

## **Utilizing YouTube Videos to Improve Speaking Skills in Seventh-Grade Students at MTsN 2 Kota Bengkulu**

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**Abstract:** This study aimed to explore how YouTube digital videos could enhance students' speaking skills and to identify the factors that influenced these improvements. Conducted as Classroom Action Research, the study involved 36 seventh-grade students at MTsN 02 Kota Bengkulu. The research employed a mixed-methods approach, gathering both quantitative data through speaking tests and qualitative data through observations, field notes, and interviews. The results revealed that key factors driving this improvement included increased student motivation and active participation in the learning process. Students reported feeling more confident in their speaking abilities, and the authentic language input provided by YouTube videos helped them improve their pronunciation, vocabulary, and fluency. The novelty of this study lay in applying YouTube as a pedagogical tool within an Indonesian junior high school context, specifically focusing on its impact on speaking skills. Furthermore, the study highlighted the importance of combining digital media with interactive classroom activities to create a more engaging and effective learning environment. This research contributed to the growing body of literature on digital media in education by offering practical insights into how YouTube videos could be successfully integrated into language teaching to foster speaking skill development among younger learners. The findings suggested that YouTube digital videos served as an effective medium for improving language proficiency, particularly in EFL (English as a Foreign Language) contexts, where authentic language exposure was often limited. Moreover, the study emphasized the crucial role of motivation and student engagement, offering valuable strategies for educators to implement in their classrooms to enhance student learning outcomes.

**Keywords:** Classroom Action Research, Digital Media, Speaking Skills, YouTube, Student Engagement

### **A. Introduction**

Speaking skills are a critical component of language proficiency in both first and second language acquisition, forming the basis for effective communication. In educational settings, the ability to express ideas clearly and confidently in spoken

English is fundamental to students' academic success and plays a pivotal role in their future career prospects. English proficiency is increasingly recognized as a global necessity across various fields, including business, science, technology, and international relations. The ability to communicate effectively in spoken English opens doors to numerous opportunities and enhances students' chances for success in a highly interconnected world (Osias Kit T. Kilag et al., 2023). In numerous conventional educational environments, there has traditionally been a focus on reading and writing, while speaking and listening have frequently been given less priority. This imbalance may lead to students being proficient in written English while lacking the confidence or skills necessary for effective spoken communication.

In today's rapidly globalizing world, the need for strong speaking skills is more important than ever before. The rise of international communication, multicultural workplaces, and global collaboration has made spoken communication a key element of language proficiency (Alkathiri, 2019). Achieving fluency in English goes beyond mastering grammatical rules and vocabulary; it requires the ability to engage in real-world conversations, navigate different social and cultural contexts, and respond appropriately to various communication situations. Therefore, speaking skills are increasingly seen as a central component of language education, particularly in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classrooms, where students may have limited exposure to authentic English-speaking environments (Ariyanto et al., 2018).

Given this shift in focus, educators and researchers are increasingly recognizing the need for innovative and engaging teaching strategies that can help students develop their speaking proficiency. One such strategy that has garnered significant attention is the use of digital media, particularly videos, as an effective tool in language teaching. Videos, especially those from platforms like YouTube, offer rich, real-life contexts and authentic language input that can expose students to natural speech patterns, pronunciation, and everyday language use. Unlike traditional textbooks, which often provide formal and scripted language examples, digital videos allow students to observe how language is used in spontaneous and natural conversations. This exposure to authentic language helps students understand not only how words and phrases are used but also the nuances of intonation, body language, and cultural expressions that are essential for effective communication (Binmahboob, 2020).

The use of digital videos in language instruction also addresses one of the key challenges in EFL teaching—providing students with opportunities for meaningful language input and interaction. In many EFL contexts, students may not have regular access to native English speakers or authentic language environments. This can limit their ability to develop strong speaking skills, as they are often confined to classroom-based language practice, which may not reflect the dynamic and interactive nature of real-world communication. By incorporating digital videos into

the curriculum, educators can bridge this gap, bringing the outside world into the classroom and providing students with opportunities to engage with authentic spoken English (Idries et al., 2024).

Furthermore, digital videos can be highly engaging and motivating for students, especially when compared to more traditional forms of instruction. Many students are already familiar with platforms like YouTube and regularly consume video content for entertainment, learning, and social interaction. By leveraging this familiarity and interest, educators can create more engaging and interactive language lessons that resonate with students. The use of videos can make language learning more enjoyable, reducing the anxiety and fear that some students may experience when speaking in a foreign language. This increased engagement can, in turn, lead to higher levels of participation and motivation, which are critical factors in language acquisition (Islam et al., 2024).

In addition to providing authentic language input, digital videos can also serve as a springboard for a variety of speaking activities. Educators can design tasks that encourage students to use the language they observe in the videos, such as role-plays, discussions, debates, or presentations. For example, after watching a video of a conversation between two native speakers, students can be asked to recreate the conversation, discuss the topics covered, or role-play similar scenarios. This kind of interactive practice not only reinforces the language structures and vocabulary introduced in the videos but also helps students develop the confidence and fluency needed to use the language in real-life situations (Khakimah, 2024).

Moreover, digital videos can be easily adapted to meet the diverse needs of learners in the classroom. Teachers can select videos that align with their students' language proficiency levels, interests, and learning goals. For beginners, videos with clear pronunciation and slower speech can be used to focus on basic language structures and vocabulary. For more advanced learners, videos featuring faster-paced, more complex language can be introduced to challenge their listening and speaking skills. This flexibility allows educators to cater to individual learning styles and ensure that all students are able to benefit from the use of digital media in their language learning journey.

Additionally, digital videos often incorporate visual elements, such as facial expressions, gestures, and contextual cues, which can aid in comprehension and language learning. For language learners, particularly those at lower proficiency levels, these visual supports can help clarify meaning and make it easier to understand spoken English. By observing how speakers use gestures or facial expressions to convey meaning, students can develop a deeper understanding of how communication works in real-life situations. This multimodal input is particularly valuable for developing speaking skills, as it mirrors the way

communication occurs in everyday life, where spoken language is often accompanied by visual and contextual cues.

Integration of digital videos into EFL instruction offers numerous benefits for developing students' speaking skills. By providing authentic language input, creating engaging and motivating learning experiences, and offering opportunities for interactive practice, videos can significantly enhance students' ability to speak English with confidence and fluency. As the world becomes increasingly interconnected, the demand for strong speaking skills will continue to grow, making it essential for educators to adopt innovative teaching strategies that help students succeed in real-world communication. Digital media, particularly videos, represents one such strategy, offering a powerful tool for language teachers to improve speaking proficiency in the 21st-century classroom (Kristiani & Pradnyadewi, 2021).

Although the benefits of digital media in language learning are widely acknowledged, there is still limited research that specifically examines the impact of YouTube videos on the speaking skills of junior high school students in Indonesia. Most studies that investigate the role of YouTube in language education have focused on higher education or older student populations, leaving a gap in understanding its potential impact on younger learners, such as those in junior high school. This lack of research is particularly evident in regions like Bengkulu, Indonesia, where access to engaging, interactive educational tools may be more limited than in urban areas. While previous studies have explored the general advantages of using digital media for language improvement, there is still a need to investigate the specific effects of YouTube videos on enhancing motivation and student engagement in developing speaking skills, especially among younger learners (Kurnia Aliffia & Arifani, 2024).

Current research in the field has provided valuable insights into the effectiveness of YouTube in improving language skills. For instance, a study by (Meilinda, 2018) found that using YouTube videos combined with interactive techniques, such as the snowball throwing method, helped students in Palembang improve their speaking skills. While these studies offer important findings, they primarily focus on older students in high school, which leaves a gap in understanding how YouTube can be applied effectively in junior high school settings. This gap is particularly important to address in rural or less urbanized regions, such as Bengkulu, where educational resources and opportunities for language exposure might be more limited. Moreover, while these studies highlight the overall language improvement through YouTube, they do not delve deeply into the role of motivation and student engagement in the learning process, factors which can greatly influence speaking performance.

This study sought to fill the gap by focusing specifically on seventh-grade students

in a junior high school setting, investigating how YouTube videos could be used to enhance speaking skills. The integration of digital media into English instruction for younger students was relatively new in the Indonesian educational context, and this study explored its potential to improve speaking performance. By using both quantitative and qualitative data, the research provided a more comprehensive understanding of how digital media, particularly YouTube videos, could facilitate the development of speaking skills. The systematic approach employed in this study allowed for an in-depth analysis of the factors that contributed to the improvement of students' speaking abilities, particularly motivation and active engagement in classroom activities (Meinawati et al., 2020).

The contribution of this research lay in its practical application of digital media in EFL classrooms, particularly within the context of junior high school students in Indonesia. It provided educators with insights into how YouTube videos could be effectively integrated into their teaching methods to enhance students' speaking skills. Moreover, the study emphasized the critical role of motivation and student participation in language learning, offering educators strategies to increase student engagement and improve learning outcomes. The findings of this research not only contributed to the existing literature on digital media in education but also offered practical recommendations for teachers seeking to enhance their students' speaking abilities through interactive and engaging teaching methods (Mulya et al., 2022).

In light of the issues discussed, this study aimed to address two key research questions: (1) To what extent could YouTube digital videos improve the speaking skills of seventh-grade students at MTsN 02 Kota Bengkulu? (2) What factors influenced the changes in students' speaking skills after using YouTube digital videos? These research questions guided the investigation and helped explore how digital media could be harnessed to improve language teaching and learning in junior high schools, particularly in less urbanized regions.

## **B. Methods**

This study was designed as Classroom Action Research (CAR), following the Kemmis and McTaggart model, which outlines four key phases: planning, action, observation, and reflection. This method is well-suited for educational settings where the goal is to improve classroom practice through iterative cycles of interventions and reflections. The primary aim of this research was to enhance the speaking skills of seventh-grade students at MTsN 02 Kota Bengkulu by incorporating YouTube digital videos into their English lessons. The intervention spanned one full cycle, with each phase meticulously designed to ensure that the research objectives were effectively addressed.

In the planning phase, we undertook several critical steps to ensure that the

intervention was both effective and aligned with the students' learning needs. The first step was the development of detailed lesson plans that integrated YouTube digital videos into the classroom activities. The selected videos were chosen for their relevance to the English syllabus and their focus on providing authentic examples of spoken English. Authenticity was a key criterion, as the videos needed to present real-world language use to allow students to observe natural conversational patterns, idiomatic expressions, and accurate pronunciation.

The lesson plans were designed to be interactive and student-centered, incorporating various activities such as vocabulary drills, pronunciation exercises, and speaking tasks. These activities aimed to support the students in practicing the language structures and phrases they observed in the videos, facilitating an active learning environment. To ensure that the intervention was appropriately scaffolded, the lesson plans gradually increased in complexity. Initial lessons focused on basic language features, while later lessons emphasized more advanced aspects of communication, such as fluency, coherence, and proper intonation. This gradual increase in difficulty allowed students to build their confidence and language skills over time (Nazhifah & Lubis, 2024).

In addition to preparing lesson plans, we developed a range of supplementary materials to support the learning process. These materials included worksheets that reinforced key vocabulary and language structures from the videos, as well as role-playing scenarios designed to provide students with opportunities to practice speaking in various real-life contexts. We also prepared observation checklists and interview questions in advance to ensure that comprehensive qualitative data could be collected during and after the intervention. These tools were essential for capturing insights into students' engagement, progress, and attitudes toward learning English through YouTube videos (Nuraini et al., 2024).

The action phase involved the implementation of the intervention in class VII-A, which consisted of 36 seventh-grade students at MTsN 02 Kota Bengkulu. The class was selected based on a pre-study evaluation that identified these students as having lower-than-average speaking skills. This evaluation provided a crucial baseline for comparing the students' progress before and after the intervention. The intervention was conducted over a series of lessons, each of which incorporated YouTube videos as the primary teaching tool for speaking practice.

Each lesson began with the presentation of a YouTube video that was relevant to the day's learning objectives. The videos featured native or fluent English speakers engaging in conversations, narrating stories, or providing tutorials on various topics. These videos served as models for authentic language use, offering students the opportunity to observe how English is spoken in everyday situations. After watching the videos, students engaged in a range of activities designed to improve

their speaking abilities. These activities included vocabulary practice, where students were encouraged to identify and use new words they encountered in the videos; pronunciation drills, which helped students mimic the native speakers' intonation and stress patterns; and role-playing, where students were given specific scenarios and asked to use English to communicate in simulated real-life contexts (Osias Kit T. Kilag et al., 2023).

A key element of the action phase was the emphasis on student-centered learning. Rather than passively watching the videos, students were encouraged to actively participate in the learning process. They were asked to work in pairs or small groups to discuss the content of the videos, share their interpretations, and practice speaking together. This collaborative learning environment fostered greater interaction among students, allowing them to learn from one another and build their confidence in speaking. The use of YouTube videos in conjunction with speaking exercises helped to create a supportive and engaging classroom atmosphere, where students felt more comfortable practicing their English skills without fear of making mistakes (Panuntun et al., 2017).

Throughout the lessons, the teacher provided guidance and feedback, helping students to refine their pronunciation, expand their vocabulary, and improve their fluency. Students who encountered difficulties were given additional support, and various strategies were used to cater to different learning styles, such as visual aids for visual learners and discussion-based tasks for auditory learners.

The observation phase played a pivotal role in gathering data on the students' participation, engagement, and progress throughout the intervention. To ensure a comprehensive evaluation of student performance, we used an observation checklist to systematically record various aspects of student behavior during the lessons. The checklist included indicators such as students' level of engagement with the videos, their willingness to participate in speaking tasks, and their ability to mimic pronunciation and intonation patterns from the videos. This structured approach allowed us to capture objective data on how students were responding to the intervention (Pasaribu et al., 2023).

In addition to the observation checklist, we took detailed field notes to capture qualitative insights into the classroom dynamics. These notes provided rich contextual information that supplemented the quantitative data collected through the speaking tests. The field notes included observations on how individual students responded to different activities, how they interacted with their peers, and their overall enthusiasm for the lessons. For instance, we noted that several students who had been initially reluctant to speak in English became more confident as the intervention progressed, participating more actively in group discussions and role-playing activities. The field notes also highlighted any challenges students

encountered, such as difficulties with pronunciation or vocabulary retention, allowing us to make adjustments to the lessons as needed (Rachman et al., 2024).

As the intervention continued, we observed noticeable changes in the students' attitudes toward speaking English. Many students began to demonstrate greater enthusiasm for speaking tasks, showing a willingness to practice even outside of structured activities. The classroom atmosphere became more collaborative, with students encouraging each other and providing constructive feedback during group activities. This increase in student engagement was one of the key successes of the intervention.

The reflection phase involved a thorough analysis of both the quantitative and qualitative data collected during the study. After the completion of the intervention cycle, we reviewed the results of the speaking tests to assess the effectiveness of the YouTube video intervention in improving the students' speaking skills. The speaking tests were administered before and after the intervention, evaluating the students on several key aspects of speaking, including fluency, pronunciation, grammar, and vocabulary. The students' test scores were then averaged and categorized into levels such as "poor," "satisfactory," "good," and "very good" based on pre-determined criteria.

The comparison of the pre-test and post-test results revealed significant improvements in the students' speaking abilities. Before the intervention, a large proportion of students were categorized as having "poor" speaking skills, particularly in terms of fluency and pronunciation. However, after the intervention, the majority of students had moved into the "good" and "very good" categories, demonstrating considerable progress in their ability to speak English with confidence and accuracy (Rufino, 2024).

In addition to the quantitative analysis, we conducted an in-depth qualitative analysis of the data gathered from the observation checklists, field notes, and student interviews. The interviews provided valuable insights into the students' perceptions of the YouTube videos and how these videos had contributed to their speaking improvement. Common themes emerged from the interviews, such as the positive impact of the visual and auditory input provided by the videos, which helped students better understand how to use English in everyday contexts. Students also reported that the videos made learning more enjoyable and less intimidating, which encouraged them to participate more actively in speaking activities. This qualitative data helped to explain the underlying reasons for the success of the intervention, revealing that increased motivation and active engagement were key factors in the students' improvements (Sadaf et al., 2024).

The research was conducted at MTsN 02 Kota Bengkulu, an Islamic junior high school located in Bengkulu, Indonesia. The study focused on class VII-A, which



consisted of 36 students in their first year of junior high school. The selection of this class was based on the students' lower-than-average speaking skills, as identified through a pre-study evaluation conducted by us. This evaluation served as a baseline for measuring the students' progress following the intervention.

Several instruments were used for data collection. The speaking test was the primary tool for quantitatively measuring the students' progress. The test required students to speak on various topics, and their performance was evaluated using a standardized rubric that assessed fluency, pronunciation, grammar, and vocabulary (Tahmina, 2023). This rubric ensured that the assessment was objective and consistent across all students. The speaking test was essential for determining the overall effectiveness of the YouTube video intervention in improving the students' speaking skills.

In addition to the speaking test, the observation checklist was employed to systematically record student behavior during the lessons. This checklist provided a structured way to evaluate students' participation, engagement, and interaction with the learning materials. Furthermore, field notes were taken to capture additional qualitative insights into the classroom environment, student behavior, and any challenges encountered during the lessons. These notes were instrumental in providing context for the students' test scores and participation levels (Saed et al., 2021).

Finally, student interviews were conducted to gather qualitative data on students' experiences with the intervention. These interviews allowed students to share their thoughts on the use of YouTube videos in the classroom, their engagement with the content, and their perceptions of their own progress. The interviews provided a deeper understanding of how digital media can enhance language learning, particularly in an EFL context.

The data collected through these instruments were analyzed using both quantitative and qualitative methods. The quantitative analysis involved comparing the pre-test and post-test results to measure improvements in students' speaking performance. The scores were averaged and categorized into levels ranging from "poor" to "very good" based on pre-determined criteria. This analysis provided a clear picture of the gains made by the students in their speaking abilities. For the qualitative analysis, the data from the observation checklists, field notes, and interviews were reviewed to identify patterns of student engagement, participation, and overall impact of the intervention on their speaking skills. The qualitative data was particularly valuable in understanding the factors that contributed to the students' improvements, such as increased confidence, better pronunciation, and a greater willingness to participate in speaking activities. These themes were then analyzed to explain the underlying reasons for the success of the intervention and to provide a more nuanced

understanding of how digital media, particularly YouTube, can enhance language learning in an EFL context (Syafiq et al., 2021).

### **C. Results and Discussion**

Based on the Research Question 1: To what extent can YouTube digital videos improve students' speaking skills at the seventh grade of MTsN 02 Kota Bengkulu? The study's findings revealed a substantial improvement in the speaking skills of the seventh-grade students following the intervention using YouTube digital videos. Before the intervention, the majority of students struggled with speaking, as indicated by the pre-cycle results where 55% of students were categorized as having "poor" speaking abilities. Their lack of fluency, weak pronunciation, and limited vocabulary were significant barriers. After the intervention, however, there was a marked shift in students' speaking performance. By the end of the study, 85% of the students had improved to either "good" or "very good" levels. This increase in performance was reflected in the mean speaking test score, which rose from 55 before the intervention to 77 after the intervention cycle, indicating a considerable enhancement in their speaking skills.

The improvement was evident across three cycles, with each cycle showing progressive growth in students' abilities. During Cycle 1, the proportion of students in the "poor" category dropped to 27%, while 41% of students were categorized as "satisfactory," and 23% had improved to "good." By Cycle 2, no students remained in the "poor" category, with 39% classified as "satisfactory" and 34% achieving "good" speaking levels. In Cycle 3, further improvements were observed, with 45% of students reaching the "very good" category, and 42% categorized as "good." These findings highlight the positive impact of YouTube digital videos in fostering significant improvements in students' speaking abilities, particularly in terms of fluency, pronunciation, and confidence in using English for communication.

The consistent use of YouTube videos in the classroom provided students with authentic language models, allowing them to mimic native speakers' pronunciation and intonation. Moreover, the interactive speaking exercises that accompanied the videos helped students practice and apply the language structures they observed, further reinforcing their speaking skills. As students engaged with the videos and classroom activities, their confidence in speaking increased, allowing them to participate more actively in discussions and role-playing tasks. The overall improvement in speaking performance suggests that YouTube digital videos, when used effectively, can be a valuable tool for enhancing speaking skills in EFL contexts.

Based on Research Question 2: What factors influence the change in students' speaking skills by using YouTube digital videos? Motivation emerged as one of the primary factors influencing the improvement in students' speaking skills. The use of

YouTube digital videos made the learning process more engaging and enjoyable for students, which, in turn, increased their willingness to participate in speaking activities. During interviews, students frequently mentioned that they found the YouTube videos more interesting than traditional teaching methods, as the videos provided visual and auditory input that helped them better understand how English is used in real-world contexts. Several students also indicated that watching native speakers on YouTube videos reduced their fear of making mistakes, as they were able to mimic the speakers' pronunciation and intonation, which increased their confidence in speaking English.

The activeness of students during classroom activities also played a crucial role in their speaking improvements. As students watched the YouTube videos, they were encouraged to participate more actively in class, particularly during group discussions and role-playing exercises. The combination of visual and auditory stimuli from the videos made it easier for students to engage with the content, and they were more motivated to apply what they learned in speaking activities. Students reported that the videos helped them better understand how to express themselves in English, and this, in turn, encouraged them to participate more actively in speaking tasks. The interactive nature of the classroom activities, which included vocabulary practice, pronunciation drills, and group discussions, further reinforced their speaking skills and increased their comfort level in using English.

The results of this study are strongly supported by previous research on the use of digital media, particularly YouTube, in language learning. Similarly, (Meilinda, 2018) demonstrated that YouTube videos, when combined with interactive teaching techniques like the snowball throwing method, enhanced the speaking skills of high school students in Palembang. These findings align with the current study's emphasis on the importance of interactive activities, such as role-playing and discussions, which complemented the use of YouTube videos and contributed to students' speaking improvements.

Furthermore, Harmer (2001) emphasized that videos provide learners with authentic language examples, which motivate them to practice speaking more confidently. This finding resonates with the current study, as students in MTsN 02 Kota Bengkulu reported that the YouTube videos made it easier for them to mimic native speakers and practice their pronunciation, which contributed to their improved fluency and confidence. Similarly, (Alkathiri, 2019) found that YouTube videos positively influenced student motivation and engagement, a finding that was also evident in this study. Students became more enthusiastic about participating in speaking activities and were more willing to engage in discussions and practice their speaking skills in class.

Additionally, research conducted by (Saed et al., 2021) highlighted the effectiveness of group discussions when paired with YouTube media, as it fostered better

speaking performances. In the current study, students who participated in group discussions and role-playing activities demonstrated greater improvements in their speaking skills, further validating the importance of combining digital media with interactive classroom activities.

However, some studies presented contrasting views on the use of digital media for language learning. (Sa'adah, 2020) argued that while YouTube may improve student engagement, it may not always address deeper linguistic issues such as grammar. This finding was partially reflected in the current study, where some students, despite their improved fluency and pronunciation, still struggled with grammatical accuracy. This suggests that while YouTube videos can significantly enhance certain aspects of speaking, such as fluency and pronunciation, additional instructional support may be needed to address grammar-related issues. Similarly, Fairbairn (2005) pointed out that relying solely on video media may limit students' ability to apply grammar rules, as passive viewing does not always translate into active language use. However, in this study, the combination of YouTube videos with interactive classroom activities, such as discussions and role-playing, helped mitigate this concern by providing students with ample opportunities to practice speaking in real-time.

The findings of this study contribute to the growing body of research on the effectiveness of digital media in language education. The results confirm that YouTube digital videos, when combined with active learning techniques such as role-playing and discussions, can significantly improve students' speaking skills. This study highlights the importance of using engaging and authentic digital media to enhance student motivation, particularly among younger learners who may find traditional methods less appealing. The role of student motivation and activeness in the learning process emerged as critical factors in achieving improvements in speaking abilities. This research offers valuable insights for educators seeking to incorporate digital media into their teaching practices to enhance language learning outcomes.

#### **D. Conclusions**

The findings of this study clearly demonstrate that the use of YouTube digital videos significantly improved the speaking skills of seventh-grade students at MTsN 02 Kota Bengkulu. By the end of the intervention, 85% of students achieved "good" or "very good" levels in their speaking performance, marking a substantial improvement from their initial baseline scores. This progress was largely attributed to the increased motivation and active participation of students during the lessons, which were enhanced by the engaging and authentic language input provided through YouTube videos. The combination of digital videos with interactive teaching methods, such as role-playing and group discussions, was particularly

effective in fostering fluency, pronunciation, and confidence in speaking. These results indicate that YouTube digital videos can serve as a powerful tool for enhancing speaking skills in EFL classrooms, especially when integrated with active learning strategies.

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