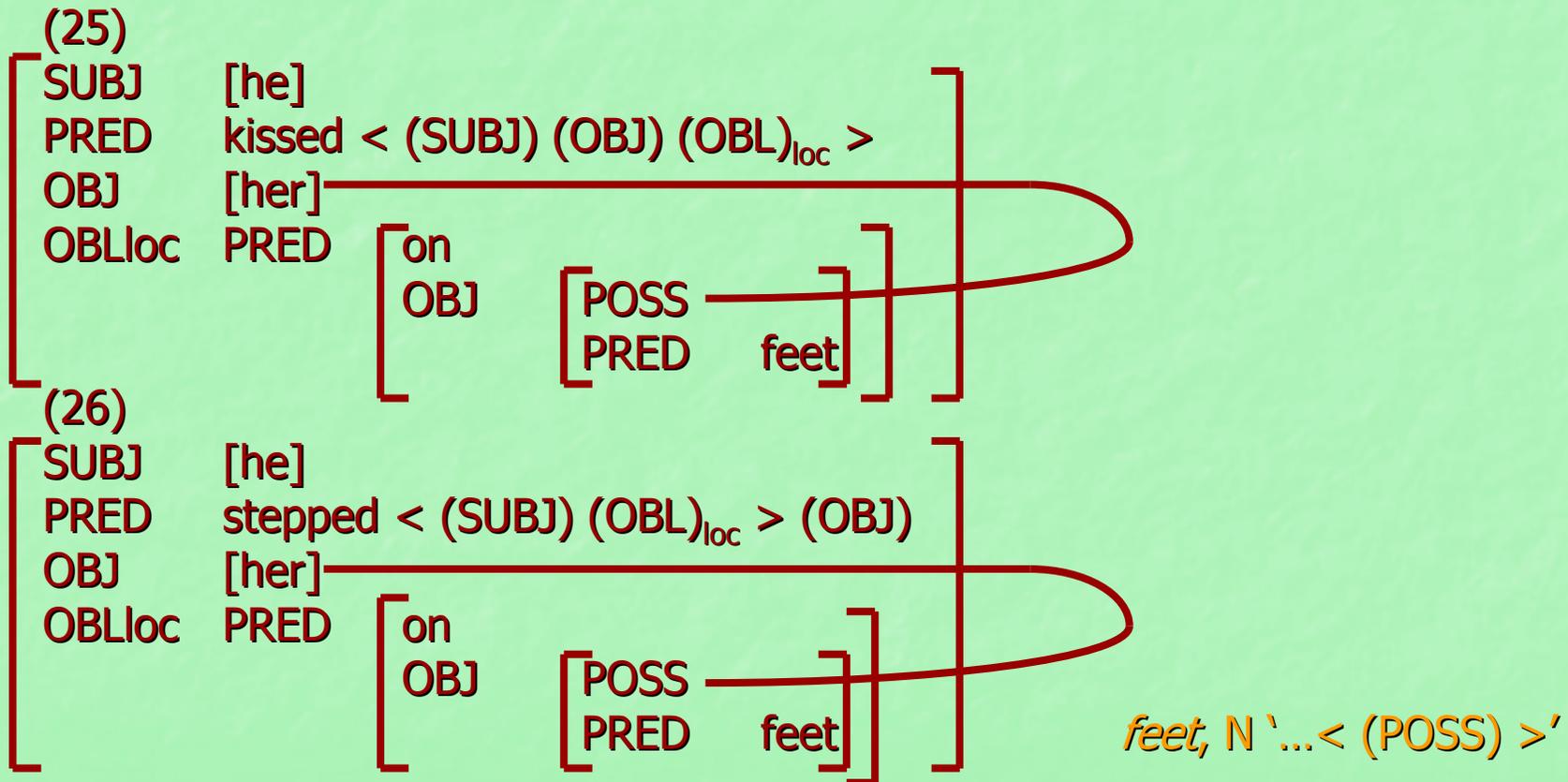
- AS for inalienable nouns
- POSS as a semantically unrestricted grammatical function assigned to an argument

(23) Han kysset henne på føttene. (transitive)
he kissed her on feet.DEF
lit.: 'He kissed her on the feet.'

(24) Han tråkket henne på føttene. (unergative)
he stepped her on feet.DEF
lit.: 'He stepped her on the feet.'

5. POSS in AS (5)

Lødrup (2009)(ii)



5. POSS in AS (6)

- **LFG: Bresnan (2001), Sells (2009) and Lødrup (2009) need to assume**
 - POSS in AS (Bresnan and Sells: even for ordinary nouns)
 - POSS is a semantically unrestricted grammatical function in LFG
→ Subject-like in the DP domain
- **LFG: Laczkó (2004): a similar view for Hungarian**
- **LFG: Laczkó (2007): a novel analysis of possessive constructions – the present proposal is compatible with it**
- **GB: Szabolcsi (1994) – some problems with Theta role assignment in the case of relational and deverbal nouns**
- **GB: Alberti (1995) – an LCS-like view of Theta role assignment**

5. POSS in AS (7)

Norwegian relational nouns

- in languages like Norwegian the counterpart of (9b) is grammatical on the inalienable reading
- a question:
 - (i) LCS only
 - (ii) Asudeh (2005) style AS optionality
 - (iii) AS and suppression (→ two lexical forms)
- the answer:
 - (a) (iii) is more uniform (cf. Hungarian)
 - (b) Lødrup (2009) POSS in AS for the treatment of possessor raising, cf. 5.(5)

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