Ruth Kramer. 2014. Clitic doubling or object agreement: the view from Amharic. *NLLT* 32: 593–634.

Lecture 31

November 29, 2023

1 Introduction

The Empirical Puzzle. The empirical focus of Kramer (2014) and Baker & Kramer (2018) is the status of the Object Marker (OM) in Amharic, as well as other languages:

(1) a. Almaz   tämari-w-in   ayy-ätʃtʃ-**ɨw**
         Almaz.F student-DEF.M-ACC see-3FS.S-**3MS.O**
         'Almaz saw the male student.'[2]

     b. Almaz   tämari-wa-n   ayy-ätʃtʃ-**at**
         Almaz.F student-DEF.F-ACC see-3FS.S-**3FS.O**
         'Almaz saw the female student.'[3]

The puzzle comes from the question of whether OM in Amharic is the reflex of an agreement relation or if it is an instance of clitic doubling

(2) ni-***(k)**-te:moa šo:čitl   **Object agreement: Nahuatl**
     1S.S-3S.O-seek flower
     'I seek a flower.'   (Stiebels 1999:790)

(3) **Clitic doubling**
     a. **Rioplatense Spanish**
         (Lo) vimos   a Guille.
         3MS saw.1PL a Guille
         'We saw Guille.'   (Jaeggli 1982:14)

     b. **Greek**
         (ton) idhame to Jani
         3MS saw.1PL the John.ACC
         'We saw John.'   (Philippaki-Warburton et al. 2004)

There is also the puzzle of how these two phenomena differ and how to distinguish them.

(4) <u>Agreement</u> = affix, obligatory, realization of valued phi features on a functional head
     <u>Clitic doubling</u> = morphophonological clitic, optional, D that has moved to a verbal functional head

The Empirical Claim.   Kramer (2014) draws on previous research to present a comparison of Amharic OM with known instances of agreement and clitic doubling.

(5)   **Table 1**   Properties of the Object Marker seen in Sect. 2

Characteristic of Agreement	Characteristic of Clitic Doubling
One object marker per clause	Optional
Attaches to verbal stem	Indexes specific DPs
Refers to highest internal argument	Triggers a semantic effect of emphasis
	Obligatory for inalienably possessed nominals
	No obligatory default
	Allows for backward pronominalization

It is determined to be implausible that OM is an instance of agreement (*pace* Baker 2012). Further argumentation demonstrates the morphonological similar of Amharic OM with clitics.

From an empirical standpoint, this paper is a diagnostic case study in how to distinguish agreement from clitic doubling.

The Analysis.   Kramer (2014) develops a clitic doubling analysis that is parasitic on an agreement relationship between v^0 and the doubled object.

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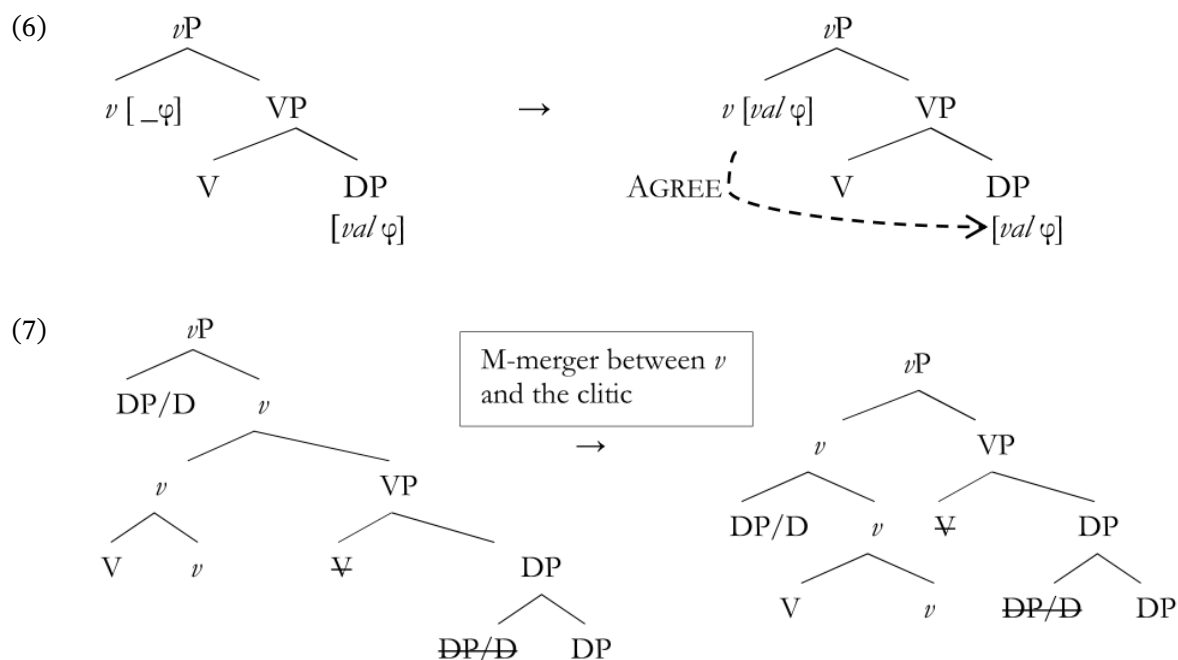
Looking Ahead.   Baker & Kramer (2018) extend this program further by showing that several newly catalogued restrictions on OM are expected from a clitic doubling analysis.

2 The Amharic object marker

Having determined that Amharic OM will not plausibly be treated as an instance of agreement, Kramer (2014) turns to arguments that the OM morpheme is a clitic with the category D.

2.1 Morphological Invariance

The OM morpheme is invariant across different TAM realizations (Kramer 2014:606–609):

(8) <u>Perfect</u>   <u>Imperfect</u>
   a. säbbär-ä-**ññ**   yɨ-säbr-**äññ**
     break.PF-3MS.S-1S.O   3MS.S-break.IMPF-1S.O
   b. säbbär-ä-**h**   yɨ-säbr-**ɨh**
     break.PF-3MS.S-2MS.O   3MS.S-break.IMPF-2MS.O
   c. säbbär-ä-**w**   yɨ-säbr-**äw**
     break.PF-3MS.S-3MS.O   3M.S-break.IMPF-3MS.O

It also does not vary across different properties of v^0:

(9) Almaz mäs'haf-u   tä-sät't'-**at**
   Almaz.F book-DEF.M PASS-give-(3MS.S)-**3FS.O**
   'The book was given (to) Almaz.'[24]   (Baker 2014: (16b))

   ɨdʒdʒ-wa-n   t-at't'äb-ätʃtʃ-ɨw
   hand.M-her-ACC REFL-clean-3FS.S-**3MS.O**
   'She washed her hands.'   (Leslau 1995:464)

It is common cross-linguistically for agreement, but not clitic pronouns, to vary depending on the verbal properties of the clause.

(10) <u>Perfect</u>   <u>Imperfect</u>
   a. säbbär-ku   ɨ-säbr
     break.PF-1S   1S-break.IMPF
   b. säbbär-ɨh   tɨ-säbr
     break.PF-2MS 2MS-break.IMPF
   c. säbbär-ä   yɨ-säbr
     break.PF-3MS 3MS-break.IMPF

It is also common for clitics to vary based on their Case/grammatical role: *le ~ lui.* Amharic OMs do not display this behavior, adding another entry to the list of similarities with agreement markers.

2.2 OMs as Ds

The OM morpheme in Amharic does vary with respect to the ϕ-features, making it similar to other pronominal elements. Treating OM morphemes as D^0 allows for an explanation of these similarities.

Similarities to possessive pronouns. The OM morpheme is syncretic with more than half of the possessive pronominal markers, suggesting its status as a D (Kramer 2014:609–610).

(11)

Table 3 Pronominal possessor paradigm

	Singular	Plural
1st Person	-e	-atʃtʃin
2nd Person	-h (masc.) ǀ -ʃ (fem.)	-atʃtʃihu
3rd person	-u (masc.) ǀ -wa (fem.)	-atʃtʃäw
2nd person polite	-wo(t)	
3rd person polite	-atʃtʃäw	

(12)

	OBJECT MARKER	APPLICATIVE *-ll*	APPLICATIVE *-bb*
3SM	*gäddälä-w*	*gäddälä-llät*	*gäddälä-bbät*
3SF	*gäddäl(ä)-at*	*gäddälä-ll-at*	*gäddälä-bb-at*
2SM	*gäddälä-h*	*gäddälä-ll-əh*	*gäddälä-bb-əh*
2SF	*gäddälä-š*	*gäddälä-ll-əš*	*gäddälä-bb-əš*
1S	*gäddälä-ññ*	*gäddälä-ll-əññ*	*gäddälä-bb-əññ*
3P	*gäddäl(ä)-aččäw*	*gäddälä-ll-aččäw*	*gäddälä-bb-aččäw*
2P	*gäddäl(ä)-aččuh*	*gäddälä-ll-aččuh*	*gäddälä-bb-aččuh*
1P	*gäddälä-n*	*gäddälä-ll-ən*	*gäddälä-bb-ən*
	'he killed him, etc.'	'he killed for him, etc.'	'he killed to his detriment, etc.'

As a point of comparison, we can contrast OM morphemes with the SM morphemes. (Kramer 2014:fn.25) points out that OM and SM morphemes do not significantly overlap.

(13)

	PERFECTIVE	IMPERFECTIVE	JUSSIVE	CONVERB
3SM	*säbbär-ä*	*yɨ-säbr-*	*yɨ-sbär*	*säbro* (<*säbrä-u)
3SF	*säbbär-äčč*	*tə-säbr-*	*tə-sbär*	*säbr-a* (<*säbrä-a)
2SM	*säbbär-k*	*tə-säbr-*	*(t-) səbär*	*säbrä-h*
2SF	*säbbär-š*	*tə-säbr-i-*	*(t-) səbär-i*	*säbrä-š*
1S	*säbbär-kʷ*	*ə-säbr-* (*-l-säbr*)	*lə-sbär*	*säbərre* (<**säbrä-^{GEM}e*)
3P (= 2/3H)	*säbbär-u*	*yɨ-säbr-u-*	*yɨ-sbär-u*	*säbrä-w*
2P	*säbbär-aččuh*	*tə-säbr-u-*	*(t-) səbäru*	*säbraččuh* (<*säbrä-aččuh)
1P	*säbbär-ən*	*ənnə-säbr-*	*ənnə-sbär*	*säbrä-n*

We should also compare Amharic OMs with full pronominal forms, where we do not find significant syncretism.

4

Similarities to determiners.   The OM morpheme is syncretic with the definite marker, suggesting its status as a D (Kramer 2014:610–611).

(14)   a.   C*äw*, V*w*   third person masculine singular object marker
       b.   C*u*, V*w*   masculine singular definite determiner

The same syncretism is not found with either the 3F markers (*at/wa*) or the plural markers.

However, 3MS OMs and definite markers have the same contextual allomorphy conditions: /w/ → [t] / after a verb ending in [u].

(15)   [bä-fätäna yämmi-wädk'-u-t] tämar-otʃtʃ
       at-exam   C-fail-3PL.S-**DEF**   student-PL
       'the students who fail the exam'   (Leslau 1995:84)

Determiner Haplology.   When a determiner and OM morpheme attach to the same host, only the OM morpheme surfaces (Kramer 2014:611–612).

(16)   [wäre-w-in   yä-näggär-at]   lidʒ
       news-DEF-ACC C-tell-(3MS.S)-**3FS.O** child
       'the child who told her the news'   (Leslau 1995:85)

This otherwise puzzling fact can be understood as an instance of haplology given the D status of the OM morpheme.

(17)   **Morphological Haplology of D**   (D_1 = Object Marker,
       $Stem - D_1 - D_2 \rightarrow Stem - D_1$ D_2 = Definite Determiner)

2.3   Clitic v. Affix: Morpheme Ordering Constraint

There is an adopted set of morphophonological criteria used for distinguished affixes from clitics. These include:

(18)   Criterion B: Arbitrary gaps are more common for affixes than for clitics.

       Criterion C: Morphophonological idiosyncrasies are more common for affixes than for clitics.
       Criterion F: Clitics can attach to material already containing clitics, but affixes cannot.

Amharic OMs show behaviors consistent with being categorized as clitics, though this does not by itself entail that they are pronominal/D^0 (Kramer 2014:612–614).

Namely, there are no arbitrary gaps and there are no idiosyncratic suppletive forms.

Criterion F is interesting for being a way of describing acceptable violations of Mirror Principle as a way of satisfying the Morpheme Ordering Constraint.

(19) Almaz tämari-w-in   ayy-ätʃtʃ-ɨw   (repeated from (1a))
      Almaz.F student-DEF.M-ACC see-3FS.S-3MS.O
   'Almaz saw the male student.'

The OM morpheme attaches to a form of the verb inflected with SM, suggesting that it is a clitic, as opposed to an inflectional affix.

3   A Clitic Doubling Analysis

Kramer (2014) provides an analysis of OM in Amharic and the OM morpheme that has the following pieces:

- The object marker begins adjoined to the DP it cross-references,
- The clitic A-moves to Spec,vP,
- The clitic undergoes m-merger with v^0,

These pieces fit together to produce the following picture:

(20)
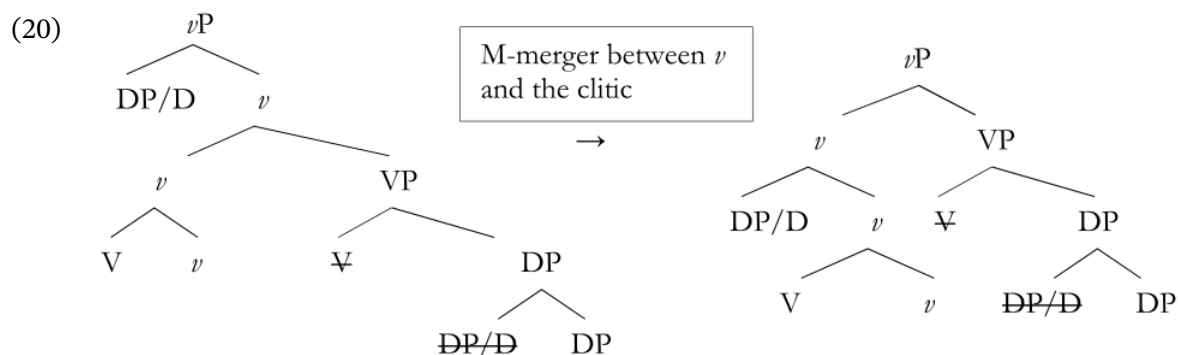
3.1   The origin of the clitic

An influential analysis of clitic doubling, in which the clitic is a D^0, treats the clitic analogously to a floated quantifier:

(21)
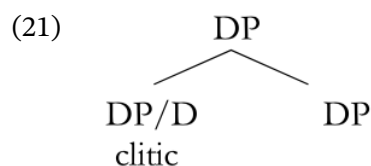
This structure treats the doubled/quantified DP as a constituent to the exclusion of the clitic/quantifier.

(22)   a.   **All the students**$_1$ are t_1 leaving.
        b.   **The students**$_1$ are [**all** t_1] leaving.

3.2 The mechanics of A-movement

A-Movement. [Kramer (2014)](#) points out that many treatments of clitics and clitic doubling suppose that the clitic undergoes A-movement. This is consistent with backward pronominalization facts:

(23) a. Tigist$_i$ tämari-wa$_i$-n ayy-ätʃtʃ
          Tigist.F student-her-ACC see-3FS.S
          'Tigist$_i$ saw her$_i$ student.'

     b. ?*tämari-wa$_i$ Tigist$_i$-in ayy-ä
          student-her Tigist.F-ACC see-3MS.S
          Intended: 'Her$_i$ student saw Tigist$_i$.'

(24) tämari-wa$_i$ Tigist$_i$-in ayy-**at**
      student-her Tigist.F-ACC see-(3MS.S)-3FS.O
      'Her$_i$ student saw Tigist$_i$.'

A-movement is otherwise understood to adjust binding relationships.

(25) a. **John**$_1$ seems to **himself**$_1$ to be t_1 intelligent.
     b. *It seems to **himself**$_1$ that **John**$_1$ is t_1 intelligent.

But it's unclear why in (24) binding would be a necessary condition for coreference. I think the strongest thing we're permitted to say at this point is that clitic doubling allows new *co-reference* relationships.

The Locus of Movement. Knowing that the clitic must cliticize with the verbal root, movement plausibly targets a position within the vP.

In line with standard Minimalist analyses, movement is triggered by an AGREE relation between a head and the moving phrase.

Thus, v^0 agrees with the DP and this triggers movement of the clitic into a local relationship with v^0.

(26)
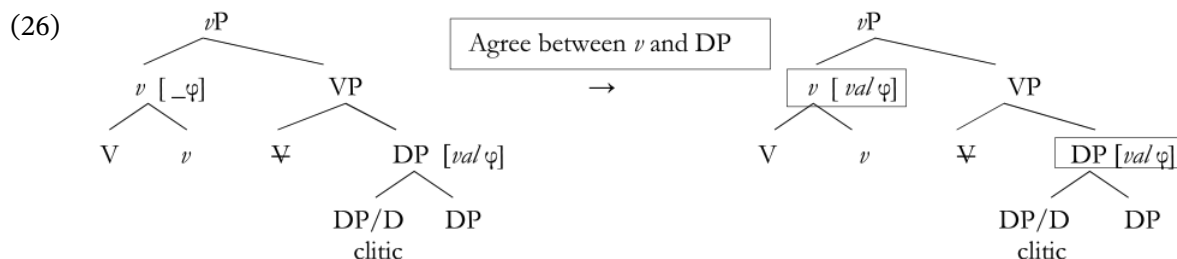
Ultimately, the agreement relationship between v^0 and the doubled DP is nothing more than an abstract object agreement relationship that triggers A-movement.
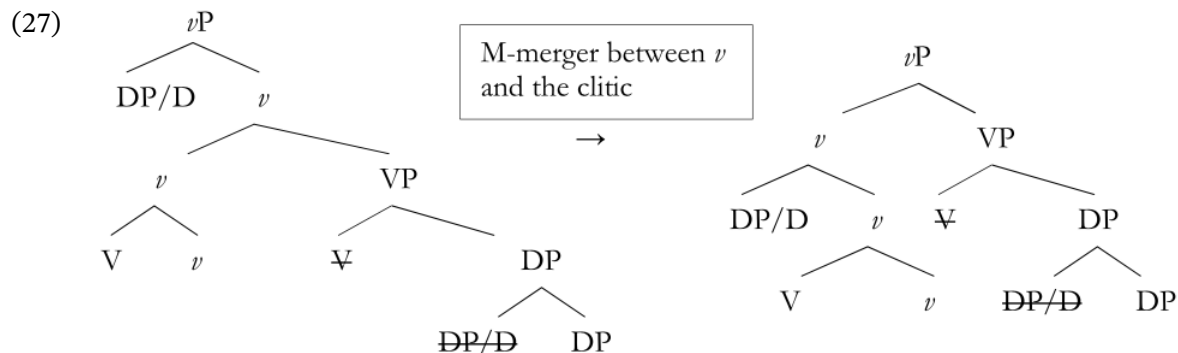
The ϕ-agreement properties of the clitic are the result of its local relationship with the doubled DP.

3.3 M-merger

Cliticization of the OM and the verb is the result of:

- Movement of the verb to v^0

- A-movement of the clitic to Spec,vP, and

- M(orphological)-merger of the D^0-V^0-v^0 complex.

This is schematized as below:

(27)

Without a more explicit picture of the coreference facts above, the same empirical results are achieved here if we assume successive applications of head movement: D^0-to–V^0-to-v^0 movement.

(Kramer 2014:620–622) considers and ultimately adopts a slightly altered view of clitic doubling for Amharic. This is an analysis based on a proposal by Harizanov (2014) whereby the doubled DP undergoes Object Shift and is partially pronounced in both positions.

Analyses along these lines have been called into question by Kalin (2018) and Kalin & Weisser (2019).

4 Capturing Clitic Properties

Kramer (2014:622–624) spends some time showing how the proposed analysis can be used to tie up loose ends.

4.1 Loose ends tied-up

D-like behavior.   The similarities between the OM morpheme and other D elements is captured by the assertion that the OM morpheme is (the phonological realization of) a D^0.

Backwards pronominalization.   OM ameliorates disjoint reference effects associated with backward pronominalization because the OM morpheme undergoes A-movement.

On the Object Shift approach, the DP moves to a position where it presumably binds an in-situ subject. Although it's not entirely clear why binding must be invoked.

Specific DPs and Emphasis. As a D^0, specificity and emphasis can be encoded directly onto the the OM morpheme.

Assuming that the A-movement of the OM is a case of Object Shift, we expect the link between OM and definite/specific DPs as well as the emphasis effect.

Lack of a default. As an independent D^0 morpheme, there is no alternative spell-out for the OM; it is either present or absent.

Alternatively, a non-specific DP means no Object Shift, which means a doubled clitic would be unlicensed.

Optionality. OM should be as optional as the use and stranding of floated quantifiers.

Under the slightly more articulated story that is found in Kramer sec.4.4 2014, OM is as optional as Object Shift. But it's not clear to me how optional Object Shift is (Johnson 1991, Diesing 1992).

Morpheme Ordering. The cliticization of the OM morpheme to an inflected form of a verb can be understood assuming that the following complex head is constructed:

(28)
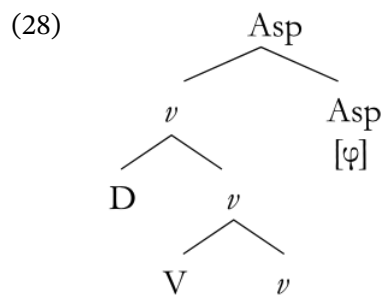
Instructions for the OM morpheme to be an enclitic will linearize D^0 at the right edge of this m-word.

Cliticization to the verbal stem. The verbal complex and auxiliaries do not undergo m-merger, meaning D^0 is always pronounced on V^0 and not on Aux^0.

4.2 Loose ends left loose

The Inalienability Puzzle. The obligation to cross-reference inalienably possessed DPs remains an open issue (Kramer 2014:624).

Ditransitives. Locality constraints on Agree help us understand why the highest internal argument is cross-referenced by OM. But, something must be said for why multiple clitics are not possible in Amharic.

Applicative Markers. Applciative markers present a similar conundrum whereby they may be seen as agreement morphemes or pronominal clitics.

With respect to the diagnostics available in this paper, they are compatible with a clitic doubling analysis.

Non-optionality. In addition to structures with inalienably possessed objects, there are several other environments in which OM morphemes are obligatory. OM obligatorily cross-references:

- the remaining internal argument of certain passivized ditransitives,

- the possessor in existential-*have* predication,

- the experiencer of certain psych-verbs, and

- the "affected argument" in dyadic unaccusative verbs.

Moreover, OM is obligatory regardless of the definiteness/specificity of the cross-referenced DP. Baker (2012) tells us that this can be expected from an agreement analysis.

However, clitic-doubling is obligatory in some or all of these environments in clitic-doubling languages. Thus, an analysis of clitic-doubling would presumably derive these facts as well and this is an argument for Amharic OMs as pronominal clitics.

5 Summary

OM in Amharic:

- shows few properties that make it compatible with treatment as an agreement morpheme and

- shows numerous properties observed for known clitics.

For Kramer (2014), this motivates an analysis in which OM in Amharic is a clitic that doubles the object that it cross-references.

(29)
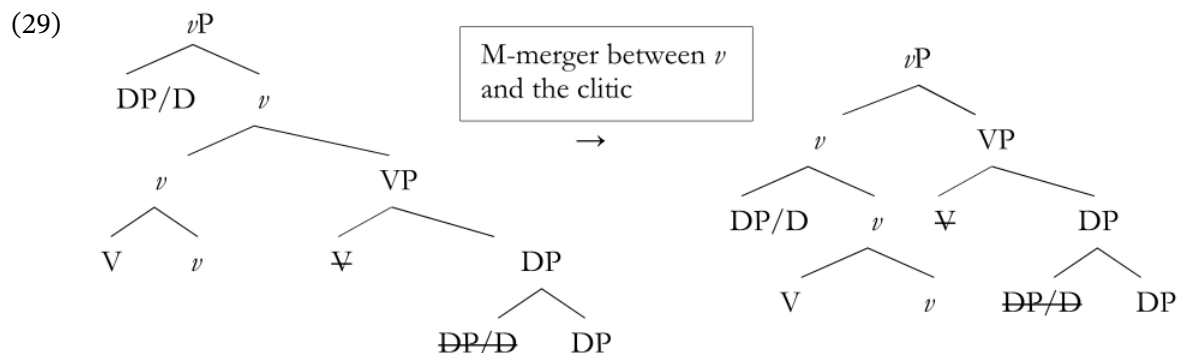
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