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English Right Dislocation

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Abstract

A number of researchers claim that the the Right derivation of Dislocation Construction (RDC) involves movement (e.g., Chung, 2012, for Korean; Ott & de Vries, 2012, 2015, for Dutch and German; Tanaka, 2001 and Abe, 2004, for Japanese; Whitman, 2000, for English, Japanese, and Korean). However, the RDC in English does not obey movement constraints such as the Coordinate Structure Constraint and the Left Branch Condition; that is, there are acceptable sentences that seem to violate these movement constraints. This suggests that the derivation of the English RDC should not involve movement. The present paper demonstrates that some syntactic properties of the English RDC can be explained instead through the interaction of independently motivated parsing strategies with a licensing condition for adjoined elements.

1 Introduction

The Right Dislocation Construction (RDC) is a construction in which a dislocated NP appearing in sentence-final position refers to a pronoun, as observed in example (1), with the relevant pronoun in italics and the dislocated NP in boldface.

(1) *He* is real smart, **John**.

As (2) shows, the dislocated NP cannot occur outside the embedded clause that contains the relevant pronoun. This seems to suggest that the dislocated NP is derived by movement, because a violation of a movement constraint—namely, the Right Roof Constraint (RRC)—appears to be present (Ross, 1986: 179).¹ (2) *That *they* spoke to the janitor about that robbery yesterday is terrible, **the cops**.(Ross, 1986: 258)

However, there is a construction that violates the RRC but is still acceptable, as seen in (3).

(3) [That *they* spoke to the janitor about that robbery yesterday] is terrible, I mean, **the cops**. (Whitman, 2000: 450)

The sentence in (3) differs from that in (2) only in that it has *I mean* inserted between the preceding clause and the dislocated element. This suggests that the derivation of the RDC should at least not involve rightward movement.² Note that the relevant pronoun is not a "resumptive" pronoun that repairs an island violation; it would otherwise be difficult to account for the unacceptability of the example in (2), in which the pronoun seems to play no role in repairing the violation of the RRC.³

Further acceptable examples that appear to violate movement constraints exist, as in (4).

(4) a. I saw Mary and *him* downtown yesterday, your friend from Keokuk.

(Ross, 1986: 260) b. I noticed *his* car in the driveway last night, your friend from Keokuk. (*ibid*.)

In (4), it is possible to connect the dislocated NPs with *him* and *his*, respectively. If the dislocated NP in (4a) were extracted from the position occupied by the pronoun *him*, a conjunct could be moved. Likewise in (4b), if the dislocated NP were extracted from the position occupied by *his*, an

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¹ Another possibility is a violation of the Sentential Subject Constraint.

² An example of the type in (3) was originally provided by Tsubomoto (1995), who argues against a movement analysis for the RDC and accounts for some of its properties in terms of information structure.

³ If movement were involved in the derivation of the RDC and the relevant pronoun were a resumptive pronoun, the RRC would be a condition on a representation.

element could be moved out of the specifier position of the NP.

Irrespective of whether an element moves rightward or leftward, however, English observes the Coordinate Structure Constraint (CSC) and the Left Branch Condition (LBC), as shown in (5) and (6), respectively.

- (5) a. ***What sofa**_i will he put the chair between some table and t_i ? (*ibid*.: 97)
 - b. *I saw Mary and *t*_i downtown yesterday, your friend from Keokuk_i. (*ibid*.: 260)

(6) a. ***Whose**_i did you steal *t*_i money?

(McCawley, 1998: 526) b. *I noticed *t*_i car in the driveway last night, your friend from Keokuk_i.

(Ross, 1986: 260)

If the derivation of the RDC involved rightward movement in any way, the examples in (4) would violate the movement constraints, resulting in unacceptability—contrary to the actual situation. Furthermore, the examples in (4) suggest that the derivation of the RDC involves no rightward movement.⁴

This paper is structured as follows. In section 2, I argue that the derivation of the RDC involves no movement, by pointing out empirical problems with the argument by Whitman (2000), who claims that the derivation of the RDC in English involves the operation of deletion after leftward movement. In section 3, I first set out a number of independently motivated principles, such as parsing principles and a licensing condition for adjoined elements, and then I demonstrate that the interaction of the licensing condition with these principles can account for the cases with which movement analyses fail to cope. Section 4 concludes the paper.

2 Problems with a Biclausal + Deletion Analysis

In the previous section, I discussed certain empirical problems with rightward movement analyses. In this section, I take up Whitman (2000) as an example of leftward movement analyses, and demonstrate that it fails to account for several properties of the English RDC.

Whitman (2000) follows Kayne (1994) in claiming that a sentence like that in (1) is derived from the biclausal structure shown in (7), as in (8).



(8) [_{CP1}He is real smart], John_i, [_{CP2} $t_i \frac{is real smart}{smart}$]

As (8) shows, *John* is left-adjoined/dislocated to CP_2 , and the remaining elements (i.e., the underlined parts) are deleted under an identity condition, thereby generating (1).^{5,6}

According to Whitman (2000), the RRC effect displayed in (2) is explained as follows: As in (1), (2) is formed by first conjoining two clauses, and then, as shown in (9), *the cops* is extracted from the sentential subject in CP_2 to adjoin to the left side of CP_2 . This extraction, however, violates the Sentential Subject Constraint, resulting in the RRC effect.

(9) *[_{CP1}That they spoke to the janitor about that robbery yesterday] is terrible, [the cops]_i, [_{CP2} [that t_i spoke to the janitor about that robbery yesterday] is terrible]. (Whitman, 2000: 458)

However, the analysis above is empirically problematic, because (3) would be excluded in the

⁴ It is assumed that the CSC and the LBC are regarded as conditions on movement rather than on representations.

⁵ Whitman (2000) claims that his analysis is also applicable to the RDC in Japanese and Korean. Similar proposals are made by, e.g., Chung (2012) for Korean, Ott and de Vries (2012, 2015) for Dutch and German, and Endo (1996), Tanaka (2001) and Abe (2003) for Japanese. What these proposals have in common is that the RDC has a biclausal structure and undergoes left-adjoinment to the second clause before deletion under an identity condition. Hence, the application of these approaches to English RDCs will face similar sorts of empirical problems to those Whitman (2000) does.

⁶ The identity condition is not clearly defined in Whitman (2000). Incidentally, Ott and de Vries (2012) follow Merchant (2001) in assuming that "the deleted domain in CP₂ and its antecedent domain in CP₁ must be semantically equivalent...."

same way as (2) is.⁷ Furthermore, the analysis is not adequate to account for the examples in (4). That is, *your friend from Keokuk*('s) would be extracted from the respective second clauses [*I saw Mary and your friend from Keokuk downtown yesterday*] and [*I noticed your friend from Keokuk's car in the driveway last night*]. These extractions, however, violate the CSC and the LBC, as discussed in section 1. Thus, the biclausal + deletion analysis also cannot account for the acceptability of the examples in (4) (see footnote 4).⁸

Moreover, the biclausal + deletion analysis faces another empirical problem.

(10) The girl who ate *it*, **the potato salad**, was rushed to the hospital.⁹ (Gundel, 1988: 132)

The example in (10) shows that the RDC is possible inside an embedded clause.¹⁰ There are at least two possible ways for (10) to be derived under the analysis in question. The relevant possible structures corresponding to that in (8) before deletion takes place would be those in (11), with the content of CP_1 in (11a) ignored.

- (11) a. [CP1 ...], the potato salad_i [CP2 the girl who ate t_i was rushed to the hospital]
 - b. (the girl who) [[_{CP1} ate it], **the potato salad**_i [_{CP2} ate *t*_i]]

In (11a), *the potato salad* moves out of a relative clause. This movement violates the Complex NP Constraint, and so this possibility should be excluded. As for (11b), *the potato salad* moves leftward inside a relative clause. As Gundel (1988: 151) points out, however, leftward movement in a relative clause is not permitted, as illustrated by (12).

(12) *The one who [topic-comment structure_i doesn't understand t_i] is me.
(adapted from Gundel, 1988: 151)

Hence, the structure in (11b) would not be appropriate either.

The biclausal + deletion analysis might claim that the internal structure of the embedded clause in (10) is different from that of the relative clause in a sentence like (12). If so, the analysis would be unable to cope with an unacceptable example such as (13), in which the embedded clause appears to have the same structure as that in (10).

(13) *Bill gave the girl who [ate *it*, **the potato** salad], a dollar.

Thus, biclausal + deletion analyses such as that of Whitman (2000) have empirical problems. On the basis of the discussion in sections 1 and 2 here, it seems safe to say that the derivation of the English RDC does not involve movement (i.e., that the RDC is base-generated).

3 A Base-Generation Analysis3.1 Parsing strategies

Concerning a parsing strategy, I follow Pritchett (1992b) in adopting the Generalized Theta Attachment (GTA) strategy, formulated in (14).

 (14) Generalized Theta Attachment (GTA): Every principle of the Syntax attempts to be maximally satisfied at every point during processing. (Pritchett, 1992b: 138)

Despite the presence of "theta attachment" in the name, Pritchett (1992b) notes that the GTA strategy should be understood to denote that the parser attempts to maximally satisfy all syntactic principles—not just the theta-attachment principle. To instantiate (14), consider a simple English sentence like that in (15), the parsing of which is set out in (16).

In (15), *John* is identified as an NP with no assigned theta-role, and the GTA strategy is attempted. However, as no theta-role assigner has been encountered, theta-roles are unavailable. *John* is therefore stored (i.e., left unattached to anything) until a theta-role assigner is encountered; otherwise,

⁷ Although Whitman (2000) provides (3) in his paper, it is unclear how he accounts for its acceptability as he does not elaborate on this type of example.

⁸ One of the reviewers of this paper has mentioned that if island constraints are a PF-phenomenon, as Merchant (2001, 2003) claims, the argument based on islands becomes moot. As the reviewer points out, however, the example in (2) would challenge Whitman's analysis.

⁹ Left dislocation is not permitted in an embedded clause.

 ⁽i) *The woman who that book, wrote *it* is a well-known linguist.
(Gundel, 1988: 84)
¹⁰ The DDC is an embedded elsere is not elserementible. See the second second

¹⁰ The RDC in an embedded clause is not always possible. See (13) in this regard.

the theta-criterion would not be locally satisfied (see 16a).

(15) John saw Mary.



When saw is encountered, it is identified as a transitive verb (see 16b). The GTA strategy is again attempted, and this time, a potential argument (i.e., John) and a theta-role assigner (i.e., saw) are available. At this point, the strategy may be successfully applied: The parser integrates John as a subject, postulating a trace in the specifier position of the vP such that the trace can be assigned a theta-role by the verb saw, the theta-role being transmitted through a chain to the subject John. Consequently, the parser contains a structure like (16c). $^{\Pi}$ Note that the theta-criterion is maximally satisfied here, although saw still has a theta-role to discharge (see Mulders, 2002: 187). The structure in (16c) therefore does not contain a node that might be predicted to exist as an object of saw on the basis of the lexical information (argument structure).

When *Mary* is encountered, it is identified as an argument, and the GTA strategy is attempted once again to assign *Mary* a theta-role. *Mary* is merged with the trace of *saw*, and is then assigned a theta-role through the chain. The parser finishes successfully, yielding the parse tree in (16d).

In addition to the GTA in (14), I adopt the Right Association Principle (RAP) proposed by Kimball (1973), presented in a slightly modified form in (17).

(17) Right Association Principle (RAP): Terminal symbols optimally associate to the lowest non-terminal node. (Kimball, 1973: 24)

The RAP can account, for example, for (18)'s having a preference for the reading in (18'a) rather than that in (18'b).

- (18) Joe figured that Susan wanted to take the train to New York out. (*ibid*.)
- (18') a. Joe figured that Susan wanted to [take the train to New York out].
 - b. Joe [figured that Susan wanted to take the train to New York] out.

In (18'a), the particle *out* is associated with [*take the train to New York*], whereas in (18'b), *out* is linked to [*figured that Susan wanted to take the train to New York*]. The RAP requires *out* to be linked to the lower verb phrase. ¹² Thus, the preferred interpretation is (18'a), where *take the train to New York out* forms a constituent.

3.2 Garden path phenomena

In addressing garden path phenomena, I propose the reanalysis condition in (19), which is adapted from the On-Line Locality Constraint originally proposed by Pritchett (1992b).¹³

(19) Unconscious Reanalysis Condition (URC): It is possible for the human parser to make a syntactic reanalysis (i.e., reanalysis is low-cost) only if the final attachment site β c-commands the original attachment site α , and every phase (i.e., vP, CP) containing α contains β .¹⁴

¹¹ CP and C are omitted for reasons of space.

¹² The reason that the particle *out* is not associated with the "real" lowest node [NP New York] may be that, even if it is associated with the NP, this combination of the NP and *out* is not permitted in English. Thus, I assume tentatively that the lowest node to which an element must attach should be construed as the lowest among the nodes to which the element attaches to get a permissible combination of items in a relevant language.

¹³ On-Line Locality Constraint (OLLC):

The target position (if any) assumed by a constituent must be governed or dominated by its source position (if any), otherwise attachment is impossible for the automatic Human Sentence Processor. (Pritchett, 1992b: 101) ¹⁴ "Node A c-commands node B if neither A nor B dominates the other and the first branching node which dominates A dominates B." (Reinhart, 1976: 32)

Note that the URC includes the notion of the "phase" introduced within the minimalist framework (see Chomsky, 2001; cf. Citko, 2014).¹⁵ To see how the URC works, let us compare the sentences in (20).¹⁶

(20) a. John gave her books to Mary.

b. #I put the candy in the jar into my mouth. (Pritchett, 1992b: 101, 104)

In (20a), *her* is initially identified as an object of *gave*. On reaching *books*, the parser analyzes it as the second complement of the verb. The parse tree at this point is as in (21a), with CP and C omitted for reasons of space.¹⁷



Upon encountering *to Mary*, the parser can reanalyze *her* and *books* respectively as a determiner and the head of the first (rather than the second) internal argument; the subsequent parse tree will be that in (21b), with only the relevant parts illustrated for reasons of space. In (21b), the

¹⁵ It is assumed here that syntactic structures are constructed by *Merge* (Chomsky, 1995).

element in the final attachment site *books* (= β) ccommands the original attachment site *to Mary* (= α) (i.e., the second internal argument position), and every phase (i.e., *v*P) containing *to Mary* (= α) also contains *books* (= β). According to the URC in (19), this is a low-cost reanalysis; thus, (20a) is easily comprehensible.¹⁸

Now, let us turn to (20b). When *into my mouth* is encountered, *the candy* and *in the jar* must undergo reanalysis. The resulting parse tree would be that in (22), again with CP and C omitted for reasons of space. Here, however, the final attachment site *in the jar* (= β) does not c-command the original attachment site *into my mouth* (= α); this results in a high-cost reanalysis. Thus, (20b) requires conscious processing.



Next, let us consider the sentence in (23).

(23) #After Susan drank the water evaporated. (Pritchett, 1992b: 101, 104)

In (23), *the water* is initially identified as the direct object of *drank*. As soon as *evaporated* is encountered, *the water* is reinterpreted as the subject of *evaporated*; *drank* is simultaneously reinterpreted as an intransitive verb. This yields a parse tree like that in (24), with the final attachment site β cannot c-command the original attachment site α . The reattachment of *the water* to the specifier position of the matrix TP is thus

 $^{^{16}}$ # indicates that the relevant sentence is grammatical but unacceptable.

¹⁷ Chomsky (2005: 12) points out that "[w]ithout further stipulations, external Merge yields n-ary constituents." I therefore assume that VP constituents can have more than two branches.

¹⁸ To complete the URC, it is necessary to add the disjunctive statement "or α contains β ," which accounts for the ability of *her* to undergo reanalysis (cf. Pritchett, 1992a; Siloni, 2014).

costly, and the sentence in (23) is therefore difficult to comprehend.



3.3 An Analysis

Before discussing how the RRC effect in the RDC follows from the above parsing strategies, I adopt the licensing condition (LC) for adjoined elements proposed by Kamada (2009, 2010, 2013a,b) in a slightly amended form, as presented in (25).

- (25) The licensing condition for adjoined phrases (where X=any syntactic category): A phrase α adjoined to XP is licensed only if α is associated with an element β such that
 - (i) α c-commands β , and
 - (ii) α is non-distinct from β in terms of φ -features and Case features.¹⁹

Furthermore, I have revised the Interpretive Rules originally proposed by Kamada (2009, 2010, 2013a,b), given in revised form in (26)

- (26) Interpretive rules for adjoined phrases
 - Suppose that a phrase α is adjoined to XP (where X=any syntactic category) and is associated with an element β ; then,
 - (i) α is construed as an element sharing properties with β^{20} only if

- a. α is an NP or a CP and
- b. α is non-distinct from β in terms of semantic features and semantic types.²¹
- (ii) α is construed as a potential modifier of β only if α cannot be construed as an element sharing properties with β (cf. Heim & Kratzer, 1998: 65).

Let us first reconsider (1) in order to illustrate how (25) and (26) interact with the parsing strategies. In (1), upon encountering *John*, the parser realizes that there are no following elements, and starts to find a relevant element to license *John*, at the same time adjoining *John* to the preceding element. The RAP in (17) mandates that *John* should adjoin to the lowest AP node. The parse tree existing at this point is given in (1'), again with only the relevant parts illustrated for reasons of space.



In (1'), **John** c-commands AP (i.e., *real smart*), and they are non-distinct from each other with respect to φ - and Case features.²² **John** can thus be associated with *real smart*, thereby being licensed. **John** and *real smart* cannot be construed as elements sharing properties with each other,

b. Johni, I assure you t_i to be a nice guy. (Rizzi, 1990: 60)

¹⁹Adger and Harbour (2008: 16) point out that in German, when *Mädchen* 'girl', which is grammatically neuter, is referenced by a pronoun, the feminine is used but not the neuter. Hence, the neuter could be non-distinct from the feminine somehow.

 $^{^{20}}$ α and β share properties including theta-roles (if any), referentiality, and semantic features/types unless semantic conflicts occur.

²¹ Concerning semantic types, if α is an NP, its semantic type may be <e> or < <e, t> t>, and if α is a CP, its semantic type may be <t> or <e, t>.

²² If the right-dislocated NPs had Case features, uninterpretable Case features would remain unchecked, yielding a violation of the principle of Full Interpretation. This point is supported by the observation that fronted NPs can appear in nonargument positions without Case features being checked, as show in (i.b) and (i.d):

⁽i) a. *I assured you John to be a nice guy.

c. *He alleged Melvin to be a pimp.

d. Who_i did he allege t_i to be a pimp? (Postal, 1974: 304-5) The above observation falls under the generalization that overt NPs in peripheral positions do not have to have Case features. This generalization may extend to the case of RDCs.

because their semantic types are different (i.e., <e> for *John* and <e, t> for *real smart*). Furthermore, semantic deviance excludes the possibility of *John*'s being construed as a modifier of *real smart*. The parser will therefore attempt to reattach *John* to v' in order to obtain an appropriate interpretation. The parse tree after the reanalysis is that in (1"), where the final attachment site of the dislocated NP is indicated by bold italics.



The URC in (19) allows the parser to reattach *John* to the *v*P, because the final attachment site *John* (= β) c-commands the original attachment site *John* (= α), and every phase (i.e., *v*P) containing *John* (= α) contains *John* (= β). *John* thus c-commands the trace of *he* (i.e., *t*_i), and they are non-distinct in terms of φ - and Case features (see footnote 21). According to (25), *John* is thus associated with the trace, thereby being licensed. Then, *John* is non-distinct from the trace of *he* in terms of semantic features and semantic type. Thus, (26) allows *John* to be construed as an element sharing properties with the trace (i.e., *he*).²³ The sentence in (1) is therefore acceptable.

Next, let us return to the sentence in (2), in which the RRC effect is observed. In accordance with the RAP in (17), as in the case of (1), when *the cops* is encountered, it is adjoined to the lowest AP node. The parse tree at this point is that in (2'), where the relevant pronoun *they*/its trace is within the sentential subject that moves to the specifier

position of the main TP, leaving its trace in the specifier position of the main vP.



In (2'), *the cops* c-commands *terrible*, and they are non-distinct from each other in terms of φ - and Case features. *The cops* can therefore be associated with *terrible*, thereby being licensed. *The cops*, however, cannot be construed as modifying *terrible*, because of semantic deviance. *The cops* must thus be reattached to the v' in the main clause, as shown in (2"). This reattachment is low-cost for the same reason as in (1").



However, *the cops* (= β) in (2") still fails to ccommand the pronoun *they* or its trace inside the sentential subject [*they spoke to the janitor about that robbery yesterday*]. Thus, *the cops* cannot be associated with *they* or its trace, and is not licensed. An alternative analysis would reattach *the cops* to the matrix TP or CP, where *the cops* could ccommand *they*. However, this syntactic reanalysis would be banned, as the final attachment site is not contained in the phase vP that contains the original attachment site. Example (2), therefore, displays the RRC effect.

 $^{^{23}}$ As Fiengo and May (1994) point out, noncoindexing does not mean noncoreference. Hence, the binding principle (C) precludes the coindexing of *John* and *he* in (1"), but they can still become coreferential through (26).

The claim that the RRC effect is not a grammatical phenomenon is supported by the example in (3), which is acceptable. Suppose that, when *I mean* is encountered, it should be adjoined to the main clause CP, as shown in (3°) .²⁴ Then, the dislocated NP is adjoined to the main clause. As a result, *the cops* c-commands the pronoun *they*; *The cops* can thus be associated with *they*, and is properly licensed. The interpretive rules in (26) allow *the cops* to be construed as an element sharing properties with *they*, because they are non-distinct in terms of semantic features and semantic type. Thus, (3) is acceptable.



Let us now consider the examples in (4), which respectively appear to violate the CSC and the LBC. When the dislocated NPs are encountered, they adjoin to the VP. As a result, they c-command the relevant pronouns (*him* and *his*, respectively). In (4a), *him* is associated with the dislocated NP because they are non-distinct in terms of φ - and Case features. Hence, the dislocated NP is properly licensed. According to (26), *him* and the dislocated NP are non-distinct in terms of semantic features and semantic type. The dislocated NP can therefore be construed as an element sharing properties with *him*.

Likewise in (4b), the dislocated NP is associated with the genitive pronoun *his* and is properly licensed, because they are non-distinct in terms of φ - and Case features (see footnote 22). *His* and the dislocated NP are non-distinct in terms of semantic features and semantic type. Thus, the dislocated NP and *his* can be construed as sharing properties.

Now, let us return to the cases in (10) and (13), where RDCs may or may not appear in embedded clauses. In (10), when *the potato salad* is encountered, it is identified as an NP that has no theta-role assigned. At this point there is no theta-

role assigner, and hence the NP is held in store. Upon encountering *rushed*, the parser attaches *the* potato salad to the preceding element based on the RAP; otherwise, the complex NP (i.e., the girl who ate it) would not be assigned a theta-role. In order to license *the potato salad*, the application of the LC in (25) is attempted. Within the structure $[_{VP}$ [VP tv it] the potato salad], the potato salad ccommands the pronoun *it*, and is therefore associated with the pronoun and licensed. Then, the complex NP $[_{NP}$ the girl who ate *it*, the potato salad] is attached to the matrix T to receive a theta-role and have its Case checked. The potato salad is non-distinct from *it* in terms of semantic features and semantic type, and can thus be construed as sharing properties with *it*. Thus, example (10) is acceptable.

As for (13), when *the potato salad* is encountered, it is identified as an NP that has no theta-role assigned. At this point, *gave*, which is a theta-role assigner, is available. Thus, the GTA strategy in (14) is attempted, and *the potato salad* is attached to the object position to which *gave* assigns its theta-role, resulting in local satisfaction of the theta criterion. When *a dollar* is reached, *the potato salad* is reattached to a constituent inside the embedded clause. According to the URC in (19), however, this reattachment is impossible: the final attachment site fails to c-command the original attachment site of *the potato salad*. Thus, (13) is difficult to comprehend.

4 Conclusion

This paper claims that the derivation of the English RDC involves no movement and that the (un)acceptability of the RDC can be accounted for through the interaction of the licensing condition with parsing strategies. In this way, certain syntactic phenomena receiving a formal grammatical account are better explained in terms of independently motivated properties of language processing mechanisms.

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²⁴ It seems that the permissible combination of an interjection or a discourse marker such as *I mean* with elements in English is only the attachment of the former (e.g., *I mean*) to a main clause (see footnote 12).

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