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ABOUT THE EXPERIENCE

OF ORGANIZING AND CONDUCTING EDUCATIONAL EVENTS AND
CAMPAIGN TO PROMOTE THE RUSSIAN LANGUAGE ABROAD

SOBRE LA EXPERIENCIA DE ORGANIZAR Y REALIZAR EVENTOS Y CAMPAÑAS EDUCATIVAS PARA PROMOVER LA LENGUA RUSA EN EL EXTRANJERO

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ABSTRACT: The article presents the experience of organizing the following projects in 2019 under the agreements with the Ministry of Education of the Russian Federation: “Promoting Russian as a foreign language in Papua New Guinea through organizing and conducting online courses”, “Developing the courses database (introduction of new educational courses) of a complex educational portal aimed at self-training in educational programs of general, secondary vocational or additional education, including studying Russian as a foreign language”, “Organizing and ensuring the implementation of the International Methodological Projects Award “World of the Russian Word (Mir Russkogo slova)” targeted at teaching staff who carry out educational activities in Russian in foreign educational organizations”.

Keywords: Promotion of Russian language abroad, international cultural cooperation, Russian as a foreign language online course, pedagogical skills awards, complex educational web portal.

RESUMEN: El artículo presenta la experiencia de organizar los siguientes proyectos en 2019 en virtud de los acuerdos con el Ministerio de Educación de la Federación de Rusia: “Promoción del ruso como lengua extranjera en Papua Nueva Guinea mediante la organización y realización de cursos en línea”, “Desarrollo de la base de datos de cursos (introducción de nuevos cursos educativos) de un portal educativo complejo dirigido a la auto-formación en programas educativos de educación general, secundaria profesional o adicional, incluido el estudio del ruso como lengua extranjera “,” Organizar y garantizar la implementación del Premio Internacional de Proyectos Metodológicos “ Mundo de la palabra rusa (Mir Russkogo slova) “dirigido al personal docente que realiza actividades educativas en ruso en organizaciones educativas extranjeras”.

Palabras clave: Promoción del idioma ruso en el extranjero, cooperación cultural internacional, curso en línea de ruso como idioma extranjero, premios de habilidades pedagógicas, portal web educativo complejo.

INTRODUCTION

In 2019, K.G. Razumovsky Moscow State University of Technologies and Management and The Institute of Humanitarian Education and Testing jointly implemented two large-scale projects to promote the Russian language abroad – “Promoting Russian as a foreign language in Papua New Guinea through organizing and conducting online courses”, and “Developing the courses database (introduction of new educational courses) of a complex educational portal aimed at self-training in educational programs of general, secondary vocational or additional education, including studying Russian as a foreign language”. The authors of the present article are the main performers for these scientific and popularization projects, and the purpose of the article is to share their experience of successful organization and implementation of these projects.

The project “Promoting Russian as a foreign language in Papua New Guinea through organizing and conducting online courses” was implemented in accordance with the Agreement of September 24, 2019 No. 073-15-2019-1345, signed between the Ministry of Education of the Russian Federation and K.G. Razumovsky Moscow State University of Technologies and Management (head of the project - First Vice-Rector Professor Yu. P. Skachkov). The Institute of Humanitarian Education and Testing acted as a subcontractor, while the principal coordinator was Doctor of Philology, Professor of Penza State Technological University and scientific consultant of the Institute of Humanitarian Education and Testing D.N. Zhatkin, who has considerable experience in promoting the Russian language abroad (Kruglova & Zhatkin, 2016; Zhatkin, 2017).

The manners by which language and language strategy have been instrumentalized under Putin to seek after three discrete, yet interconnected, needs: to make another Russian personality, to trade Russian delicate force, and to help homegrown and international strategy objectives were researched. As the Russian president proceeds in his endeavors to combine force, language and language strategy will keep on being significant parts of this technique. Despite the fact that endeavors to cleanse and shape language are truly eventually ineffective, there is motivation to accept that the Russian state will keep on instrumental the Russian language and language strategy to characterize a restricted rendition of the Russian personality—one that is utilized to legitimize proceeded with suppression of the individuals who don't absorb (Machado, 2020).

The fundamental bearings of movement of Russia in the zone of advancement of the Russian language with

regards to the social tact of the Russian Federation were contemplated. The creators contended that the Fund “Russian World” likewise assumes a functioning part in this cycle. The creators calls upon Russia and China for a lot nearer correspondence between the two nations in the region of Promotion of Russian Language in China too (Ganshina & Tsvyk, 2016).

METHODOLOGY

The project included developing an academic and methodological complex including programs of 2 educational courses and supplementary materials; organizing online courses for teaching Russian as a foreign language in Papua New Guinea; conducting a promotional campaign for these courses among educational, cultural, and public organizations of Papua New Guinea, aimed at maintaining the interest in studying the Russian language; providing free-of-charge online courses for teaching Russian as a foreign language in English for the citizens of Papua New Guinea.

In the first phase, Zhatkin supervised the development of programs for the educational courses providing the formation of communicative competence in Russian as a foreign language for students with elementary (36 hours) and basic (36 hours) levels of proficiency in Russian as a foreign language, as well as additional materials for them.

The content of the elementary course envisaged two sections - “Everyday Topics” (24 hours) and “Learning and Cognitive Activity” (12 hours), aimed at developing skills in listening, speaking, reading and writing, as well as studying the parts of speech (pronouns – demonstrative, interrogative, personal, possessive ones; nouns - how they change according to the gender and number; numerals), expanding vocabulary and drilling vocabulary structures related to the topics “My Family and I”, “My house”, “My Friend”, “My Working Day” “My Day-off”, “Customs and Traditions in Russia”, etc. The two sections of the basic course - “Household topics” (24 hours) and “Learning and cognitive activity “ (12 hours) – involve vocabulary expansion and consolidation of grammatical structures on the topics “Food”, “Clothes”, “Shopping”, “Moscow”, “Kremlin”, “Weekend in Moscow”, the development of dialogue and monologue speech on the topics “Dates”, “Trips. Buying a Ticket”, “How to Get to...”, “In a Restaurant and Cafe”. Additional materials for each of the educational courses included handout materials, presentations, tasks for individual work, interim and final tests.

In the framework of the informational campaign targeted at promoting the designed courses among educational, cultural, and public organizations of Papua New Guinea,

the following papers were prepared: an information letter inviting Papua New Guinea citizens to participate in online courses in Russian as a foreign language held in English with an application form attached; an article in English written and sent in addition to the information letter; a mailing list for the information letter was out together followed by the mail out; an article in Russian promoting the above-mentioned courses prepared and published in digital media.

While preparing the information materials, both the historical ties between the two countries and the importance of the courses developed for promoting the Russian language in a new geographical space were emphasized. Papua New Guinea is far from Russia and is not on the list of the countries where the Russian language is popular. However, we cannot but recognize the special role of Russia in the history of Papua New Guinea associated with the activities of Nicholas N. Miklouho-Maclay.

Thanks to this outstanding researcher and discoverer, some Russian words appeared in the language of the inhabitants of Papua New Guinea, which, however, were partially lost after the settlement of Europeans on the local territories.

The last expeditions to this country, which took place in the 1980s, witnessed such borrowings from Russian as *schapor* (russ.: “topor”, “axe”), *gugruz* (russ: “kukuruza”, eng.: “corn”), as well as words containing the name of the scientist as a prefix: *diigli Maclay* (“cucumber”), *valyu Maclay* (“pumpkin”), *bik Maclay* (“cow”).

The organization of online courses of Russian as a foreign language in Papua New Guinea involved putting together a list of online courses participants, including 120 citizens of Papua New Guinea, and preparing an online courses schedule providing 5 online broadcasts per week. Online face-to-face broadcasts of courses of Russian as a foreign language carried out in English in Papua New Guinea took place from November 18 to December 15, 2019.

At the same time we have developed a new certificate form for participants of the educational course for Papua New Guinea citizens which provided the formation of communicative competence in Russian as a foreign language for students with elementary / basic level of Russian as a foreign language. Due to the fact that 23 out of 120 participants attended both courses – elementary and basic, 143 certificates of online courses were prepared and sent out. Based on the results of the work, a copy of the academic and methodological complex was made and provided to the Ministry of Education of the Russian Federation.

The academic and methodological complex consisting of the programs for two educational courses and additional materials, was successfully tested and approved within the framework of the implemented project. This academic and methodological complex is characterized by the fact that it envisages teaching Russian as a foreign language in English to those persons who do not speak Russian at all or have elementary level. The above mentioned academic and methodological complex can be used afterwards to promote the Russian language in developing non-CIS countries, where the language of communication for the majority of the population is English, in particular, countries in the English-speaking Africa (Ghana, Kenya, Lesotho, Nigeria, Rwanda, Uganda, etc.).

The project “Developing the courses database (introduction of new educational courses) of a complex educational portal aimed at self-training in educational programs of general, secondary vocational or additional education, including studying Russian as a foreign language” was implemented by the same team of performers in accordance with the Agreement of November 26, 2019 No. 073-15-2019-2337 between the Ministry of Education of the Russian Federation and K.G. Razumovsky Moscow State University of Technologies and Management.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The project involved a complex educational portal aimed at individual learning based on educational programs of additional education (including learning Russian as a foreign language), which functions on the basis of one of the modern online learning systems (platforms) and provides the possibility of remote interactive learning free of charge, with the right to choose the intensity, time, and place of access to educational and test materials; the development and placement at the portal of educational and test materials of six new courses of open education in Russian language in educational programs of additional education, aimed at foreigners who speak or learn Russian language, including courses in Russian as a foreign language; corresponding to at least 3 levels of proficiency in Russian as a foreign language, regulated by the order of the Ministry of Education and Science of the Russian Federation of April 1, 2014 No. 255 “On approval of the levels of competency in Russian as a foreign language and corresponding requirements” (the course “Let’s Speak Russian (Vocabulary and Grammar)”, corresponding to the elementary level (A1) of Russian language proficiency.

The course “A Little Bit about Russian Holidays and Traditions (Reading, Listening)”, corresponding to the elementary level (A1) of Russian language proficiency; the course “Introduction to Russia (Geography)”

corresponding to the basic level (A2) of Russian language proficiency; the course “Trip to Russia: Russian Cities (Geography)” corresponding to the basic level (A2) of Russian language proficiency; the course “Interesting Stories (Reading)” corresponding to the basic level (A2) of Russian language proficiency; the course “Russian Song (Vocabulary, Grammar, Speaking)” corresponding to the first level (B1) of Russian language proficiency; consolidation of the course materials of open education in Russian language; developed during the process of the project implementation, into the academic and methodological complex.

The complex educational portal designed for individual learning of educational programs of additional education (including learning Russian as a foreign language) was created on the basis of Stepik, one of the modern systems (platforms) of online learning, which provides the possibility of remote learning in an interactive mode free of charge with the right to choose independently the intensity, time, and place of access to educational and test materials.

A program of six new online courses with a total of 36 academic hours has been developed. The program consists of two parts. The first part describes the tactical tasks to be solved in order to achieve the strategic goals stated in the state standards and requirements. The second part is an attempt to distribute the material which helps to form communicative and language competence at the levels of “the student having an idea, possessing knowledge – skills – mastery”. The training program is aimed at working with the Russian-learning audience, and involves mastering knowledge, skills and abilities that meet the basic communication needs when communicating with native speakers in the social, everyday, and socio-cultural spheres, as well as in the field of educational and professional activities.

In the framework of the courses “Let’s Speak Russian (Vocabulary, Grammar)” and “A Little Bit about Russian Holidays and Traditions (Reading, Listening)”, which correspond to the elementary level (A1) of Russian language proficiency, participants study grammar (noun cases and genders, adjectives, the verb), vocabulary expansion and drilling/consolidation of grammatical structures related to the topics “Introduction”, “My Class”, “Birthday”, “Russian Holidays”, “Russian Cuisine”, the development of skills in listening, speaking, reading, and writing.

The courses “Getting to Know Russia (Country Studies)”, “Travel to Russia: Russian Cities (Country Studies)”, “Interesting Stories (Reading)” for the basic level (A2) of language proficiency include the study of some grammatical topics (present, past and future tenses, imperative

mood, complex sentences, the concept of cases, verb aspects), vocabulary build-up and use of grammatical structures related to the topics “Russia”, “Russian Cities”, as well as the development of skills in listening, speaking, reading, and writing.

The course “Russian Song” (vocabulary, grammar, speaking) corresponding to level B1 of Russian language proficiency involves the study of grammatical topics “Adjectives”, “Conjugation of Reflexive Verbs”, “Transitive and Intransitive Verbs”, “Active or Passive Voice”, “Participle”, vocabulary build-up and consolidating the use of grammatical structures related to the topic “Russian Song”, developing skills in listening, speaking, reading, and writing.

Educational and test materials were prepared for each of the six educational courses, which were uploaded onto the designed portal. As a result of the work, a copy of the academic and methodological complex containing materials of open education courses in Russian developed during the project implementation was created.

In the future, there are plans to add new educational courses to the designed educational portal for individual learning using educational programs of additional education (including learning Russian as a foreign language). At least 30 new online course mainly dedicated to learning Russian as a foreign language are planned to be placed at the portal in the future. The promotion of the materials of the complex educational portal in social networks, electronic and print media is also planned.

The Institute of Humanitarian Education and Testing also participated in the implementation of the Agreement of October 2, 2019 No. 073-10-2019-093 between the Ministry of Education of the Russian Federation and the Autonomous Non-Profit Organization “Center for the Development of Modern Information Technologies” on the organization and integrated management of the International Methodological Projects Award “World of the Russian Word” (“Mir Russkogo slova”), targeted at teaching staff who carry out educational activities in Russian in foreign educational organizations.

The project objectives were: to organize the International Methodological Projects Awards “World of the Russian Word” (“Mir Russkogo slova”), targeted at teaching staff who carry out educational activities in Russian in foreign educational organizations; to conduct two Award stages and the final; to provide information support of the International Award.

The Organizing Committee, headed by Zhatkin, Doctor of Philology, and Professor included leading experts in

the field of teaching methodologies of the Russian language and literature. The jury of the Awards consisted of Kruglova, Doctor of Philology, Professor, Director of the Institute of Humanitarian Education and Testing; A.A. Zhukova, total winner of the all-Russian competition for teachers of vocational education and training "I Give My Heart to Children"; V.F. Mironycheva PhD in Pedagogy, Honorary Worker of General Education of the Russian Federation, author of textbooks on the methodology of teaching literature; novelist E.S. Tulusheva, winner of the 5th and 6th International Forums of Slavic Literature "Golden Knight" ("Zolotoy Vityaz"), the all-Russian Literature Award named after N.S. Leskov "The Enchanted Wanderer", the International Literature Award "Yugra", "Prokhorov Field", "Northern Star", winner of the Russian -Italian Award "Rainbow" ("Raduga"), member of the Union of Writers of Russia.

The Award organizing stage included the development of relevant documentation – Regulation on International Methodological Projects Competition "World of the Russian Word" ("Mir russkogo slova"), targeted at teaching staff engaged in educational activities conducted in the Russian language in foreign educational organizations. The Regulation included the operating procedures of the Jury, parameters for evaluating the contestants' work, forms of consolidated tables filled in by the jury members, the logo of the International Competition, the list of members of the International Competition jury, preparation of the information letter about the International Competition, and creation of the information letter mailing database with the subsequent mail out of the letter.

Also, we developed the program for the second stage and the finals of the International Methodological Projects Competition "World of the Russian Word" ("Mir Russkogo slova") targeted at teachers providing education in the Russian language in foreign educational institutions, searched for the venue, provided equipment for the events, created sets of medals, and published necessary handouts.

A total of 317 teachers from 18 countries who submitted 329 projects took part in the competition representing Belarus, Moldova, Armenia, Azerbaijan Republic, Kazakhstan, Republic of Turkmenistan, Kyrgyz Republic, Republic of Tajikistan, Republic of Uzbekistan, the Republic of Poland, the Republic of Serbia, Montenegro, Republic of North Macedonia, the Republic of Turkey, People's Republic of China, the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, Mongolia, the [National Palestinian Autonomous Territories](#).

249 projects were submitted for the nomination "Russian as a Foreign Language", 53 projects – for the nomination

"Russian Literature as a Foreign Literature", 27 projects – for the nomination "Extracurricular Activities". Fifteen teachers from nine countries (Belarus, Moldova, Armenia, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, the Kyrgyz Republic, People's Republic of China, and the Republic of Turkey) became winners of the first stage and were invited to Moscow to participate in the "live" stage and the finals.

On December 21-22, 2019, the finalists of the International Methodological projects Competition "World of the Russian Word" ("Mir Russkogo slova"), targeted at teaching staff engaged in educational activities in the Russian language in foreign educational organizations using modern and individual teaching methods performed public defense of their projects submitted for the first (remote) stage. The competition jury summed up the results.

The first degree diplomas were awarded to Tatyana Ambrushkevich, teacher of the Russian language and literature of the state educational institution "Gymnasium of the town of Osipovichy" of the Mogilev region (Republic of Belarus); Marina S. Asylbekova, teacher of Russian Language and Literature at school-lyceum for gifted children No.165, Almaty (Republic of Kazakhstan); Olga I. Brizhatyuk, teacher of Russian Language and Literature at the Gogol Theoretical Lyceum (Republic of Moldova, Kishinev); Inna R. Vinnik, teacher of Russian Language and Literature at the state educational institution "Snovskaya Secondary School" (Republic of Belarus, Snov, Nesvizh district, Minsk region); Tatiana V. Kotova, teacher of Russian Language and Literature at the state educational institution "Gymnasium No.8 named after V.I. Kozlov" in Zhlobin, Gomel region of the Republic of Belarus; Lin Mei, Russian language teacher at the XI'an International Studies University (People's Republic of China, XI'an). The second degree diplomas were awarded to Tatiana N. Los, teacher of Russian Language and Literature at the secondary school No.1 in Balkhash, Karaganda region of the Republic of Kazakhstan.

Vladislava A. Morozova, teacher of Russian Language and Literature of the non-state-owned educational institution "Terra Nova School" in Ferghana, Republic of Uzbekistan; Diloru R. Saidova, teacher of Russian Language at school No.115 in Vakhdat, Republic of Tajikistan; Elena V. Khromova, teacher of Russian Language and Literature at educational complex "Cyril and Methodius" (Republic of Moldova, Kishinev); Anastasia S. Shabalina, teacher of Russian Language and Literature at "Bilimkana-Bishkek" school (Republic of Kyrgyzstan, Bishkek). The third-degree diplomas were awarded to Tamara E. Gziryanyan, teacher of Russian language at the international scientific and educational complex "Lyceum Shirakatsi" (Republic of Armenia, Yerevan); Samal N. Karymsakpaeva, teacher

of Russian Language and Literature at “Nazarbayev Intellectual School of Physics and Mathematics” (Republic of Kazakhstan Nur Sultan); Olena A. Kozan, lecturer of Russian Language at the University of Ankara Haci Bayram Veli (Turkish Republic, Ankara); Sha’lo R. Hasanova, head of the Department of Russian Language and Literature at the Pedagogical College named after H. Maksumova (Republic of Tajikistan, Dushanbe).

On completion of the competition, public responses to these events were published on the websites of Rossotrudnichestvo, Russian centers of science and culture in Moldova, Armenia, Turkey, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, etc., in digital media (Federal Portal “Rossiyskoe obrazovanie”, “Rossiya v Kyrgyzstane” portal), in the newspapers “Bilimdi El - Educated country” (Republic of Kazakhstan), “Russkoe slovo” (Republic of Moldova), “Minskaya pravda” (Republic of Belarus), “Druzhniy rebyata” (Republic of Kazakhstan), etc.

In an interview to the Kazakh newspaper “Bilimdi-El – Educated country”, Doctor of Philology, Professor Zhatkin, who has chaired the Organizing Committee for the third consecutive time, said: “The finalists this time are very heterogeneous? At the same time, most of the finalists may probably be assigned to one of the three large groups. The first group may be defined as outstanding teachers of the Russian world, high-profile professionals well-known both in their own countries and abroad, people whose methodological developments, articles, and textbooks have become a great help for other teachers.

Inna R. Vinnik, outstanding educator of the Republic of Belarus, winner of the medal of Francysk Skaryna, winner of 32 international competitions, including the First International competition “Best Teacher of Russian Literature Abroad”, winner of the World Festival of the Russian Language, presented her project “Kvartyrnyk (“Flatparty”) of the Grandchildren of Poets of the Sixties” in the category “Extracurricular Event”.

Most of the school scripts about the 1960s are made up as a collage composed of excerpts from literary works according to the model “presenter-reader-presenter...”. This particular script is specially created as a dramatically musical performance, as an immersive performance, as a nostalgic performance-nostalgia. This is a real flat party (“kvartirnik”), a meeting of the grandchildren of 1960s poets on Bulat Okudzhava’s commemoration day; it’s a story of how the descendants of great poets make friends, fall in love, keep the memory of their loved ones. Young actors, students of the 9th and 10th grades recite their favorite poems, recall stories about their favorite poets, sing to the guitar, creating an atmosphere that unites the

actors and the audience, causing a desire to mount the stage and become a guest of this hospitable party.

The performances of the best teachers of the Russian world - Tatyana L. Ambrushkevich from Belarus and Marina S. Asylbekova from Kazakhstan - created a unique atmosphere. Both of these extraordinary people have their own approach to teaching, their own way to the hearts and souls of students. Tatyana L. Ambrushkevich always emphasizes the necessity of visualization of the educational information through reference tables, posters, collages, graffiti, symbols, and tag clouds. Text visualization techniques help to define new meanings, develop students’ ability to understand their emotions after reading works of art, and transmit them as visual images.

This is especially important nowadays, when the interest in reading is largely lost, with clip thinking prevailing in teenagers. Marina S. Asylbekova’s work presented for the competition is an attempt to solve the mystery of Alexander Blok’s “The Stranger” through the students’ own feelings and experience. The teacher intentionally develops the emotions and values of young readers, immerses them in the atmosphere of the genesis of thought, uses critical thinking strategies, and turns to creative and search activities. The second group consists of finalists who are promising, fast-developing teachers, aged mostly between 30 and 40.

The main advantage of these people and the key to their success is a relentless pedagogical search, the ability to absorb and transform for their own purposes the methodological developments of senior colleagues, the ability to create a new product based on the achievements of his predecessors taking into account the specifics of their audience, love for children and their profession. Such people need the competition much more than luminary teachers, because it impacts highly their professional growth.

Here we would like to mention Vladislava A. Morozova from Ferghana, the Republic of Uzbekistan. She is a very promising teacher, undeservedly not yet well-known outside Uzbekistan, where she is renowned as the winner of a number of teacher competitions and the state award – the Shukhrat medal. We believe that Vladislava A. Morozova’s experience, especially in working with secondary school students who initially speak little or no Russian, but achieve an advanced level of language proficiency, should be widely disseminated abroad.

We would also like to mention Anastasia S. Shabalina, a young teacher from Bishkek, who participated in three of our competitions in recent years. Among her achievements is the preparation of participants for International Competitions of readers (“World Through Culture”,

“Country of High Inspirations”, “Living Classics”) and school Olympiads, as well as publications of methodological developments in media, particularly, in the magazine “Russian Language in Schools of Kyrgyzstan”. Finally, we should mention a group of teachers who work “in the far abroad” promoting the Russian language in the Balkans, the Arab world, the countries of South-East Asia, and in some remote places in the post-Soviet space as well, where it is particularly difficult to promote the Russian language, for example in the mountainous villages of Tajikistan. In this regard, we cannot but name Diloru R. Saidova, who is sometimes the only guide in the Russian world for children living in these mountains” (Zhatkin).

CONCLUSIONS

The International competition “World of the Russian Word” (“Mir Russkogo slova”) became a platform for the exchange of pedagogical experience, allowing teachers to significantly enrich their knowledge of methods and working technologies. In May 2020, a collection of Competition materials was published, including the best methodological works of short listed teachers (Zhatkin, 2020). We plan to attract the winners and finalists of the International Competition “World of the Russian Word” (“Mir Russkogo slova”) to participate in teaching workshops and other practice-oriented events for teachers from foreign countries in the framework of new projects in 2020. It is also obvious that there is a need to continue organizing such methodological competitions aimed at supporting teachers who promote the Russian language and culture abroad.

As we can see, organizing cultural and educational events dedicated to promoting the Russian language abroad has helped to encourage new students to learn Russian, as well as to improve the professional skills of Russian language teachers abroad.

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