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Negation in Mosuli Arabic

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Abstract

Arabic has many varieties and is spoken all over the Middle East. This study talks about one of the varieties of Arabic called North Mesopotamian Arabic, also known as Mosuli Arabic. Mosuli is spoken in the city of Mosul in the north of Iraq, and it is an understudied variety of Arabic, so studying it deeper would help linguists and documentary linguists understand more about the universality of human language. This study gives a descriptive analysis and discusses sentential negation in Mosuli Arabic. The research investigates different ways to negate verbs in present, past, and future tenses, as well as questions and imperative verbs. In addition, the negation of nominal sentences in the Mosuli dialect will be discussed. Furthermore, the negation of verbless phrases, or what is called nominal phrases, such as nouns, processive case, adjectives, and participles, is also discussed. Upon the dissemination of the collected data, it was found that Mosuli utilizes a number of negation particles, such as (ma:), for present, past, and future verb negation. The negation particle (la:) indicates a request from peers or advice, while the particle (ma:) is used to negate the imperative, indicating a command and an order. Additionally, Mosuli and the use of the negation marker (kəl). Finally, the particle (wala) negates multiple verbs, such as nouns, adjectives, and prepositional phrases.

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النفي في اللهجة المصلاوية

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المستخلص:

تتناول هذه الدراسة إحدى اللهجات العربية المعروفة باسم العربية الشمالية الراقدينية، والمعروفة أيضًا باسم اللهجة الموصلية. تُستخدم اللهجة الموصلية في مدينة الموصل في شمال العراق وهي لهجة عربية غير مدروسة بصورة مكثفة، لذا فإن دراستها بشكل أعمق ستساعد علماء اللغة وموثقين اللغات على فهم المزيد عن عالمية اللغة البشرية. تُناقش هذه الدراسة نفي الجمل في اللهجة الموصلية. وقد تمت دراسة الطرائق المختلفة لنفي الأفعال في أزمنة المضارع والماضي والمستقبل، فضلًا عن الأسئلة والأفعال الأمرية المستخدمة في اللهجة الموصلية. كما تمت دراسة كيفية نفي العبارات الاسمية في اللهجة الموصلية. وكذلك، قد تمت مناقشة نفي العبارات الخالية من

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الأفعال أو ما يعرف بالجملة الاسمية في اللغة العربية، مثل الأسماء والملكيات والصفات وكذلك الصفات المشتقة من الأفعال. تستخدم اللهجة الموصلية النفي المزدوج من خلال استخدام ادوات النفي المتعددة وبعض الكلمات. بعد تحليل البيانات التي تم جمعها، وجد أن اللهجة الموصلية تستخدم عددا من ادوات النفي، مثل (ما)، لنفي الفعل المضارع والماضي والمستقبل. وتشير اداة النفي (لا) إلى طلب من الأقران أو المشورة، بينما تستخدم الاداة (ما) ايضا لنفي الجملة الأمرية. فضلا عن ذلك، تستخدم اللهجة الموصلية اداة النفي (كل)، أداة لنفي النفي (ولا) لنفي الأفعال المتعددة في الجملة الواحدة، وكذلك الأسماء والصفات وعبارات الجر.

الكلمات المفتاحية: اللهجة الموصلية، النفي، علم تركيب الجملة، النفي المزدوج، اللغة العربية

1- Introduction

1.1- The Mosllawi Dialect

Mosuli has many features that distinguish it from other surrounding dialects. One of the features is having the phoneme /q/. Mosuli preserved these phonemes from classical and Modern Standard Arabic. In other dialects in Iraq, the phoneme /g/ is used instead of the /q/. There are two varieties of dialects in the area, the (Qeltu) and the (Gelet) (Woidich & Versteegh, 2004). The (Qeltu) varieties preserve the phoneme /q/, while the (Gelet) varieties use the phoneme /g/, such as Baghdadi Arabic and Bedouin dialects. Thus, Mosuli is a (Qeltu) dialrct (Aljoumard, 1988). Among the (Qeltu) varieties are those dialects and languages of the Arabic-speaking Muslims and Non-Muslim inhabitants of Mosul and varieties of Neo Aramaic languages. According to Mazraani (1997), among the (Qeltu) varieties are Christian Arabic, Jewish Arabic, Mosul Arabic, and Tikrit Arabic (Mazraani, 1997).

1.2- The Origin of the Mosuli Dialect

Mosuli comes from the Semitic branch of the Afro-Asiatic language family, with Arabic as its mother language. Mosuli descends from the subgroup of the Arabic branch known as Mesopotamian. The Mesopotamian variety falls into varieties, the Mesopotamian Spoken and the North Mesopotamian Spoken (Palva, 2009) and (Versteegh, 1997). Mosuli falls under the North Mesopotamian Spoken variety. Furthermore, Mosuli has other names, such as Mesopotamian Qeltu Arabic and Syro-Mesopotamian Vernacular Arabic. According to Ethnologue, speakers of the North Mesopotamian Arabic settled on the banks of the Tigris River, and some other speakers of this variety settled on the banks of the Euphrates River north of Baghdad. Gordon (2005) mentioned that North Mesopotamian Arabic is spoken in Jordan, Syria, and Turkey (Gordon, 2005).

Mosuli is an understudied dialect, and there needs to be more literature on it. Investigating negation in Mosuli would add to the dialect's literature and enrich the literature about other varieties of Arabic. Knowing how negation works in Mosuli can also help compare it with other modern dialects of

Arabic. Moreover, Mosuli utilizes double negation in sentences, making it more attractive to look at how it works and to investigate any constraints on the negation in general and double negation in particular.

This paper is organized as follows: Section two discusses negation in Modern Standard Arabic. Section three presents the methodology for collecting data. Section four discusses negation in Mosuli, and section five is the conclusion.

2- Negation in Arabic

A great deal of attention is paid to the topic of negation in Arabic because it has many varieties. Each of these varieties has varied rules for negations and varied negation particles. Modern Standard Arabic has a complex negation system compared to many of the languages of the world. For instance, negation in Modern Standard Arabic follows the tense of the sentence. Thus, the negation particle (la) is used to negate a sentence in the present. While the negation particle (lam) is used to negate a sentence in the past tense, it is worth noting here that the verb must turn into the present form after using the negation particle (lam).

Furthermore, the negation particle (lan) is used to negate a future sentence, and the negation particle (la) is used before imperative verbs in imperative sentences. It is worth mentioning that (la/ kalla) is also a negative short answer to a Yes/No Question (Holes, 2004). The current study aims to analyze the negation of the Mosuli dialect using data collected from native speakers of the dialect. This study is a descriptive study based on how the dialect is used by its speakers.

3- Methodology

To collect data, native speakers of Mosuli dialect were met and asked for their grammatical judgments on different sentences and their negations. Each sentence was taken from an authentic conversation in Mosuli to ensure it was syntactically and semantically correct. Responses of the native speakers' negated sentences were written down to be analyzed later. To accurately analyze negation in Mosuli, I used different sentence structures and types such as indicative, interrogative, imperative, compound, complex, nominal, and verbal sentences. Moreover, nouns and adjectives are considered stand-alone items to investigate their negation process.

4- Discussion

4.1- Negation of Verbal Sentences: Present, Past, and Future

Mosuli Arabic has a simple negation system, as noticed below. Negation in this Arabic dialect does not depend on the verb tense in that the negation particle (ma:) is used with all tenses and aspects, except for the imperative where (la:) is used, as it will be identified in the following section. The subject in Mosuli can be preverbal or postverbal if it is a free-standing subject and not a pronoun attached to the verb. The subject's position does not affect the negation process in that the negation particle is placed before the verb, whether the subject is preverbal or postverbal. I will start with the negation of the present verb, as seen in sentences (1), (2), and (3).

1- jəlfab maʃa sʕadi:qu:

play.he with friend.his

“He plays with his friend”

2- ma: jəlfab maʃa sʕadi:qu:

NEG play.he with friend.his

“He does not play with his friend”

3- ʕndəm matʕam

have.they restaurant

“They have a restaurant”

ma: ʕndəm matʕam

NEG have.they restaurant

“They do not have a restaurant”

As can be seen from sentences (1), (2), and (3), to negate a sentence in the present, the negation particle (ma:) is used before the verb. To negate a verb in the present progressive aspect, the negation particle (ma:) is used before the verb, as seen in sentence (4).

4- əlwla:d ʕaj-jəlfabu:n

DEF.kids PROG.play.they

“The kids are playing”

əlwla:d ma: ʕaj-jəlfabu:n

DEF.kids NEG PROG.play.they

“The kids are not playing”

As seen in sentence (5), using the negation particle (ma:) between the progressive marker and the verb is not grammatical.

5- *əlwla:d ʕaj-ma:-jəlfabu:n

DEF.kids PROG.NEG.play.they

“The kids are not playing”

The process of negating verbs in the past is not different from that in the present. The negation particle (ma:) is placed before the verb, as seen in sentences (6) and (7).

6- ya:h ʕalbɛ:t

go.he.PST to.DEF.home

“He went home.”

ma: ya:h ʕalbɛ:t

NEG go.he.PST to.DEF.home

“He did not go home.”

7- əʕadʒa:ya: kasayu: əlba:b

DEF.kids break.they.PST DEF.door

“The kids broke the door.”

əʕadʒa:ya: ma: kasayu: əlba:b

DEF.kids NEG break.they.PST DEF.door

“The kids did not break the door.”

The past progressive aspect is formed using the verb (ka:n) followed by a verb with the progressive aspect morpheme (ʕaj). Sentence (8) is an example of a verb in the past progressive aspect.

8- əlna:s ka:nu: ʕaj-jəmʃo:n

DEF.people be.they.PST PROG.walk.they

“The people were walking.”

əlna:s ma: ka:nu: ʕaj-jəmʃo:n

DEF.people NEG be.they.PST PROG.walk.they

“The people were not walking.”

It can be seen from sentence (8) that (ma:) is placed before the verb (ka:n). Negation of future verbs can be seen in the following examples.

9- Sarah dətʃo:h ʕalmadrasi:

Sarah FUT.go.she to.DEF.school

“Sarah will go to school”

Sarah ma: dətʃo:h ʕalmadrasi:

Sarah NEG FUT.go.she to.DEF.school

“Sarah will not go to school.”

10- dāna:kəl əlmayaqa

FUT.eat.we DEF.soup

“We will eat the soup.”

ma: dāna:kəl əlmayaqa

NEG FUT.eat.we DEF.soup

“We will not eat the soup.”

The negation particle (ma:) goes before the verb to negate future sentences in Mosuli. A future marker (de) attaches to the verb to indicate futurity. As for future sentence negation, the future marker is not split from the verb, as explained in sentence (11).

11- *dā-ma:.na:kəl əlmayaqa

FUT.NEG.eat.we DEF.soup

“We will not eat the soup.”

4.2- Negation of Imperative and Interrogative Sentences

There are two ways to negate imperative sentences in Mosuli. One way is to use the negation particle (la:) before the verb, and the other is to use the negation particle (ma:) before the verb. Examples of both cases will be presented, and the differences between them will be discussed as well. The following sentences (12) and (13) are imperative in Mosuli. Sentence (12) is negated with the negation particle (la:), while sentence (13) is negated with the negation particle (ma:).

12- dʒi:b ləhwa:s

Bring.you.M DEF.clothes

“Bring the clothes”

la: tʒi:b ləhwa:s

NEG Bring.you.M DEF.clothes

“Don’t bring the clothes.”

13- ʒo:h ʕalfəyəl

go.you.M to.DEF.work

“Go to work.”

ma: ʒo:h ʕalfəyəl

NEG go.you.M to.DEF.work

“Don’t go to work.”

It can be seen from sentences (12) and (13) how negation happens in imperative sentences. The difference between using the negation particles (ma:) and (la:) is that (la:) is used when the speaker and the listener are of the same level, i.e., both at the same status. Moreover, it is also used when the imperative comes as advice, not as a command. On the other hand, (ma:) is used when the speaker is

higher than the listener, and the imperative is coming as a command. The particle (ma:) also indicates that the listener has no choice but to do what he/she is told to do. It can also be noted that the verb undergoes some morphological changes when negated in an imperative sentence.

Yes/No Questions in Mosuli are formed by raising intonation. The following examples show how negation applied on them.

14- katabət ʔəsmak?

Write.you.M name.your.M.name Q?

“Did you write your name?”

ma: katabət ʔəsmak?

NEG write.you.M name.your.M.name Q

“Didn’t you write your name?”

15- jəyo:ho:n ləwla:d ʔalsaha?

go.they DEF.kids to.DEF.field Q

“Do the kids go to the field?”

ma: jəyo:ho:n ləwla:d ʔalsaha?

NEG go.they DEF.kids to.DEF.field

“Don’t the kids go to the field?”

Sentences (14) and (15) show that interrogative sentences are negated when the negation particle (ma:) precedes the verb. It is noted that the verb and the subject can be split by (ma:) if the subject is free-standing, as in sentences (16).

16- jəyo:ho:n ləwla:d ʔalsaha?

go.they DEF.kids to.DEF.field Q

“Do the kids go to the field?”

ləwla:d ma: jəyo:ho:n ʔalsaha?

DEF.kids NEG 3PP.go to.DEF.field

“Don’t the kids go to the field?”

To give a short negative answer to any of these questions, the particles (la/ laʔ) can be used, and then (ma:) is used, and the verb follows, as seen in a sentence (17).

17- katabət ʔəsmak?

Write.you.M name.your.M Q

“Did you write your name?”

ma: katabət ʔəsmak?

NEG write.you.M name.your.M Q

“Didn’t you write your name?”

la ma: katabtu: ʔəsmi:

no NEG write.I name.my

“No, I did not write my name.”

4.3- Negation of Nominal Sentences in Mosuli

In the previous sections, it can be noticed that negation particles in Mosul come before the verb. In this section, the negation of nominal sentences will be discussed, i.e., copula constructions. This kind of sentence only has a subject and a predicate. The predicate can be a noun, an adjective, or a prepositional phrase. The subject of the nominal sentence is definite, and the predicate is indefinite. If the predicate is also definite, then the phrase turns into a noun phrase instead of a nominal sentence. The examples in sentences (18) and (19) show how nominal sentences are formed.

18- əlbət kbi:y

DEF.house big
“The house is big.”

19- əlbət ələkbi:y

DEF.house DEF.big
“The big house.”

Sentence (18) is a nominal sentence, while (19) is a noun phrase with a head noun and an adjective that modifies it. It can be seen that the adjective in sentence (19) agrees with the head noun in definiteness. It is essential to look at the following examples to observe how negation occurs in these sentences.

20- ?əlwalad həba:b

DEF.boy lovely.M
“The boy is lovely.”

?əlwalad ma: həba:b

DEF.boy NEG lovely.M
“The boy is not lovely.”

21- Ali bəlbət

Ali in.DEF.house
“Ali is in the house.”

Ali ma: bəlbət

Ali NEG in.DEF.house
“Ali is not in the house.”

It is clear from sentences (20) and (21) that the negation of nominal sentences, or what are called copula constructions, is performed by placing the negation particle (ma:) before the sentence's predicate.

There is more to discuss regarding the negation of copula construction or nominal sentences. For instance, when these sentences are interrogative, the negation occurs as in the following sentences.

22- həlu:?

beautiful.he Q
“Is he handsome?”

ma: həlu:?

NEG beautiful.he Q

“Isn’t he/it handsome?”

It can be seen that the negation particle (ma:) is placed before the adjective, just as in declarative sentences. Only the adjective must be negated when the answer to a question is a negative one, as can be observed in sentence (23).

23- huwwa həlu:?

he beautiful.M Q

“Is he handsome?”

huwwa ma: həlu:?

he NEG beautiful.M Q

“Isn’t he handsome?”

la ma: həlu:

no NEG beautiful.he

“No, he is not beautiful”

24- Sarah bəlbə:t?

Sarah in.DEF.house Q

“Is Sarah at home?”

la: ma: bəlbə:t

no NEG in.DEF.house

“No, she is not at home.”

Sentences (23) and (24) show that in Mosuli, it is possible to negate adjectives by themselves as well as nouns and prepositional phrases when the sentence is a nominal one.

4.4- Double Negation in Mosuli

Thus far, Mosuli’s negation system is straightforward. However, it can be noticed that Mosuli uses double negation in various ways, using words like (maħhad) from (ma: řaħhad), (kəl řaħhad) “everybody,” and (laħhad) from (la: řaħhad) all of which mean “nobody.” When using double negation, these words and the particles (ma:) and (la:). (la:) are used in imperative sentences. Sentence (25) provides an example of double negation in Mosuli.

25- maħhad ma: dza:

nobody NEG come.PST

“Nobody came.”

It can be seen that the word (maħhad) “nobody” is used with (ma:), which constitutes a double-negative sentence. As mentioned earlier, (maħhad) is composed of the negation particle (ma:) and the form (řaħhad), which means “a human entity.” When they are combined, the vowel of (ma:) is shortened. Furthermore, the negation particle (kəl) can be used with (ma:) to form double negation in Mosuli.

26- kəl řaħhad ma: dza:

nobody NEG come .PST

“Nobody came.”

Sentence (26) shows that the double negation is formed by the word (kəl ʕahhad) and the negation particle (ma:).

It was mentioned earlier that the negation particle (la:) is used with imperative sentences. When the negation particle (la:) is used in double negated imperative sentences, we would have a sentence like the one in (27).

27- lahhad la: jyo:h
nobody NEG go.PRES
“Nobody goes.”

It can be seen from sentence (27) that when we double negate an imperative sentence, the particle (la:) is used instead of (ma:). On the other hand, if (ma:) is used to double negate an imperative sentence, (mahhad) also needs to be used instead of (lahhad), as shown in sentence (28).

28- mahhad ma: jyo:h
nobody NEG go.PRES
“Nobody goes.”

If we look at the word (kəl ʕahhad), it can be seen that (kəl) acts as a negation marker, and it can be used by itself or with (ma:) in double-negated sentences. Let’s look at the following example.

29- we:n ləwla:d?
Where DEF.kids
“Where are the kids?”
bkəl maka:n
in.NEG place
“Nowhere”

30- ʔafnu: haj bi:dak?
what this.F in.you.M.hand
“what is this in your hand”
kəl ʃe:
NEG thing
“Nothing”

The particle (kəl) can be used when a WH-question is answered with (we:n) “where” and (ʔafnu:) or (ʔaf) “what” ((ʔaf) is used with present progressive aspect) as shown in sentence (31) and (32). It is worth noting that the word (kəl ʃe:) by itself also means “everything,” for example, we can say (ʕəndu: kəl ʃe:) “he has everything.” In this case, it can be argued that the morpheme (kəl) can act as a negation particle in certain cases. Here are some more examples with (kəl).

31- we:nəmə?
Where.they Q
“Where are they?”
bkəl maka:n
In.NEG place

“Nowhere”

- 32- ʔaf ʕandak bəllə:l?**
What have.you.M in.DEF.night
“What do you have at night?”
kəl ʃe:
NEG thing
“Nothing”

4.5- Existential Negation

The word (ʔaku:) is used to express existential relations, and its negative form (ma:ku:) in Mosuli Arabic. Look at the following sentence.

- 33- ʔaku: walad ho:ni:**
there boy here
“There is a boy here.”
ma:ku: walad ho:ni:
NEG.there boy here
“There is no boy here.”

The intonation is raised to make the sentence interrogative, as in (33).

- 34- ʔaku: walad ho:ni:?**
there boy here Q
“Is there a boy here?”
la: ma:ku: walad ho:ni:
no NEG.there boy here
“There is no boy here.”

The question in sentence (35) can also be answered with (ma:ku: ʔaħħad) “there is no one,” (maħħad) “no one,” or (ma:ku: kəl ʔaħħad) “there is no one.” Here is another question with (ʔaku:).

- 35- mən ʔaku: bəlmadrasi:?**
who there in.DEF.school Q
“Who is there in the school?”
maħħad
“nobody”
36- ʔaku: ʔatʕfa:l bəlbə:t?
there kids in.DEF.house Q
“Are there kids at home?”
la: ma:ku: kəl ʔatʕfa:l bəlbə:t
no NEG.there NEG kids in.NEG.house
“No, there are no kids at home.”

It can be seen that sentence (36) has double negation using (ma:ku) and (kəl). The particle (kəl) is used before nouns to negate them. Furthermore, as in the following sentence, (ʔabad) “never” can be used in sentences with double negation.

37- tādʒi: maʕa:j ʕalso:q?
 come.you with.me to.DEF.market
 “Do you want to come with me to the market?”
la: ʔabad ma: ʔadʒi maʕa:k
 no never NEG come.I with.you
 “I never come with you.”

The particle (ʔabad) “never” can be used in questions, but the particle (ma:) has to be used with it in the question, as shown in the following sentence.

38- ʔanta ʔabad ma: t̤hki: ʔəngəli:zi: Q
 you.M never NEG speak.you.M English
 “Do you ever speak English?”
la: ʔabad ma: ʔahki: ʔəngəli:zi:
 no never NEG speak.I English
 “No, I never speak English.”

4.6- Other Kinds of Negation

Mosuli uses the negation marker (wala) for sentential negation of sentences containing more than one verb. (wala) is a combination of the conjunction (wa) “and” and the negation particle (la:). Here is an example of (wala) being used to negate a sentence with more than one verb.

39- ʔanti katabti: ʔəlwɑ:dgəb w dʒəbti:nu:?
 You.F write.you.F.PST DEF.homework and bring.you.F.it.PST
 “Did you write the homework and bring it?”
la: katabtu:nu: wala dʒəbtu:nu:
 NEG write.PST.it NEG bring.PST.it.PST
 “I neither wrote it nor brought it.”

Notice here that the negation particle (la:) is used before the verb; we can also use (ma:), and there is no difference in meaning.

40- ʔanti katabti: ʔəlwɑ:dgəb w dʒəbti:nu:?
 You.F write.you.F.PST DEF.homework and bring.you.F.it.PST
 “Did you write the homework and bring it?”
ma: katabtu:nu: wala dʒəbtu:nu:
 NEG write.PST.it NEG bring.PST.it.PST
 “I neither wrote it nor brought it.”

Adjectives are negated with (ma:), and we can also use (wala) to negate more than one adjective in the sentence.

41- ha:ða: ʔəlbɛ:t h̤əlu: w kbi:y
 This.M DEF.house beautiful.M and big.M
 “This house is beautiful and big.”
la: h̤əlu: wala kbi:y

NEG beautiful.M NEG big.M
“It is neither beautiful nor big.”

To negate nouns in Mosuli, (ma:) and (wala) can also be used to negate multiple nouns, as shown below.

42- Ali dəkto:r lo muhandəs?

Ali doctor.M or engineer.M
“Is Ali a doctor or an engineer?”

la: dəkto:r wala muhandəs
NEG doctor.M NEG engineer.M
“Neither a doctor nor an engineer.”

As shown below, prepositions can also be negated using (ma:) and (wala).

43- dawwayət ʕaləhwa:s bəlkanto:r?

Search.you.M.PST on.DEF.clothes in.DEF.closet
“Did you look for the clothes in the closet?”

dawwayətu w ma: mawdzudin la: bəlkanto:r wala bəlʔo:da
search.I.PST and NEG exist.they NEG in.DEF.closet NEG in.DEF.room
“I looked, and they are not in the closet or the room.”

44- ʔələwla:d bəlbət?

DEF.kids in.DEF.house
“Are the kids home?”

ma: bəlbət
NEG in.DEF.house
“Not at home.”

Sentence (44) is an example of a negated prepositional phrase.

This research has investigated many ways to negate verbs, nouns, adjectives, and prepositions in Mosuli, as well as double negation and how it works.

5- Conclusion

I investigate the negation system in Mosuli Arabic in this study. Mosuli uses the negation particle (ma:) to negate present, past, and future verbs. The subject and verb order does not affect the location of the negation particle (ma:) since it remains before the verb. In imperative verbs, the negation particle (la:) indicates a request from peers or advice, while using (ma:) in imperative indicates a command and an order. Furthermore, I discuss double negation in Mosuli and the use of the negation marker (kəl). Additionally, I investigate at (wala) and how it negates multiple verbs, such as nouns, adjectives, and prepositional phrases.

Negation in Mosuli needs to be investigated further, and more data needs to be collected to devise other ways of negation and confirm this study's findings.

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Conflict of Interests

There are no conflicts of interest for this study.

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