



Effects of Transactional Analysis Method on Senior Secondary School Students Ability to Appreciate Poetry in Jos North, Plateau State, Nigeria

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Abstract. The study was set to establish the effects of Transactional Analysis Method of teaching poetic devices on senior secondary students' ability to appreciate poetry in Jos North, Plateau State. The research was motivated by the poor performance of senior students in poetry appreciation. One research question and one hypothesis guided the study. The study was a pure experimental design that employed randomised pre-test post-test control group design that provided complete control for all sources of internal invalidity and established statistical equivalence of all the samples. The population comprised 1,157 literature students in the 20 government owned public schools in Jos North. The sample was made up of 120 students randomly selected and assigned to experimental and control groups. Poetry Appreciation Test (PAT) made up of objective and essay test items covering theme, sound, imagery, emotions aroused by poems and students' ability to express their opinions about given poems was used to collect the data and was analysed using mean and standard deviation. Pre-test results showed that the students were not able to respond to the different aspects of poetry appreciation before treatment. The hypothesis was analysed using ANOVA statistics. The result showed that there was a significant difference between the mean scores of the experimental and control groups in poetry appreciation after treatment. Based on the findings it was recommended that transactional analysis method should be adopted by literature teachers to teach poetic devices, literary techniques and poetry appreciation.

Keywords: Poetry, Transactional Analysis Method, Poetic Devices, Poetry Appreciation

1. Introduction

In order to curb the problem of low performance in poetry, there are three basic types of responses to poetry that the teacher would need to develop in his students for proper appreciation. These are cognitive, affective and aesthetic responses. Responding to poetry on the cognitive level is the analysis of theme, characters, setting, points of view, literary techniques and poetic devices. The essence of affective response signifies how the students feel about characters, images, sound and events. The aesthetic response to poetry is concerned with determining the appropriateness of the devices of language employed and the author's organisation of this to achieve the desired effects. Appreciating poetry includes recognising and responding to poems by noting how imagery, sound, figurative language, author's voice, genre and structure convey meaning". Given that response is the central focus of poetry teaching, techniques which seek to elicit response and engender aesthetic meanings in pupils are more appropriate for the subject.

Secondary school students have difficulty appreciating poetry because they lack the knowledge of poetic devices needed to respond to poems. Poor language competence of students learning English as a second language seriously affect the appreciation of

the subject (Sutherland, 2010). The Chief Examiner's Report of WAEC (2013) explained that many students could not read and understand the prescribed poems and were therefore unable to interpret questions correctly due to poor command of English. Symbols, imagery, form, sound and specialised diction are some of the poetic devices which constitute stumbling blocks to students in understanding poetry. Kamariah as cited by Astill (2010) stated that poems are generally disliked due to the abundance of figurative language such as simile, metaphor, personification, symbolism, apostrophe, sarcasm, alliteration and irony which students fail to interpret.

Most literature teachers do not often apply appropriate methods and techniques to teach their students some of the necessary literary terms and poetic devices which the students are likely to come across when studying poems. Many teachers define poetic devices out of context; some cannot explain their communicative importance while others avoid the terms completely. The features of discussion method namely; questioning, listening and responding could not be identified in teachers' classroom. Most literature teachers are not equipped with interactive skills and methodologies that utilise learners' experiences and prior knowledge that would usher the students into a new world of fantasy where they would learn. Any approach lacking interaction is counter productive as it can lead to a negative attitude towards poetry. Most teachers do not lead the students to participate in poetry class, they read the poems as directed by the teacher, they do not think, talk, link their ideas or write their questions individually or in groups to share their responses in class. Teachers are no longer arbitrary dispensers of knowledge because the poem is within the reader, created in the act of reading as suggested by Rosenblatt (1978, 1982, 1985) in her reader's response theory and transactional method of poetry teaching. Teachers are not expected to lead the students to the foreseen conclusions, because meaning resides not in the text but in the enactment by the individual readers.

The literature teachers do not facilitate aesthetic response in poetry. They also tend to forget to scaffold the meaning - making process to help develop students' independence in the learning process. The effectiveness of discussion method in teaching poetic devices and cultivating the skills of literary appreciation in students makes it necessary to integrate same in senior secondary schools in Jos North where students perform poorly in poetry yearly. Based on these reports, the focus of the study was to find out whether the use of the transactional

literature discussion would enable the teachers to reactivate the poor background knowledge of the students to enable them to analyse poetry effectively.

1.1 Purpose of the Study

The present study was designed to investigate the effects of transactional analysis method on senior secondary school students' ability to appreciate poetry in Jos North Local Government Area of Plateau State. Specifically the objectives of the study were to:

- determine the extent to which instruction in poetic devices, using the transactional analysis method, will improve the students' overall ability in poetry appreciation.

1.2 Research Question

The following research question was formulated to guide the conduct of the study:

- To what extent can Senior Secondary One (SS1) students appreciate poetry, before and after treatment?

1.3 Hypothesis

In this research study, the following null hypothesis was tested at 0.05 significance:

- There is no significant difference in the performance of the experimental and control groups in the pre-test and the post-test Poetry Appreciation Test (PAT).

2. Methodology

The present study was a pure experimental research that employed randomised pre-test post-test control group design that provided adequate and complete controls for all sources of internal invalidity. The pure experimental research design establishes statistical equivalence of the samples by ensuring that characteristics of the samples in both the experimental and control groups are the same. In this design, there are two groups drawn from the same population. The assignment of subjects to experimental and control groups was through randomisation and without biases. The experimental group was exposed to treatment while the control group was not exposed to treatment. The central aim of this study was to compare the gain scores of the two groups; the Experimental and Control groups.

The population of the study consisted of 1,157 SSS I students: 598 boys and 559 girls, sampled out of thirteen (13) of the twenty (20) government - owned public secondary schools located within the area of coverage of Jos North Area Directorate of Education. The sample for the study consisted of the one hundred and twenty (120) senior secondary one students selected from two Plateau State government public secondary schools within Jos North Area Directorate of Education. The two schools were randomly selected from the thirteen (13) government secondary schools that met the set criteria for inclusion in the study. The 120 students were randomly selected from the total population of 1157 students: 598 boys and 559 girls in the 2 schools. The simple random sampling technique was used to select the two schools for the study and to assign the students into the experimental and control groups. For the purpose of the study, the reliability of the research instrument (PAT) was determined using the Test – Retest Method, within the framework of a small-scale pilot test undertaken several months before the conduct of the main study.

2.1 Instrument for Data Collection

The major instrument used for purposes of data collection in this study was the Poetry Appreciation Test (PAT). It was used for the conduct of both pre-test and the post-test exercises in the study. The PAT instrument was made up of two components, labeled as Section A (Objective) and Section B (Essay) respectively. Section A is made of 35 objective test items while Section B contains 6 essay test items.

2.2 Experimental Procedure

To develop balanced and representative instruments, consideration was given to the transactional analysis method for teaching poetic devices. The poetic devices instruction curriculum for treatment was aimed at building in students the poetry appreciation behaviours and competencies they need to acquire and develop.

Procedure for data collection involved training of research assistants, administration of pre-test instruments on students who were placed in experimental and control groups and the administration of treatment programme for 7 weeks on experimental group students only while the students in control group were taught essay writing. The post test was administered after the 6 weeks and the data collected from the test was crucial for the study. The data was to document information on the poetry appreciation performance score of students in the experimental and control groups before and after

treatments. Four (4) teachers of literature in English were trained as research assistants for the study. The teachers were holders of, at least, B. Ed (English), with not less than 5 years teaching experience in any government senior secondary schools in Jos North. The pre-test was administered on the first day of the first week of the treatment programme. The (PAT) lasted for a period of one (1) hour, followed by two (2) hours break, then the essay part of PAT commenced and lasted for 2½ hours on the same day. The pre-test was administered on Experimental groups A and B and Control groups A and B. After the administration of the pre-test, the treatment (training in poetic devices) was administered to the students.

The Experimental Groups A and B were taught selected poetic devices using the transactional analysis method while the Control Groups A and B did not receive any treatment rather they were taught writing skills using the lecture method. The treatment programme lasted for seven (7) weeks. The treatment was made up of the description and modeling of theme, rhythm, rhyme, simile, metaphor, personification, and emotions with the component feature of poetic devices identified for each lesson. A post-test was planned and administered to both the experimental and control groups, at the closing stages of the treatment period of the study. The objective-item section of the post-test lasted for one (1) hour duration. This was subsequently followed by the essay-items section of the post-test which lasted for two and half (2 ½) hours. The same post-test was given to all the groups. The research assistants assisted the researcher in conducting the post-test. The post-test was administered on the fifth day of the last week. The groups in each school were accommodated in different classrooms under the supervision of the research assistants. The same test earlier administered as pre-test was administered as post-test at the same time to all the groups, but the question numbers were reshuffled to stop the students from recognising the questions.

2.3 Method of Data Analysis

The methods of data analysis employed in this research work were the mean frequencies, percentages, standard deviation t-test and ANOVA (the analysis of variance). Frequencies and percentages were used to answer the research questions while mean, standard deviation and t-test were used to compute and compare post-test results of the two groups to determine the degree of differences that existed between them. The test scores obtained by the students were computed using t-test

analysis, and the output of the analysis was shown using the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 23.0. The use of frequencies and percentage to analyse the data for answering the research question were preferred because the research question was quantitative in nature while the t-test was preferred for testing the hypothesis because it is best used to test differences between variables. The analysis of variance ANOVA was preferred for testing hypothesis 8 because there are four different groups to be tested namely: pre-test experimental group, post-test experimental group, pre-test control group and post-test control group.

3. Results

The results as presented are guided by the research question and hypothesis.

Research Question One: To what extent can SS 1 students appreciate poems before and after treatment?

In order to answer this research question, the frequency counts of the experimental and control group pre-test and post-test scores on students' ability to appreciate poems before and after treatment were taken and percentages calculated. The result of the analysis was presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Experimental and Control Groups' Pre-test and Post-test Scores for Appreciating Poems Before and After Treatment

POETRY APPRECIATION TEST (PAT)

Test	Group	Score	Frequency	%
Pre-test	Exp	Low	60	100
	Control	Low	60	100
Post-test	Exp.	Average	6	10
		High	54	90
		Total	60	100
	Control	Low	60	100

The Table showed that the pre-test scores of all the students in the experimental and control groups were 100% low. It was also observed that 10% and 90% of the students moved to average and high levels of achievement respectively in the post-test. It was also important to note that 100% of the post-test control still remained in the same low level in their post-test. The control group remained on the low level of achievement in their pre-test and posttest.

Hypothesis One: There is no significant difference in the performance of the experimental and control groups in the pre-test and the post-test Poetry Appreciation Test (PAT).

Table 2 presents the pre-test and post-test mean scores of the experimental and control groups in Poetry Appreciation Test. The result analysis was presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Pre-test, Post-test Mean Scores of the Experimental and Control Groups in Poetry Appreciation Test

One way
ANOVA
SCORES

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	156061.179	3	52020.393	1695.720	.000
Within Groups	7239.883	236	30.677		
Total	163301.063	239			

Post Hoc Tests

Multiple Comparisons

Dependent Variable: SCORES

LSD

(I) Test/Group		Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Pretest Experimental	Pretest Control	3.25000*	1.01123	.001	1.2578	5.2422
	Posttest Experimental	-57.01667*	1.01123	.000	-59.0089	-55.0245
	Posttest Control	2.18333*	1.01123	.032	.1911	4.1755
Pretest Control	Pretest Experimental	-3.25000*	1.01123	.001	-5.2422	-1.2578
	Posttest Experimental	-60.26667*	1.01123	.000	-62.2589	-58.2745
	Posttest Control	-1.06667	1.01123	.293	-3.0589	.9255
Posttest Experimental	Pretest Experimental	57.01667*	1.01123	.000	55.0245	59.0089
	Pretest Control	60.26667*	1.01123	.000	58.2745	62.2589
	Posttest Control	59.20000*	1.01123	.000	57.2078	61.1922
Posttest Control	Pretest Experimental	-2.18333*	1.01123	.032	-4.1755	-.1911
	Pretest Control	1.06667	1.01123	.293	-.9255	3.0589
	Posttest Experimental	-59.20000*	1.01123	.000	-61.1922	-57.2078

*. The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

df = 239, p-value = 0.000

The mean difference between post-test experimental and the other three groups were given by 57.01667, 60.2667 and 59.20000 respectively. The fisher value = 1695.720, the degree of freedom = 239 and the p. value was 0.000. Since the p. value was less than 0.05, we conclude that there exists a significant difference between the pre-test experimental, post-test experimental, pre-test control and post-test control. The null hypothesis was therefore rejected.

4. Discussion

Pre-test results in all the aspects of poetry appreciation indicated that before exposure to poetic devices using transactional analysis method in this study, the SS 1 students were unable to respond to the different aspects of poetry appreciation. Such areas of appreciation include discussing the theme, rhythm, rhyme (sound), simile, metaphor, personification (images), emotions poems and the ability to express ones opinion about given poems. The results showed a significant low level of performance in the pre-test scores of the experimental and control groups in all the test items and levels of appreciation. This showed that majority of the students could not respond to poetry before treatment.

Teaching poetic devices using the transactional analysis method in this study was very effective and helpful in aiding the students to respond positively to poetry appreciation. The experimental and control groups pre-test scores on the discussion of theme, rhythm and rhyme in both the objective and essay test items showed a significant low level of performance. This result pointed to the fact that the SS 1 students were not able to respond to poetry at the cognitive affective and aesthetic levels of appreciation before the student were taught poetic devices using the transactional analysis method. Therefore, the students were not able to discuss poets' message and main ideas, they were not able to verify if the flow of poem through the line patterns are regular or irregular and were notable to justify poets' use of rhyme to emphasise their words and messages in poems before treatment. Furthermore, they were not able to analyse poets' use of figurative language and the effects produced by the use of similes, metaphors, personification and other striking descriptions in poems. They were also not able to interpret the appropriateness of the poets' words and language and the emotions built around certain words and actions in poems or express their own interpretive opinion of a poem in general and the effects it has had on them.

5.1 Cognitive Level of Poetry Appreciation

Cognitive response to poetry appreciation entails the discussion of the literal and inferential meanings of poetic materials. The experimental and control groups pre-test scores on the discussion of theme, rhythm and rhyme in both the objectives and essay test items showed a significant low level of performance. This result pointed to the fact that the SS 1 students were not able to respond to poetry at the cognitive level of appreciation before the student were taught poetic devices using the transactional analysis method. Therefore, the students were not able to discuss poets' message and main ideas, they were not able to verify if the flow of poem through the line patterns are regular or irregular or to justify poets' use of rhyme to emphasise their words and message in poems before treatment.

However, after the instruction in poetic devices using the transactional analysis method, the post-test results of students in the experimental group showed that they were able to figure out and discuss poem's main ideas, flow of poetic rhythm, and the poet's use of rhyme to emphasise their words and message in poems after treatment. In both the objective and essay test items, the SS 1 students were able to grow from passive learners to developing the ability to appreciate poems. For theme(s), the mean values for the experimental and control groups in the post-test were 11.25 and 3.77, for rhythm, 11.12 and 1.72, and for rhyme, 11.05 and 2.23 respectively. In all the variables that required cognitive response, there exists a significant difference in the post-test achievement mean scores of the experimental group over the control group in all the test items.

5.2 Affective Level of Poetry Appreciation

This refers to the students' emotional involvement with a work, how they feel and their opinions about characters, images, symbols and the events in the poem. The pre-test results of students in both experimental and control groups showed that most of them could not express their feelings, state their opinions or pass judgments on any given poem before the treatment programme. However, the post-test mean scores of the experimental group reveals that the students in the group had developed a higher than average level of ability in affective responses to the content of poems as result of their exposure to the treatment programme in poetic devices using transactional analysis method. The students were able to express the feelings a poem aroused in them and state their opinions about the poems they had read.

The experimental and control group post-test mean scores in responding to the affective level of

appreciation were 11.10 and 2.98 for emotion/feelings and 10.12 and 2.28 for emotion/opinions. The experimental group members were able to express their feelings about the poems, which may be that of satisfaction, disgust, laughter, grief or sympathy. It may be that of emotions of sorrow, anger, melancholy, sadness or joy with accompanying moods of brooding, meditation, reflection or joy. This shows that there exists a significant difference between the experimental and control groups since the probability value was less than 0.05 level of significance.

5.3 Aesthetic Level of Poetry Appreciation

Aesthetic response to poetry appreciation combines the cognitive and affective and is concerned with determining the appropriateness of the devices of language used and the author's organisation of this to achieve the artistic merit of the poem. The percentage of the students in the experimental and control group that performed at very low ability level in the pre-test was more far than the percentage at both average and high levels of performance. This is an indication that appreciation at the aesthetic level for both experimental and control groups were quite low before treatment.

The high post-test mean scores of the experimental group only after treatment indicated that there exists a significant difference in the post-test mean scores of the experimental group in their ability to justify the poets' use of figurative language and the effect produced by the use of simile, metaphors, personification and striking descriptions in poems. The mean values for figures of speech were: 22.05 and 4.50 respectively. The respondents by verifying how the images helped the poets to convey their messages in poems exposed the artistic merit of the work since aesthetic response to poetry is essentially an evaluation of poetry.

This meant that a good number of students could not respond to poetry at the aesthetic level of poetry appreciation before they were taught poetic devices using the transactional analysis method. It was found that transactional analysis method is an effective method for teaching poetry. Adjija (2002) confirmed that good mastery of English language skills is required for students to understand the connotative, symbolic and figurative expressions in poetry to appreciate the aesthetics.

5.4 Transactional Analysis Method Improves Learning Outcomes in Poetry

Within the framework of this study, transactional analysis method is understood as capable of making a difference in the area of poetry instruction and appreciation because it takes into account the needs, interest and desires of students and focuses on the development of students' inherent abilities to closely examine the structure and organisational patterns of poems and construct various shades of meaning out of their readings. Transactional analysis method stresses student-centred avenues for encouraging both individual participation in his/her group and individualisation of learning in class, all of which facilitates better understanding of the key ideas and terminologies in poetry analysis and appreciation. The role of the teacher in this study was to facilitate, moderate, encourage, guide, explain, counsel and criticise the students as they interact. The teacher also prompts the students to think about their responses in their groups and also nudges them to discuss together and construct meanings. The teacher also clarifies issues and gave answers to their raised questions. The researcher and the research assistants used questions to induct the students into an intuitive process of inquiry that explored the concept of poetic devices and poetry appreciation.

Transactional theory places a great deal of emphasis on the role of the reader because, according to Rosenblatt (1978), meaning resides not in the text but rather in the enactment by the readers. Transactional poetry discussion therefore demands consideration of the mind of the individual reader or groups of readers in a particular social and cultural setting. Transactional poetic perspective favored and adopted for the conduct of this study insists on the fact that readers initially understand a poem only on the basis of prior experience. The socio-cultural experiences, personal feelings, memories and associations engendered in the mind of a reader should, ideally, provide the foundations upon which the understanding of a text is built. Readers cannot make sense of a text except by seeing it in the light of other texts, world and other experiences.

The interpretive stance that readers bring to the study of poetry in this research work is most crucial. The choice was the combination of efferent stance and aesthetic stance. The efferent stance is concerned with the information the reader will carry from the text while the aesthetic stance is that of a reader who attends not only to the information but also to the feelings evoked, the associations and memories aroused, the stream of symbols and images employed and the exposure of the sound and structural elements that passes through the mind while reading the poem. Transactional theory as observed in this research

insists that a reader's individuality must be respected and considered since the meaning of a poem depends on every individual reader. Since transactional method suggests that a poem is within the reader, created in the act of reading than in the text, teachers did not need to lead the students towards predetermined conclusions about a poem being studied in class. The process followed in the classroom by the researcher, her assistants and the students were "Getting Ready", "Reading and Thinking aloud", "Wondering on Paper", "Talking/discussion", "Thinking on Paper" and "Looking Back". The students in their various groups jointly use these processes to transact with texts, discuss their responses and construct meanings.

5. Summary of Findings

The study investigated the effects of transactional analysis method on Senior Secondary School students' ability to appreciate poetry in Jos North Local Government Area of Plateau State, Nigeria. In specific terms, the study was carried out to determine the extent to which the transactional analysis method of instruction can be used to help SSS I students to acquire reasonable understanding of six key poetic devices (theme, rhythm, rhyme, simile, metaphor, personification and emotions poetry) as well as the application of such devices to analyse and appreciate poems effectively. After the treatment administered to the experimental and control groups and a careful analysis of the data collected from the pre-test and the post-test, a number of key results were obtained, from which the following specific findings were derived:

- However, after the instruction in poetic devices using the transactional analysis method, the post-test results of students in the experimental group showed that they were able to figure out and discuss poem's main ideas, the flow of poetic rhythm, and the poet's use of rhyme to emphasise their words and messages in the poem after treatment.
- The high post-test mean scores of the experimental group only after treatment indicated that there exists a significant difference in the post-test mean scores of the experimental group in their ability to justify the poets' use of figurative language and the effect produced by the use of simile, metaphors, personification and striking descriptions in poems.
- The experimental students exposed to treatment developed high abilities in interpreting the appropriateness of poets'

words and language and the emotions build around certain words and actions in poems after treatment.

- The post-test result indicated that the students in the experimental group were able to express their opinions of a poem they had read and the effects the poem has had on them after treatment.
- The transactional analysis method employed in the course of conducting this study helped the students to look together at the selected poems, images, symbols, form, sound, emotions, and figures of speech helped to deepen their previous understanding of poetry and its appreciation

6. Conclusion

The findings of this research study suggested that the teaching and learning of poetry in senior secondary schools can be improved. The results of the study has shown that the transactional analysis method of teaching poetic devices makes a more significant contribution towards the development and acquisition of the language skills and competencies required to react to poems at the cognitive, affective and aesthetic levels of appreciation. It has also been shown that the transactional analysis method of teaching promoted the achievement of specified learning outcomes in poetry appreciation. This supports Astill's (2010) claim that some methods are more suited to some learning outcome than others. The study adds to the body of research documenting the strong effects that teaching approaches can have on students stance, when responding to poetry (Probst 2012).

The findings of this study have shown that TLD method is intellectually productive because it leads to a high degree of understanding of concept retention, assimilation and association. The study has proved that the knowledge of poetry appreciation such as the ability to discuss the main ideas, the use of sound, images, symbols and the feelings and opinions evoked after reading poetry, helps the second language learners ESL to gain independence in poetry could be tackled, using transactional literature discussion process and its activities such as:

- Getting Ready: Group previews the poem and makes predictions.
- Reading and Thinking Aloud: Group reads the poem and share thoughts.
- Wondering on Paper: Students and teacher write short responses to the poem.

- Discussion/talking: Group discusses short responses and reflections, using RQL2 – Respond, Question, and Link.
- Thinking on Paper: Students write a free response in their notebooks.
- Looking back: Group reviews what was learned in form of a summary.

On a final note, the results of the study have been able to provide sufficient evidence to demonstrate that the students in the experimental groups, after the treatment, were able to appreciate poetry better than their counterparts in the control groups. The implication is that the transactional analysis method of teaching poetry equips the students with the skills to appreciate poetry better. This also implies that the poetry teacher must be equipped with how the method works to use it properly in poetry classroom.

7. Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are made:

- The teachers of literature in general and poetry in particular should adopt the student-centred transactional analysis method of teaching poetry which encourages further explanation of some poetic devices and literary techniques such as theme, content, sound, form, structures, images, symbols, and emotions in poetry.
- The teacher in transactional poetry discussion class should invite responses from the students and make it clear to the students that their responses, emotional and intellectual are valid starting points for discussion and writing.
- The teacher should give ideas time to crystallise in TLD class and encourage the students to reflect upon their responses.
- The teacher and the students should find points of contact among themselves and the teacher to open up the discussion to the topics of self, text and world or others.
- Since the results of this study greatly favoured the transactional analysis method of teaching, efforts should be made to encourage poetry teachers to use this method in teaching poetry in schools since the method aids the students to transact with poems and construct meanings.
- Poetry teachers should be encouraged to embrace and actively employ the use of transactional analysis method to teach their students some of the literary terms and

techniques needed to appreciate poems effectively.

- Poetry teachers should give room for group discussion, questions and answers and encourage group activities in oral and written responses in class, because when students participate in poetry class, it helps them to form their own candid interpretive opinions about any work of art.

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