VERB-COMPLEMENT RELATIONSHIP IN LANGUAGE TEACHING*

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Öz: Yabancı dil öğretiminde hedeflenen yabancı dil öğrenen kişinin öğrendiği dili kısa bir sürede doğru anlaması, konuşması ve yazmasıdır. Dil öğrenenlere kaynak dildeki kuralların dışında fiillerin tamlayıcıları mutlaka bildirilmelidir. Kaynak dil kurallarını öğreten dil bilgisi kitapları dil öğretimini amaçlamadığı için genel açıklamalar içermekte; bu da ikinci dil öğretimine yeterince yardımcı olamamaktadır. Yabancılara dil öğreten kitaplarda ise birtakım eksiklikler bulunmaktadır. Bazı meseleleri kurallara bağlamaya çalışmak yerine dildeki kullanımlarının verilmesi dil öğrenenler açısından faydalı olacaktır.

Araştırmamız üniversitede Türkçe öğrenimi gören on altı yabancı uyruklu öğrenci ile yapılmıştır. Öğrencilere Türkçe fiil-tamlayıcıları hakkında bilgi verilmiştir. Fiil-tamlayıcılarını bilmeyen öğrencilerin durum eklerini yanlış kullandıkları gözlenmiştir. Fiiller hakkında bilgi verildiğinde fiil-tamlayıcılarının yani bütünleyenlerinin verilmesi öğrenci açısından yararlı olacaktır. Araştırmanın verileri öğrencilerle yapılan uygulamalar esas alınarak saptanmıştır.

Anahtar Sözcükler: İkinci dil öğretimi, fiil ve tamlayıcı, birleşim değeri, yabancı öğrencilere Türkçenin öğretimi.

Abstract: The target of language teaching is that people learning a foreign language understand, speak and write the language they learned correctly in a short period of time. Besides rules of source language, verb complements should also be presented. Grammar books teaching source language rules include general explanations as their aim is not teaching language. This can not help to second language teaching. There are some lacks in the books which teach language to foreigners. It would be beneficial to show language uses rather than linking some issues to rules.

This research was carried out with 16 international students learning Turkish at university. The students were informed about the verb complements. It was observed that the students used case suffixes incorrectly when they did not know the verb complements. While giving information about the verbs, it would be beneficial for the students to be informed about the verb complements. Data of research was arranged depending on practices with students.

Keywords: Second language teaching, verb and complements, valence, teaching Turkish to foreing students.

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1. Introduction

The complements of the verb is analyzed in Turkish with the grammar terms such as *valenz* (German) *valence* (English; French)*, combination value* (English) **(**Vardar 1980:186, 222, 204), *volition* (Uğurlu 2001:198), *case determiner* **(**Uzun 1998). In this paper, the term *verb complements* is preferred.

Verb complements is a measurement describing and classifying the verbs according to the number of dependent actants in dependency grammar (Vardar 1980: 43).

The term valence has been transferred from the field of chemistry into linguistics by Tesniere, and many linguists who accept the verb as the focus point have adopted this term. Erben, Brinkmann, Grebe, Engelen, Helbig, Heringer and Engel are among the linguists who developed Lucien Tesniére's notions of dependency grammar and valency, and adapted them into German (Özil 1980: 13).

Starting with the verb of the sentence, Tesniére has divided the other elements of the sentence into two: the actants and the circontans. Tesniére compared the capacity of the verbs to carry a specific number of actants with the valence of atoms (such as H20), and argued that actants (nouns and the elements equivalent to nouns) are obligatory while the circontants (adverbs of time, place, manner) are optional. Tesniére has divided the verbs in French into groups such as verbs without actants (zero actant), one- actant verbs, two-actant verbs, and three-actant-verbs. In the classification of the verbs, only the quantity of the actant, in other words only the number of the actants has been considered, and nothing has been stated about the quality of the actant (İleri 1997:157).

Esin İleri states that Gerhard Helbig, who has analyzed the verb complements in German, has adopted the verbs as the center of the sentence like Tesniére. Helbig argues that every verb opens empty spaces (leerstellen) to fill within the framework of a plan. In addition to this, he has also brought some new novelties to the dependency grammar depending on Tesniére. According to Helbig, adverbs (Adverbialbestimmungen) and prepositions (Präpositionen) can also compose the valence, in other words the verb complements (İleri 1997:158).

Helbig defines the two elements which may exist around a verb as the following: (1) Obligatory complement (obligatorische Ergänzung) is an element which composes the valence of any verb; and whose combination with this verb is compulsory in order to form a correct sentence in terms of grammar- both syntactic and semantic. (2) Optional complement (fakultetive Ergänzung) is an element which also composes the valence of any verb, but it is optional to use this element in the stated sentence as it is mentioned in the text before. According to Helbig, free instruction (Freie Angaben) is the necessity of analyzing the complements not only in terms of quantity (Quantität) but also in terms of quality (Qualität) in order to accurately determine the verb complements which compose the valence of the verb within the sentence (die valenzebundenen Verbergänzungen). The qualities of the complements should be known in syntactic and semantic terms; this also means knowing the distribution of a verb. Distribution means different uses of any element of the language– phonemes, monemes – (sprach-gebrauch) or it means the whole the context (kontext) (İleri 1997: 159).

These rules are named as selection rules (selektionsregeln). According to Vardar, selection rules are semantic rules giving direction to the uses of the units. They have an important place in the transformational generative grammar, and they are related to the problem of compatibility among one element with the other elements of the sentence. For example the word *wall* cannot be the subject of the verb *to laugh* (İleri 1997: 159).

Today many Turkish language researchers are greatly interested verb complements; and this relation is also closely related with teaching or learning Turkish as a foreign language.

Information about the case suffixes is given in the books which are prepared with the aim of teaching Turkish (in the mother tongue) and teaching Turkish to the foreigners; however, their relation with verbs is mostly not addressed in these books. In fact, as Demircan also states (1977:103), the functions of these suffixes are syntactic since they organize the relations (among subject-complement-verb) within the sentences.

Kahraman (1996: 7) describes the case suffixes in Turkish as following:

Case	Suffix
Nominative Case	Ø
Accusative (object) Case	Ø, + i
Dative (approach) Case	+e
Locative (location) Case	+de
Ablative (separation) Case	+den
Genitive Case	+(n)in
Instrumental-Comitative Case	+le

When these case suffixes are compared to the Western languages (such as English, French, German, etc.) nominative and accusative cases correspond to structural words named article, and the other cases correspond to prepositions. Because of this reason some foreign authors name the case suffixes as *postposition*. One of the differences between the case suffixes in Turkish and the case suffixes of the Western languages is that in Western languages prepositions may be used with case suffixes when it is necessary. Case suffixes in western languages may take different forms according to the nominal roots. For example the case suffixes used with the word *port* (door) in Latin is different from the case suffixes used with the word *puer* (child). When it comes to English, there were case suffixes in Old English, but now they have given their place to prepositions (Demircan 1977: 102).

The case suffixes in Turkish are based on rather simple rules. It is clear that the suffixes +i, +e, +de, +den addressed as case suffixes, determine the directions related to the verbs. From this point of view, these suffixes may be called as direction suffixes (Demircan 1977: 104).

According to the dependency grammar with its implemented form in Germany, Şeyda Özil (1980:13) exemplifies the verb-complement relation as following; "In Turkish, the element with +i suffix is dependent on the verb **görmek** (to see) in the sentence *Evi görüyorum* (I see the house) ; and the element with +e suffix is dependent on the verb **bakmak** (to look) in the sentence *Eve bakıyorum* (I am looking at the house)". In Turkish, verbs such as to see, to read, to write, to take etc., are

complemented with the elements in +i case; while the verbs such as to look, to be angry, to ask etc. are complemented with the elements in +e case. Depending on these examples, Özil (1980: 13) states that the dependency covering specific groups among the parts of speech-here it is the verb to be named as valency. In other words, Özil defines valency (valence, complement of the verb) as the verb is creating specific types of empty spaces to be obligatorily filled in the sentence. Özil gives an example using the verbs *uyumak* (to sleep) and *görmek* (to see):

> *O bugün uyuyacak* (S/he will sleep today).
> *Ben bugün evi göreceğim* (I will see the house today).

In these examples, it is seen that the verb *uyumak* (to sleep) makes the elements such as *ben/çocuk/gençler* (I, child, youngsters) which are in nominative case depend on itself, and directs these elements; while the verb *görmek* (to see) makes the elements such as *evi/bahçeyi/seni* (the house/the garden/you) which are in accusative case depend on itself, and directs these elements. According to these examples the verb *to sleep* has one empty space; while the verb *to see* has two empty spaces. In the first sentence, the place of the word "she" may only be changed with nouns or pronouns in nominative case such as *I / child*. In the second sentence, elements such as *the garden/you* which are in accusative case may be used instead of the word *the house*. In these two sample sentences, the elements with specific types and specific numbers which are obligatorily used due to the verbs *sleep* and *see* are called complements. Complements are the elements dependent on specific groups within the part of speech. The word *today*, used both in the two examples, is an optional element in the both sentences. Optional elements are the elements which may be used with every element of the part of speech rather than used with a specific group (Özil 1997: 157).

While learning the mother tongue, complements of every verb have been acquired unintentionally. However, in second language learning it is necessary to be cautious in that which verbs are combined with which complements. The complements of a verb used in the mother tongue may be different from the complements of the same verb in the language to be learned. For example, the verb *evlenmek* (to marry) in Turkish is used firstly with the suffix +**le**, and then used +**de** and +**e**, +**den**, Ø suffixes:

> *Recep Yasemin**le** evlendi* (Turkish).
> *Recep a epousé Yasemin* (French).
> *Recep heiratet Yasemin* (German).
> *Recep got married to Yasemin* (English).

While a student, whose mother tongue is Turkish, learning German, French, and English may form this sentence incorrectly such as:

> *Recep heiratet mit Yasemin* (German).
> *Recep a epousé que Yasemin* (French).
> *Recep got married with Yasemin* (English).

In Turkish the verbs **bakmak** (to look) (regarde); **teşekkür etmek** (to thank) (remercié); **saygı göstermek** (to respect) (respecter); **çarpmak** (to hit) (heurté) are used with the verb complements of +**(y/n)e** / +**(y/n)a**; while these verbs are used without dative case suffixes in French.

Sınıfta tahtaya bakıyorum

I am looking at the blackboard in the classroom (Eng.)

Je regarde le tableau (Fr.).

Öğretmenime teşekkür ettim.

I thanked my teacher (Eng.)

J'ai remercié mon Professeur (Fr.).

Yaşlılara saygı göstermeliyiz.

We should respect the elderly (Eng.).

Nous devons respecter les âgés (Fr.).

Bir araba ağaca çarptı.

A car hit the tree (Eng.)

Une voiture a heurté un arbre (Fr).

While teaching Turkish to foreigners, the verb complements in Turkish are a problem for the students. J. Vandewalle (2000: 27) emphasizes this issue; and by giving the example of *Ben sizi yardım edebilir miyim?* (Can I help you?) Vandewalle states that the verb *help* requires the accusative case in English and French, while it requires dative case in Turkish; thus, the students make mistakes as they do not know this.

The structures of the mother tongue are effective in second language learning. People who learn a second language are mostly in an effort to compare the similarities and differences between their mother tongues and the second language they learn. If there are many differences between the mother tongue and the second language, it becomes harder for the students to learn that language. This problem may even be experienced among the dialects of the same language. Therefore, it is rather important in second language teaching to teach the verb complements with examples, and to state the transitive and non-transitive verbs with their meanings.

What determines the verb-complement relation is the meaning of the verb. According to every meaning, the type of the verb-complement relation also changes. For example, when the verb *vur-* (to hit) is used with the meaning of *swinging your hand or the object you hold onto the surface quickly* it takes a complement with –A suffix (birine/bir şeye vurmak- to hit sb/sth); while it is used with the meaning of (shooting, wounding, and killing) it takes a complement with –I suffix (or without suffix) (birini vurmak; bir şey(i) vurmak-to hit sb/sth). The number of the complements of the verb changes according to the meaning. For example, realization of the verb *gönder-* (to send) depends on the existence of two objects. The meaning of *göndermek* certainly requires two complements with – I suffix (or without suffix) and with –A suffix, as it is seen in the expression of *birine, bir şey(i) göndermek* (sending sth to sb) (Karahan 1997: 212-213).

Many researchers studying the German language have prepared works related to the theory of dependency grammar based on Tesniére. Şeyda Özil, lecturer in İstanbul University, is one of these researchers. Özil's work of *Değerlilik Sözlüğü, Almanca-Türkçe* (Valence Dictionary in German-Turkish(English); Valenzwörterbuch, Deutsch-Turkisch (German)) was published in two languages in the publishing series of *Studies on Multilingualism* (arbeiten zur Mehrssprachhigkeit) of Hamburg University in 1990. In this study, the German verbs within the *German Course Book* (I; II; UI)" used in the

secondary education in Turkey and their Turkish equivalents have been scanned; and it has been tried to detect their syntactic and semantic peripheries correspondingly. At the end of the book, there has been a dictionary in which the 292 German verbs, used in the German course book, were given with their structural forms and example sentences (Erkman Akerson 1991: 145).

Considering that there are thousands of verbs in Turkish, it requires a great work of dictionary in order to determine the complements of every verb, and to give their equivalents in English, French, etc.

The verb complements in Turkish should be analyzed and the differences should be defined not only for teaching it as a second language, but also for the dialects of the language. In the doctoral dissertation named *Verb complements in the New Uyghur Turkish* (Demirez Güneri 2007) it has been tried to define the verb complements of the New Uyghur Turkish. The verb complements are not totally overlapped, even in the Turkic dialects which have the same origin.

The reason of this difference is that the dialects do not form a closed integrity with the main dialect they depend on in terms of origin. The similarity of verb complements increases among the Turkic dialects which are in the same group (Uğurlu 2001).

The verb complements have a high importance in the studies of borrowing in Turkic dialects, and in the second language learning. In this study, the ways to teach verb complements accurately in a short time has been researched depending on this knowledge.

2. Method

This research is based on an empirical pattern of a pre-test and a post-test without making use of a control group.

18 verbs from the first ranks in a chapter of *Dictionary of Written Turkish Word Frequency* (Yazılı Türkçenin Kelime Sıklığı Sözlüğü) which gives the use of the verbs in a numerical order have been determined to analyze. The first degree and second degree complements of these 18 verbs have been named according to the sentence knowledge by the work of *The complements with case suffixes of the verbs in Contemporary Turkish* (Çağdaş Türkiye Türkçesindeki Fiillerin Durum Ekli Tamlayıcıları) (Kahraman 1996). A group of students learning Turkish in Ankara University, Foreign Language Teaching and Research Center have been tested on the complements of these 18 verbs, without giving any additional information about the complements. At the second stage of the research, the students have been informed about the complements of these 18 verbs. The number of the complements for every verb has been also stated. The complements required at first degree have been separated from the complements required at second degree by being highlighted with a different color.

2.1. Data Collection Instruments

In this study, a test composed of 124 questions covering the complements of the whole 18 verbs has been used as data collection instrument. The students who have

been in Turkey at least six months and came to AU TÖMER (Turkish Teaching Center) with the aim of learning Turkish have been assigned a test of 124 question covering the complements of the whole 18 verbs; and the students have been asked to correctly place the complements of the related verbs. In the introduction part of the test, the students have been asked whether they knew Turkish before starting to the Turkish Course, how long they had been in Turkey, which country they were from, and what their mother tongues were.

At the second stage of this study, as it will be seen in the following examples, the verb, the different meanings of the verb -if any-, and verb complements (Complements which the verbs require at first degree and second degree) and example sentences have been given to the students. For the complements required at first degree and second degree- to define with which case suffixes the verb is used mostly- , the work of "The complements with case suffixes of the verbs in Contemporary Turkish" (Kahraman 1996) has been used.

Verb: *bakmak* (to look)

The First Meaning of the Verb: To direct your eyes into that direction

Verb complements:

The Complements required at first degree: +e
*Anneannem, arkadaşlarım**a** baktı.* My grandmother looked **at** my friends (English).

The Complements required at second degree: +den, +le
*Küçük köpek karşı**dan** bakıyor.*
The little dog is looking **from** the opposite side.(Eng.).
*Bana doğru büyük bir dikkat**le** baktı.* He looked <u>at</u> me carefully (Eng.).

The Complements it may take: Ø, +de
*O, fal **Ø** bakıyor.*
She tells fortunes (Eng.)
*Bu dosyalara ofis**te** baktı.*
She looked through the files in the office (Eng.).

The Second Meaning of the Verb: To take care of, to be in charge of sth, to feed

Verb complements:

The Complements required at first degree: +e
*O, bugün yaşlı annesi**ne** bakıyor.*
He is looking after his old mother today (Eng.)
*Arkadaşı hasta olduğu için onun işleri**ne** bakacak.*
Her friend will take care of her work, as she is ill (Eng.).

The Complements it may take: Ø,+de
*Ayşe, çocuk **Ø** bakıyor.*
Ayşe looks after the baby(Eng.).
*Çocuğa evin**de** bakıyor.*
She looks after the baby at home (Eng.).

Verb: *çıkmak* (to go out)

The First Meaning of the Verb: To go out from inside

Verb complements:

The Complements required at first degree:+den

*Ebru saat ikide ev**den** çıkmalı.*
Ebru must go out from the house at two o'clock(Eng.).

The Complements required at second degree: +e
Dışarı**ya** çıkıyor.
She is going out (Eng.).

The Complements it may take: +de, +le
*Bu soru sınav**da** çıkar.*
This question will be asked <u>in</u> the exam(Eng.).
*Odadan sakin bir yüz**le** çıktı.*
She left the room <u>with</u> a calm face (Eng.).

The Second Meaning of the Verb: Going from down to up, to raise

Verb complements:

The Complements required at first degree: +e
*Annem odası**na** çıktı.*
My mother went to her room upstairs (Eng.)
*Dağcılar zirve**ye** çıkıyor.*
The mountaineers are climbing the summit (Eng.)

The Complements required at second degree: +i, +de, +le
*Ayşe hızla kariyer basamakları**nı** çıktı.*
Ayşe quickly moved up the career ladder(Eng.).
*Güneşin altı**nda** çıkıyor.*
She goes out under the sun (Eng.).
*Teyzem evine asansör**le** çıkar.*
My aunt goes up to her house by the lift (Eng.).
*Merdivenleri yorgun adımlar**la** çıktı.* He climbed the stairs <u>with</u> tired steps (Eng.).

The Complements it may take: Ø,+den
*Beraber yokuş **Ø** çıktık.*
We climbed uphill together (Eng.).
*Ahmet patika**dan** çıkıyor.*
Ahmet is coming <u>from</u> the pathway (Eng.).

The Third Meaning of the Verb: To be formed, to happen
Verb complements:

The Complements required at first degree: +de
*Bu haber gazeteler**de** çıkmış.*
This news appeared <u>on</u> the newspaper (Eng.).

The Complements required at second degree: +e, +den, +le
*Böyle bir problem iki defa karşım**a** çıktı.*
Such a problem happened to me <u>twice</u> (Eng.).
*Bu proje elli milyon**a** çıktı.*
This project <u>reached</u> fifty million (Eng.).
*Bu tartışma onun davranış biçimi**nden** çıktı.*
This discussion stemmed <u>from</u> his behavior (Eng.).
*Öğrenciler okuldan büyük bir heyecan**la** çıktı.*

The students went out off the school <u>with</u> great excitement (Eng).

Students have been informed about the test with these examples. The test has been implemented again to the same group. A meaningful difference has been observed between the first test and the second test which was implemented after giving information about the related verb complements.

2.2. Study Group

The study group of this research has been composed of the students of Ankara University Turkish Teaching Center (TÖMER) attending to the intermediate and advance level courses. At first, students of Turkish Department at Hacettepe Schools of Foreign Languages was thought to be as the study group; however, as the number of students was not enough to compose a control group AU TÖMER students has been stated as the study group.

2.3. Data Analysis

Pearson T test has been applied in dependent groups. Correlation coefficient has been calculated according to SPSS 15.0.

3. Findings and Remarks

Table 1: Duration period in Turkey, state of preparation, and countries of the experimental group.

STUDENT	Duration period in Turkey/Month	State of Preparation	Country	Mother Tongue
1.Student	8	Continue	Cameroon	French
2.Student	18	Continue	Philistine	Arabic
3.Student	24	Continue	Russia	Russian
4.Student	6	Continue	Afghanistan	Persian
5.Student	11	Continue	Bulgaria	Bulgarian
6.Student	9	Continue	Afghanistan	Persian
7.Student	12	Continue	Iraq	Arabic
8.Student	9	Continue	Russia	Russian
9.Student	8	Continue	Burkina Faso	French
10.Student	9	Continue	Korea	Korean
11.Student	6	Continue	Afghanistan	Pashto
12.Student	12	Continue	Iraq	Arabic
13.Student	7	Continue	Cameroon	French
14.Student	8	Continue	Maldives	Dhivehi
15.Student	8	Continue	Pakistan	Urdu
16.Student	8	Continue	Guinea-Bissau	Portuguese

The information about the students in experimental group is given in Table 1: how long they have been in Turkey, their state of preparation, their countries and their mother tongues. When the Table 1 is considered, it is seen that every student pursue the preparation class and all their mother tongues are different from Turkish. It may be said that these factors would not affect the marks they took from the test.

Table 2: Pearson correlation results between the duration period of the experiment group in Turkey and the pre-test and post-test marks.

Group	N	X	S	R	p
Time	16	10.19 (ten point nineteen)	4.71 (four point seventy one)		
Pre-test	16	87.31 (eight seven point thirty one)	25.95 (twenty-five point ninety five)	0.01 (zero point zero one)	0.72 (zero point seventy two)
Post test	16	103.69	21.75	-0.01 (minus zero point zero one)	0.971 (zero point nine hundred seventy one)

When Table 2 is considered, it is seen that the relation between the duration period of students in Turkey and pre test marks is very low; and this correlation is not statistically meaningful (r:0.01, p>α:0.05). Similarly, it is also seen that the relation between the time period of students' presence in Turkey and post test points is very low; and this correlation is also not meaningful statistically (r: -0.01, p>α:0.05).

Table 3: t test results in dependent groups for the meaningfulness of the difference between the pre test and post test average marks of the experimental groups

Group	N	X	S	Sd	T	p
Pre test	16	87.31 (eighty seven. Thirty one)	25.95 (twenty five point ninety five)	15	-5.256 (minus five point two hundred and fifty six)	0.000 (zero)
Post test	16	103.69 (a hundred and three point. Sixty nine)	21.75 (twenty one. Seventy five)			

When the Table 3 is considered, it is seen that there is a statistically meaningful difference between the pre test and post test average marks of the students in the experimental group in favor of post test (t: -5.256, p<>α:0.01). In other words, the training given is effective in the teaching of verb complements with a 99% probability.

4. Conclusion and Suggestions

The dictionaries of the Western languages (English, German, French etc.) indicate which verb requires which complements. Although some verb complements have been stated among the explanations of the meanings of the verbs in the *Turkish Dictionary of Turkish Language Agency* (TDK) and in the other monolingual and bilingual dictionaries, they are not competent, are disorganized, misleading and lacking examples. The study of "*The complements with case suffixes of the verbs in Contemporary Turkish*" (Kahraman 1996) on this issue has not been prepared with the aim of teaching Turkish to the foreign learners of Turkish. It is not a dictionary of verb complements in Turkish; and thus is not suitable to be used with this aim.

It is suggested that A Dictionary of Verb Complements in Turkish has to be prepared *as soon as* possible in order to be utilized in teaching Turkish as a foreign language. In this dictionary the complements of each verb and their frequency of use should be stated, and they should be exemplified.

The number of verb complements in every language may vary; it may also be the same. The structure of the language to be learned, its form of sentences may be very different. When these differences are acquired, the mistakes will decrease in learning a second language, and the learning period will be shortened. The determination of the verb complements and giving examples related to them would be useful for those studying in this issue in second language learning, and in the transfer of Turkic dialects. This would also increase the success rate in language learning. The dictionaries only giving the equivalents of words are not sufficient.

At the end of this research it is seen that the students who have seen the complements of each verb with examples are more successful in using these complements. Such a method may be used in Basic Turkish, Intermediate Turkish, and Advanced level Turkish according to the stages of language learning. Thus, while the students learn a language the mistake rates of them depending on their mother tongues would decrease; and it would facilitate their understanding of the syntactic differences.

The same research method may be used particularly in teaching the present simple tense and in teaching of causative verbs in verb frameworks in Turkish.

Abbreviations

AU   Ankara University
Eng. English
Fr.   French
Ger. German

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