

A comparative study between the adapted and original READS among the students of the Saudi Arabia

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Abstract---*The aim of the current study is to develop and profiling a comparison within the adapted and original READS in the students of English in the Saudi Arabia. For this purpose, the data was collected from the 100 EFL students which were studying in the universities of the Saudi Arabia. "The mixed method approach was employed which consist of both the qualitative and quantitative approach. The key findings have shown that the value of original READS is less than 0.50, then is to consider the original READS correctness insufficient. Moreover, the second question of the study was achieved through the Item Objective Congruence analysis. The value was 0.88 which was high from the assumed value which is 0.50. Therefore, the value of adapted READS is showed the suitability according to the Saudi Environment. In addition, the third research question was achieved by using the descriptive analysis as compare in the both of original and adapted READS. The key findings have shown that adapted READS have good result as compare to the original READS. The fourth research question of the study was to be achieved by using a paired sample test T-Test. Fundamentally, a comparison was performed with the results of the original and the adapted READS in the students of Saudi Arabia universities. The key findings have shown that there is a statistically significant differences are existing in respondent's performance of the adapted READS test, as opposed to the original READS version. Thus, these findings have shown that there is difference between the adapted READS and original READS in universities students of the Saudi Arabia."*

Key words---*Original READS, Adapted READS, Saudi Arabia, Universities*

I. Introduction

Being a language, English serves as a tool which makes smooth and ensures the communication among the linguistics groups and it also do assist in accessing the worldwide community (Rogerson-Revell, 2007). Previously research has highlighted that English is international language. Interestingly it is used as a primary language by only 10% of population worldwide. According to Graddol (2000) approximately one-fifth of the population is confident to use English language for communication and it is also demanded from the remaining four-fifth. It is worthy to make distinction between the purpose of oral and textual skills; where the earlier one is required to read and listen which serve as a base for general linguistic proficiency and later one denotes to write and read which serves as a base for educational purpose across the disciplines (Alsubaie, 2014). Reading is a comprehensive concept which is inclusive

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of the process to interpret a text. Importantly, it is not an easy at all to read in native language of people and even it becomes more complex in the language which they learn from schooling. Therefore, it has become important that the English Major students are equipped with satisfactory skills related to English reading who ask for English as a language to teach. Similarly, Kirby (2007) also argues that understanding the reading is very much difficult and it needs to be acknowledged and considerate teaching. Therefore, reading a text, understanding it and its context (reading comprehension) is regarded as a difficult process. Previously various studies have proved and recognized reading as a fundamental and important linguistic skill which accounts for success in academia across the languages. It is worthy to mention the findings of Sheery (2009), according to which reading is the first step when someone wants to learn how to write? In addition, study also revealed that writing skills of students improved when they get involved in free reading programs.

Commonly, it is observed that EFL lecturers are not able to oversee the reading abilities of students regarding the English (Khemanuwong, Mohamed, & Ismail, 2018). Moreover, the unavailability of the satisfactory information regarding the reading standard makes the determination of student's reading abilities a more complex job. Accordingly, having predetermined indicators seems to be practical approach which will serve as a base on which student's reading abilities are evaluated and scored regarding what is to be improved and how. "It can be accomplished by using the systems such as READS (Reading evaluation and decoding system)."

Having considered the previously mentioned factors the original READ system appeared to be mismatched to be employed for Saudi target audience. Therefore, instead to developing a new instrument the previous one is adapted as it provides the various benefits such as adapted version allows extensive amount of generalizability while increasing population (Harbon & England, 2006). Even though instrument is adapted but still it stands to be difficult task to test the instrument as it do includes a cautious array, specially the materials and validity of the instrument in general (Borsa, Damásio, & Bandeira, 2012; Cassepp-Borges, Balbinotti, & Teodoro, 2010). Notably, the instrument's adaptation does not lose its fit with culture as it is being prepared to be tested in different context (Hambleton, 2005; Sireci, Yang, Harter, & Ehrlich, 2006).

Considering "the Saudi Arabia, where English language is considered as second language for communication generally carries various complexities with regard to understand the discrepancies within the simple and compound sentences. Consequently, the students are expected not to understand and interpret the intended meaning of a writer (Alsubaie, 2014). It is problematic situation particularly at tertiary level as English reading is compulsory for learners and researchers across the levels of study (undergraduate and postgraduate). It is notable to understand that majority of the Saudi Arabia Universities' students with English major opt for the teaching once after the completion of graduation. Therefore, they are most likely to transfer the reading comprehension problems to their students as well (Al-Ahmadi & Hames, 2009).

Continuing on the Saudi Arabian context, it is necessary to mention that English as a Foreign Language have some problems such as it is based on the conventional and controlled approach in which students are asked to memorize the bulky details of small items instead of understanding the intended meaning of a writer (Alhazzani et al., 2016). Such scenario can only be eased up by identification of basic complexities and threats which are being confronted by students with English as a Major language in Saudi Arabia. It is the need to time to identify and

address the contributing factors towards the Saudi reading comprehension challenges. Hence, considering the above-mentioned arguments the current study is an endeavour to provide with the solution to the mentioned problem. Therefore, the study emphasizes on the developing and profiling a comparison within the adapted and original READS in the students of English in the Saudi Arabia

Research Questions

Research Question One: “Can the original READS system be used in the universities in Saudi Arabia?”

RQ2: “What item need to be changed to make READS system more suitable with the universities environment in Saudi Arabia?”

RQ3: Which results are generated from:

“1. The original READS on universities’ students in Saudi Arabia?”

“2. The adapted READS on universities’ students in Saudi Arabia?”

RQ4: “Is there significant differences in the Universities students’ performance in Saudi Arabia on the two READS?”

II. Literature review and Theoretical Background

Anticipated performance towards a desired objective is regarded as performance standard. Previously, a study has stated that standards denote to the targeted performance which creates anticipated levels of performance, motivate it and also act as a criterion which is used for the assessment of actual performance (Bateman & Snell, 2002). “However, the present study conceptualizes the teen performance standards as real performance of the participants in test related to reading comprehension. The standards are categorized as follows: above, achieved and below standard and finally academic warning. Each of the levels is representative of student’s performance in reading. Further, they also do point out that what is or is not poor a student to do regarding his or her reading abilities.”

“**Above Standard:** Being the first standard it covers the extra ordinary performance demonstration by student in reading. It covers that student has exhibited excellence by not just only performing to the level he/she is cable of but also going above his/her educational level by meeting the criteria provided in Barrett's Taxonomy of reading comprehension. It shows that student has outperformed and went beyond the expectations.”

“**Achieve Standard:** This standard holds that the students’ are proficient regarding their knowledge and skills in reading comprehension. Furthermore, he or she is also able to fulfill the criteria in Barrett's Taxonomy of reading comprehension. Conclusively, the students are said to possess core readings’ knowledge.”

“**Below Standard,** this standard holds that students are able to meet the criteria in a part. It can also be interpreted that the students show basic knowledge and skills even though they have reading comprehension at their education level. Conclusively, it can’t be regarded as a complete failure of students rather he or she is able to demonstrate only basic knowledge because he/she was able to meet the criteria partially (Barrett's Taxonomy of reading comprehension).”

Academic Writing: The last standard academic warning holds that the student has failed in demonstration of basic knowledge and has gaps in his/her reading at his/her education level. Conclusively, student has failed to meet the criteria stated in “Barrett's Taxonomy of reading comprehension.”

Perceptions or units which accumulate the information for long run are regarded as schema (Singhal, 1998). It is also defined as: “A mental codification of experience that includes a particular organized way of perceiving cognitively and responding to a complex situation or set of stimuli”(Merriam-Webster, 1999). Whereas, Alvarez and Risko (1989) regarded it as prearranged knowledge which is used by the reader while they are reading and make reference to his or her exposure and existing knowledge of the world to gain the understanding. While in the words of the German philosopher Kant Immanuel (1781, cited in Kramsch, 1993) described it as prearranged knowledge and also contended that in order to drive understanding regarding any latest information and constructs, it must be linked with the existing knowledge (Zhao & Zhu, 2012).

Continuing on relationship of schema it is necessary to mention that it is being focused by the researchers and they consider it as an important factor (Webster, 2001). Particularly, it contributes towards the examination in the reading process of comprehension, the way significance is derived and understanding instructions. Its importance can be judged from the fact that it has been used by researchers and academicians for explaining the process of how learning happens, remembering and understanding of things and events take place. Schema holds that texts itself don't offer the meaning instead, it offers some directions to readers in order to develop understanding by exploitation of existing knowledge, exposure, and relating it with latest ones (Zhao & Zhu, 2012). Therefore, it is concluded that while reading when the readers are familiar to a text, they tend to relate it with existing knowledge. Then the readers try to drive the meaning and develop understanding about it in light of available knowledge and exposure (Hammash, 2004).

It is worthy to mention previous scholar Rumelhart (1980), who established the schema as a organized and firm theory. Author argued that various kinds of knowledge possessed by individuals are stored for long run in form of units or schema (Zhao & Zhu, 2012). While confronting the latest information and exposure the readers recall their existing knowledge to get help for developing understanding (Bischoff & Anderson, 2001). The newly acquired knowledge is derived, understood and stored with the help to existing knowledge or circumstances. Notably, Carroll (1999) put forward that when the people are confronted with contradictory conditions regarding their understanding, they tend to disregard in order to normalize it by modification of its details till it becomes similar to their stowed schemata.

“Accordingly Carrell (1984) divided schema into three categories which as follows: (1) linguistic schema denotes to the knowledge of any reader which he or she already possess which further inclusive of grammar and vocabulary, (2) content schema is related to the content regarding area of text reading such as understanding of knowledge, already available information about the theme and knowledge related to culture and (3) formal schema denotes to: “abstract, encoded, internalized, coherent patterns of meta-linguistic, discoursed, and textual organization that guide expectations in our attempts to understand a meaningful piece of language.” (Carrell & Eisterhold, 1983, p. 82).”

Going on further “the researchers working in domain of reading contends that the printed text is understood with the help of existing knowledge which helps to assign meaning to available text (Gilakjani & Ahmadi, 2011). In addition, Gilakjani and Ahmadi (2011, p. 142) argued that readers do combine their already held knowledge with the new one to develop the understanding of text. The schema may of academic, cultural or experience related domain but it helps an individual's reading comprehension. Further it also do influence how do the information is processed

and will enable readers to be more capable to get themselves engaged in new knowledge (Riswanto, 2014). In addition to this, Anderson and Pearson (1984, p. 255) argued that schema or knowledge already held in memory plays a critical role in interpretation of latest information and enables to store and also become a schemata.”

Moreover, researchers who support the schema theory are of the belief that comprehension can't be accomplished by only going through the linguistic knowledge but it also asks for remembering the existing knowledge which ensure that the readers can understand the intended meaning of text. In this regard Zhao and Zhu (2012) in their study postulated that schema functioning is dependent on the application of existing knowledge in memory of an individual which he or she uses while confronting any latest information either writer or spoken and further it also helps them to solve the problems if any. Therefore, it is stated that the possession of greater knowledge models helps a reader's reading comprehension.

At this point it is worthy to mention that schema also carries some disadvantages as addressed by Zhao and Zhu (2012). They provided its limitations as follows; firstly, lack of vocabulary will hinder the process of linguistic schema. Secondly, insufficient knowledge about culture of text will also hinder the comprehensive understanding, even if the readers are able to develop some understanding. Finally, having knowledge about various text and genres enable a reader to form formal schema which can't be achieved unless the teachers enhance the students reading scope and let them go through various readings.

Besides limitations schema is also advantageous as Riswanto (2014) stated that frequent employment of schema by a reader will increase their comprehension's efforts pay off. On the other hand, instructors can also act as a significant driver in assisting student to develop understanding about the application of learning by employing certain appropriate strategies, where the strategies push the schema at various readings. Importantly, three reading stages activates schema but interestingly, pre-reading stage in which teachers enables students to get themselves involve in reading with the various reductions, expectations, and conjectures ultimately helps them to provoke schema. Therefore, the present study will consider these stages in read's administration and while discussing the findings as well.

III. Research Methodology

The research is to be established to answer the research questions. In this regards, it could be a primary plan of the research which consist of all the steps which are consummate from the researcher (Creswell, 1998). After seeking the importance of research design, mixed research design was established which consist of quantitative and qualitative approach. The mixed research approach also known the exploratory approach (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004). The quantitative data was found from the “adapted READS”, “although the qualitative data is consisting of document analysis and from the semi structured interview for the opinion which are experts with the document analysis used like “curriculum and English language policy in Saudi Arabia,” to name a few.” To collect the data, the target population of the current was from the English department of Saudi Arabia school of humanities which is year 1 to year 4. The target sample for the current study 100 students which represents the sample size of the study. Based on the sample of the study, the respondents were divided on the four group and each group was consisting of the twenty-five students. In the interview session, three lecturers of faculty

members were selected from the humanities university of Saudi Arabia were selected. All of these samples were selected by using the purposive sampling technique.

Research Instruments

A research instrument was established to acquire the study objective. “The main data gathering tool for the is Adapted READS which stands by “Reading Evaluation and Decoding System”. There was a prevailing “original READS” which was used in the Malaysian context and seemed to have a Malaysian culture is different. To confirm that an original read is comprises from the cultural biasness and could be recycled in the context of Saudi Arabia. The information was gathered from the English experts. These experts were the senior lecturer from the Saudi Arabia universities. There was asked to the experts to check the original READS contents. “The experts examined each item to validate and approve the adapted READS by using Index of Consistency to depict their response to the statements based on the scale of (-1), (0) and (+1) as follows”: “+1 = Agree; 0 = Uncertain; -1 = Disagree.””

Variables

The respondents in the current study was categorized into the independent and dependent and independent variable categorized. The independent variable for the current study was gender, years (1 to 4). The dependent variables were, above standard, below standard, achieve standard, academic writing.

Descriptive and Inferential Analysis of the study

In this section, the descriptive and inferential analysis of the study are discussed which are formulated based on the research question. There were mainly three research questions which are answered by taking the inferential analysis.

Descriptive Statistics of Respondents

The target sample of the current study was 100 students which were selected from the Saudi Arabia Universities by using the purposive sampling technique. The descriptive statistics results are depicted in following Table in terms of age (19 to 23), gender (male and female), years (1 to 4). The results of the descriptive analysis are depicted in the following Table1.

Table.1: Respondents’ Profile in Terms of Gender, age and year

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Val id	Male	Year 1	20	20.00	20.00
		Year 2	10	10.00	10.00
		Year 3	10	10.00	10.00
		Year 4	10	10.00	10.00
		Total	50	50.00	50.00
le	Fema	Year 1	20	20.00	20.00
		Year 2	10	10.00	10.00
		Year 3	10	10.00	10.00
		Year 4	10	10.00	10.00

Age				
19	18	18.00	18.00	18.00
20	30	30.00	30.00	48.00
21	24	24.00	24.00	72.00
22	17	17.00	17.00	89.00
23	11	11.00	11.00	100.00

IV. Research Questions

In this section is discussed about the research questions.

Research Question One: “Can the original READS system be used in the universities in Saudi Arabia?”

As discussed earlier for the evaluation and usability of the READS in the Saudi Arabia environment, the content analysis was done by the three experts which were working in the universities of the Saudi Arabia. In this regard, the experts state that:

Expert 1: The views of first respondent is formulated below.

“The READS system is well designed. However, some biasness in the texts is found which leads to the need of adapting this text. Furthermore, I believe that this test is higher than the skills of the students in Saudi Arabia”.

Expert 2: Other participants were responded that:

“I think it will be more adequate to consider the difference between our students and Malaysian student in regard to the English Reading Comprehension.”

“Some modifications are needed to make READS adequate with the Saudi Environments. For example, the names of the persons, cities, currency, places, and so on need to be changed to make the test clearer and more focusing in the reading comprehension and not in the cultures”

Expert 3: The response of the three responded indicated that:

“The level of difficulty in READS exceed the level of the Saudi Students. Also, the Malaysian culture that dominate the test make it more difficult and increase its ambiguity. I believe that by adapting this biasness the system will be really useful in the Saudi universities”

Table2:Expert Validation of original READS: Index of Consistency

Subject	Index of Consistency				Notes
	1	2	3	Mean	
1. “There is no cultural biasness such as in customs and traditions.”	+1	+1	+1	1.0	Agree
2. “There is no contextual biasness such as currency, names, and places.”	+1	0	-1	0.0	Uncertain
3. “There is no cognitive biasness such as level of thinking.”	-1	-1	-1	-1.0	Disagree
4. “There are no prejudices such as religious and ethnicity issues.”	+1	+1	0	0.67	Somewhat Agree

1	“The format of the encoder is clear and well-organized.”	+1	+1	+1	1.0	Agree
2	“The type of texts is suitable.”	+1	0	+1	0.67	Somewhat Agree
3	“The length of text is suitable.”	+1	+1	+1	1.0	Agree
4	“The level of difficulty is suitable for Saudi university educational level.”	-1	-1	-1	-1.0	Disagree

From the data in Table 2, the “Item Objective Congruence” could be found as follow:

$$\text{"Item Objective Congruence"} = \frac{1 + 0 - 1 + 0.67 + 1 + 0.67 + 1 - 1}{8} = 0.29"$$

“It is well-known that if the value of Item Objective Congruence less than 0.5, then the suitability of the original READS is inadequate.”

4.5.2 Research Question Two

RQ2: “What item need to be changed to make READS system more suitable with the universities environment in Saudi Arabia?”

Based on the expert views of the senior lecture, they were suggested that there is need of modification in the original READS to make it more appropriate according to the Saudi environment and culture. The adaptation was formulated on various aspects. Such aspects are consisting of the biasness in the form of cultural, contextual, cognitive, prejudice, the encoder format, context type, text length, and difficulty level. As per these factors, several items were changed in the adapted READS and was to be tested from three experts to examine the adapted READ validity and usability. The Table 1 of the study has shown the results of these adapted process.

Table3: Example of the Changes in the Adapted READS

No	Factors	Example
1	Cultural biasness	In Question 16-21 several changes to remove any existence of male students or teachers in the classes of female students.
2	Contextual biasness	The Photo on Questions 1-5 were changed as currency, names, and places were changes in the wale test
3	Cognitive biasness	Questions 40-45 are totally changed Questions 46-60 are totally changed
4	Prejudices	Questions 46-60 are totally changed because the music is forbidden in the Saudi environment
5	“The format of the encoder”	-
6	“The type of texts”	The text organized in suitable way.
7	“The length of text”	-
8	“The level of difficulty”	Difficult Questions was modernized in the Items from 40-60

As it is shown in the Table 2, the name of persons, name of places, the conflicts items of the culture, and various questions were also changed for the clarification of the test and according to the culture of the Saudi Arabia. “The adapted READS were also formulated from the similar experts from there the original READS was formulated.”

Table 3: That Validation of theAdapted READS: Index of Consistency

Subject	Index of Consistency				Notes
	1	2	3	Mea n	
1	+	+	+	1.0	Agree
	1	1	1		
2	+	+	+	1.0	Agree
	1	1	1		
3	+	+	+	1.0	Agree
	1	1	1		
4	+	+	+	1.0	Agree
	1	1	1		
5	+	+	+	1.0	Agree
	1	1	1		
6	+	0	+	0.67	Somewh at Agree
	1		1		
7	+	+	+	1.0	Agree
	1	1	1		
8	+	0	0	0.33	Somewh at Disagree
	1				

From the Table 3, the item objective congruence could also be computed by following mean formula

$$\text{Item Objective Congruence} = \frac{1 + 1 + 1 + 1 + 1 + 1 + 0.67 + 1 + 0.33}{8} = 0.88$$

If the value of the “Item Objective Congruence” is to be greater than 0.5, then it could be saying that adapted READS are suitable according to Saudi Environment.

Research Question Three

After the formulation of the “original and adapted READS”, the third question is formulated:

RQ3: which are the outcomes of:

“1. The original READS on universities’ students in Saudi Arabia?”

“2. The adapted READS on universities’ students in Saudi Arabia?”

To answer the current question, READS reading matrix was utilized in the conjunction along with tool of test and along with the performance standard. Descriptive analysis from the original READS, it is shown that among all of

them 47 are related to the academic writing, 8 achieve standard, 38 above standard, and seven below standards. Moreover, the results obtained from the Adapted READS shown that 21 respondents are related to the academic writing, 40 are related to the above standard, 20 are related to achieve standard and 19 are related to below standard. All of the results are depicted in the following Table 4.

Table4:Outcomes of theOriginal and Adapted READS Scores

		Freque ncy	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulativ e Percent
<i>Original</i> READS	Above Standard	38	38.00	38.00	38.00
	Achieve Standard	8	8.00	8.00	46.00
	Below Standard	7	7.00	7.00	53.00
	Academic Warning	47	47.00	47.00	100.00
Adapte d READS	Above Standard	40	40.00	40.00	40.00
	Achieve Standard	20	20.00	20.00	60.00
	Below Standard	19	19.00	19.00	79.00
	Academic Warning	21	21.00	21.00	100.00
	Total	100	100.00	100.00	

Research Question four

RQ4: “Is there significant differences in the Universities students’ performance in Saudi Arabia on the two READS?”

“A paired sample T-Test was employed to answer this question. In the following test a comparison within the adapted and original READS was accomplished. The paired T-Test was to be employed to investigate the effect on the involvement of the student get marks. The results which were gained from the adapted READS were significant (mean= 43.57, Standard deviation. = 13.96) and also original READS have the statistically significant (M= 36.99, S.D. = 18.73), (t (58) = 7.18, p = .00) findings by using two tailed tests. The mean score is 4.81 along with a 95% confidence interval which is ranged from the 3.47 to 6.6.16. In addition, the t-test results also indicated that the mean scores of the Saudi Reads are more (M = 43.07, S.D. = 6.11) are to be a more as compare to the original READS (M= 38.25, S.D. = 4.94), t (99) = -7.8, p = .00 (two-tailed). That is, after contextual biases in the original READS were removed, the students’ mean scores in the adapted READS were higher than those of the original READS. Therefore, it could be inferred that there is statistically difference which is exists in performance of respondents on the adapted test READS as opposite to the original version). Based on this, a significant answer is drawn that there is a significant difference in the students of the university on the two READS. These findings are consisting along with the Ministry of Education general objective of teaching EFL in the Saudi Arabia Schools (Al Zayid, 2012; Alrashidi & Phan, 2015; ur Rahman & Alhaisoni, 2013). All of the following results are depicted in the following Table 5 and Table 6.”

Table5: Paired Samples Statistics

		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1	Original READS Total Score	36.99	100	18.731	1.873
	Adapted READS Total Score	43.57	100	13.960	1.396

Table6: Paired Samples Test

Pair	Original READS Total Score - Adapted READS Total Score	Paired Differences				t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
					Lower				Upper
1		-6.580	8.440	.844	-8.255	-4.905	-7.796	99	.000

V. Conclusion

“The current research has shown that there a number of readings which are student do for their schools and for their personal enjoyments have paid a positive effect on their achievement of their reading, comprehensions skills of readings, and also contributes to the development of the academic knowledge (Cox & Guthrie, 2001; Stanovich, 1990). Therefore, the aim of the current study is to develop and profiling a comparison within the adapted and original READS in the students of English in the Saudi Arabia. “This is mainly to provide a relevant, reliable, consistent, and unbiased and to use reading proficiency assessment for Saudi Arabian universities students. To achieve the objective of the study, four research questions were formulated. In the research question one, to get the outcome of internal consistency, the item objective congruence found is 0.29 and this assumption was that if the value of this is less than 0.50, then is to consider the original READS correctness insufficient. Moreover, the second question of the study was achieved through the Item Objective Congruence analysis. The value was 0.88 which was high from the assumed value which is 0.50. Therefore, the value of adapted READS is showed the suitability according to the Saudi Environment. In addition, the third research question was achieved by using the descriptive analysis as compare in the both of original and adapted READS. The key findings have shown that adapted READS has good result as compare to the original READS. The fourth research question of the study was to be achieved by using a paired sample test T-Test. Fundamentally, a comparison was performed with the results of the original and the adapted READS in the students of Saudi Arabia universities.

The key findings have shown that there is a statistically significant differences is exist in respondents performance of the adapted READS test, as opposed to the original READS version. Thus, these findings have shown that there is difference between the adapted READS and original READS in universities students of the Saudi Arabia.”

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