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**THE ROLE OF EXPRESSIVE AND IMPRESSIVE VOCALIZATIONS
IN SELF-EXPRESSION AND SELF-AXPLORATION**

PhD Dissertation Summary

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GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF THE RESEARCH

Relevance of the study

These days, vocal therapy as a field of counselling psychology and non-medical practice is being developed and spread all over the world (Austin, 2008; Hiller, Gardstrom, 2018; Kern, Tague, 2017; Lewis, 2017; Lindblad, 2017; Monti, Austin, 2017, Nazarova, 2002; Olenskaya et al., 2015; Rogers, 2015; Shushardjan, 2005; Stewart, McAlpin, 2016; Zirko, Orlov, 2017a). Vocal therapy introduces a wide spectrum of psychotherapeutic vocal practices which facilitate self-expression, self-exploration, self-healing and finding an authentic voice for an individual (Zirko, Orlov, 2017b; Uhlig, 2006). The language of vocal therapy features vocalizations which are understood as the client's expression of their experience with non-verbal voice sounds in vocal practices and psychotherapy (Zirko, Orlov, 2017, b). Despite the popularity of this field of psychotherapy, there are very few investigations into this topic. In contemporary relevant literature mostly practice-oriented descriptions of the concrete cases were found (Baker, 2015; Hiller, Gardstrom, 2018; Monti, Austin, 2017). The relevant research projects are mostly either descriptive and phenomenological, or investigate the effectiveness of particular vocal therapeutic interventions (Dassa, 2018; Kern, Tague, 2017; Lewis, 2017; Vaillancourt et al., 2018). It can be observed that there is a gap between methodological bases and practical work in the area of vocal therapy as it is an element of person-centered expressive psychotherapy (Merill, Anderson, 2005). Only empirical research in this field can fill this gap.

As a result, despite the wide popularity of vocal therapeutic practices in the fields of counselling, psychology and non-medical psychotherapy, there are very few investigations in the area of the practice itself (Zirko, Orlov, 2017a; Rogers, 2015; Kern, Tague, 2017; Stewart, McAlpin, 2016; Theorell, 2014 et al). So far, no theoretical and methodological bases, classifications, research applications or questionnaires providing instruments for investigation of vocalizations in self-expression and self-exploration have been found in the relevant sources. Taking all this into account, two primary research questions were formulated and set:

- First, are there any psychological bases for the classification of spontaneous vocalizations which occur in self-expression and self-exploration practices?
- Second, what are the roles of different types of vocalizations in self-expression and self-exploration?

The new point of this research is based on a special model of the vocal psychotherapy process and a special classification of vocalizations. An empirical investigation was conducted exploring the types and dynamics of vocalizations during self-expression in the situation of unconditional and positive regard and in the situation of evaluating.

The purpose of the study was to investigate the experience of self-expression and self-exploration through vocalizations in the situation of unconditional and positive regard and in the situation of evaluating.

The following research tasks were formulated:

- To analyze and systematize the sources on the topic of vocalizations in self-expression and self-exploration.
- To reveal the problematic areas due to the lack of research in this field of science and to formulate the research questions.
- To clarify the premises and to determine the theoretical bases of self-expression and self-exploration with vocalizations in person-centered expressive psychotherapy.
- To design the author's model of vocalization types in self-expression and self-exploration.
- To conduct the empirical research on the role of different types of vocalizations in self-expression and self-exploration in the situation of acceptance and valuing and in the situation of evaluating.

The hypothesis of the research was formulated in correspondence with the theoretical model of vocalization types which were suggested in this study. Four vocalization types were described which create two continuums and four poles: authenticity / inauthenticity and expressiveness / impressiveness. This model is strongly connected with the ability to find an authentic and genuine voice through vocal self-expression, which are expressive vocalizations (Zirko, Orlov, 2017a; Orlov, 2015; Rogers, 2015). To classify a huge variety of vocalizations which may appear during vocal psychotherapy and other vocal practices a continuum of authentic and inauthentic vocalizations was proposed. This was based on the idea of congruent and incongruent behavior as well as on the idea of authenticity and inauthenticity itself (Babakina, 2016; Ragulina, 2007; Rogers, 2015). The continuum of expressive and impressive vocalizations, in its turn, was based on the idea of expressive and impressive arts (Orlov, 2015). The existence of expressive vocalizations which help to express an individual's feelings and experiences and impressive vocalizations which help an individual to impress the listener can be hypothesized. Then a wide variety of vocalizations can be located on a plain built with two described continuums and four poles (Zirko, Orlov, 2017b). Authentic and expressive vocalizations help express an individual's experience in the situation of unconditional and positive regard. Authentic impressive vocalizations impress the listener but they do not express an individual's true experience. Inauthentic expressive vocalizations distort an individual's inner experience. Inauthentic impressive vocalizations do not impress the listener and do not express an individual's experience. Based on this theoretical model the following hypothesis of the empirical research was formulated. Expressive vocalizations which individuals use for self-expression and self-exploration in the situation of unconditional and positive regard will receive higher quantitative and qualitative indexes of authenticity in comparison to the impressive vocalizations of individuals who are placed into the situation of outer and inner evaluation and work on the artistic impressiveness and beauty of their voices.

The object of the research is the subjective experience of self-expression and self-exploration with vocalizations.

The topic of the research is the role of vocalizations in self-expression and self-exploration in the situation of unconditional and positive regard and in the situation of evaluating.

The theoretical and methodological bases of the research are as follows. First, the methodological bases of the given research lies in person-centered approach, person-centered expressive psychotherapy and vocal music psychotherapy (Monty, Austin, 2017; Rogers, 1994; 2015). In this research the principles of person-centered approach were used (Rogers, 2008), along with person-centered expressive psychotherapy (Rogers, 2015), vocal teaching and vocal psychotherapy (Brusilovskiy, 1985; Gromov, 2000; Markovich, Tatsumi, 2015 et al.). The principles of conducting a qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods research (Coolican, 2017; Creswell, 2017; Lyons, 2016) were also used.

Next, the theoretical importance of the study is discussed. In the given study the analysis, systematization and integration of existing knowledge in the field of vocal psychotherapy and person-centered expressive psychotherapy was done. The conceptual method for investigating the roles of different types of vocalizations in self-expression and self-exploration was developed.

The practical importance of the study is as follows. The results of this investigation can be used in developing textbooks, programs, trainings and sessions on person-centered expressive psychotherapy and vocal psychotherapy which facilitates self-expression and self-exploration.

The characteristics of the sample are these. There were 42 participants in the study: among them were nine men and 33 women. The average age was 35 years old (SD = 8.97, range: 20-57). Typically, this is the age when clients apply for psychotherapy. The study did not consider gender as a factor of self-expression and self-exploration

Now the procedure for the study will be described. The research was announced on social platforms and the website of the Doctoral School of Psychology at the National Research University “Higher School of Economics”. The research procedure and its purpose was

described in the announcement and the researcher's contact information was provided. The volunteers contacted the researcher if they saw the announcement and were interested in participating. The first session was held individually with each participant. They answered the introductory questions to help them and the researcher determine their personal goals during the research. Each participant chose one goal (self-expression or impression) and worked on it during the research. They were placed into either the expressive or impressive group depending on their choice. There were 17 people in the impressive group (7 men and 10 women) and 25 people in the expressive group (2 men and 23 women). The average age in the impressive group was 35 years old (SD = 9,26, range: 23-55). The average age in the expressive group was 34 years old (SD = 8,56, range: 20-57). Next the participants were placed into pairs in order to participate in vocal sessions as sounders and listeners. Every following session was done in the following order: sharing, some warming up exercises to free the bodies and voices of the participants (Linkleyter, 1993). Then the first participant's sounding occurred followed by discussion, feedback from the listener and filling out the applications assessing the authenticity of the vocalizations. The participants then switched and repeated the same experiment. The sounding time limit was 7 minutes. The participants visited during four to twelve 90-minute sessions once a week. There were two different modeled experimental situations: one for the expressive and one for the impressive group. The situation of valuing and unconditional positive regard was modeled in the expressive group. The situation of evaluation was modeled in the impressive group.

In the expressive group each participant was offered the chance to sound freely, expressing their feelings and experiences. They were encouraged to listen to themselves, feel their actual experience and live through it with the sounds of their voices. The sounder was encouraged to value this experience and unconditionally and positively relate to it. After this vocalizing the listener had to provide the sounder with their unconditional feedback about the sounder's vocalizations.

In the impressive group it was suggested that each participant should represent a particular feeling. Several small cards with different emotions were written. A participant took one

of these cards and represented the emotion written on it. The listener had to guess which feeling was represented and gave the evaluative feedback on how the sounder was able to act it out. The sounders also evaluated their vocalizations during the task and how they had achieved the goal of communicating the emotion written on the card. This means that in the impressive group the conditions of external and internal evaluation were created.

The research design will follow. In the permanent research two non-equivalent groups were compared combining a longitudinal study which involved repeated observations. The two groups differed from each other based on the research conditions and the instructions given by the researcher.

Materials

The introductory interview consisted of nine five-point scales and one open question. The participants filled this out during the first session and provided more in-depth responses orally while marking the multiple choice. The questions were clarified and discussed with the researcher.

The form for sounders consisted of nine ordinary five-point scales by which the sounders had to assess the process and the result of vocalizing. The questions were matched with the criteria of the four types of vocalizations. The sounders were asked to assess the peculiarities of their vocalizations. The questions reflected their body state, their voice and their feelings.

The form for listeners consisted of nine ordinary five-point scales. The listeners had to provide answers about what they have heard, describe the characteristics of the sounder's voice, how the sounder was involved in the process and their own feelings.

As a result of the research the hypothesis was partially proved. Vocalizations in the expressive group (in the situation of unconditional and positive regard) had significantly higher mean scores by the following factors: "Psychophysiological authenticity" ($p = 0.027$), "Psychological authenticity" ($p = 0.001$), "Satisfaction" ($p = 0.001$) and "Perceived satisfaction" ($p = 0.027$) in comparison to the vocalizations of the participants from the impressive group. All these factors are involved in the entire concept of

authenticity of vocalizations and correspond to the criteria of authentic vocalizations (Zirko, Orlov, 2017b, Litaer, 2005). The participants from the expressive group felt more relaxed and free during vocalizing in comparison to the participants from the impressive group. It was also easier for them to vocalize. The feelings which they expressed corresponded greater to their inner experience in comparison to the acted feelings of the participants from the impressive group. The overall satisfaction was significantly higher in the expressive than in the impressive group which also corresponded to the opinion of the listeners. In correspondence with the works of C. Rogers (Rogers, 1994, 2008) The high satisfaction level of the clients indicates their high authenticity. In both groups the indexes of the factor “Perceived satisfaction” grew. This can likely be explained because of the special peculiarities of each group, which provided similar results. During the research the participants from the impressive group felt more and more confident performing in public and they told the researcher and their listeners about it. They learned to act out different emotions and feelings with their voices. All of this could be perceived by their listeners as the progress and higher satisfaction as a result. The participants from the expressive group reported feeling more freedom, inner strength and resources. This could also allow their listener to give them higher scores on the factor of “Perceived satisfaction”. Most of the vocalizations from the expressive group corresponded to the criteria of authenticity (Zirko, Orlov, 2018) and fell into “Authenticity” and “Expressiveness” clusters. A significant part of the vocalizations from the impressive group fell into the “Impressiveness” cluster. Vocalizations from the “Inauthenticity” cluster were spread between the two groups in a fairly equal proportion (42% and 58%). At the beginning of the research the participants from both groups felt rather tense and constraint, but by the end of the research participants from the impressive group reported more self-confidence and learned to perform different emotions. At the same time participants from the expressive group talked about having a sense of inner strength and freedom, as well as unity with their inner essence. This also indicates a greater authenticity of expressive vocalizations in comparison to impressive vocalizations (Zirko, 2019; Orlov, 1995, 2002). BThe tendencies described above show the peculiarities of each group of vocalizations and indicate a higher authenticity of vocalizations upon the

conditions of acceptance and valuing then upon the conditions of evaluating. This requires further investigations on a larger sample. The results of the given study also indicate the four psychological bases for classifying the vocalizations: expressiveness, impressiveness, authenticity and inauthenticity. Authentic vocalizations help the participants to become more relaxed and free and bring them closer to their inner self. Inauthentic vocalizations bring tension, constraint and anxiety.

The research argues that:

- Vocal therapy is a practice of self-expression and self-exploration. In the scope of person-centered approach vocal therapy creates a way to find a client's authentic voice.
- A variety of vocalizations in the practice of self-expression and self-exploration can be classified by two bases: authenticity/inauthenticity and expressiveness/impressiveness. Expressive vocalizations help individuals to express their feelings and emotions while impressive vocalizations help them to impress the listener. Authentic vocalizations help express an individual's feelings and experiences in the fullest and most open way, while inauthentic vocalizations do not correspond to an individual's inner feelings.
- Expressive vocalizations were more authentic in comparison to impressive vocalizations. Most of the vocalizations in the expressive group corresponded to the criteria of authenticity.

Now the approbation and discussion of the research will be shared. The research stages and outcomes were presented at the following conferences: the XIV and XV international junior scientific forum "LOMONOSOV-2017", "LOMONOSOV-2018", the VII and VIII Russian conferences of Russian society of person-centered approach with international participation. The materials of the dissertation was also discussed at the regular research seminars for Ph.D. students at the personality psychology sub department at the Higher School of Economics.

The research structure and scope is as follows. The paper consists of the introduction, two chapters, conclusions, references (204 sources) and 7 appendices. It contains 150 pages, 35 tables and one figure.

THE MAIN CONTENT OF THE THESIS

The introduction of the paper states the relevance of the given study, its novelty and theoretical and practical significance. The study's object, topic and goals are also described. The methodological and theoretical bases of the research are briefly introduced. The problem, questions and hypothesis are stated. In the introduction the design, sample, research procedure and materials are described.

The first chapter of the dissertation is called **“Vocal practices in self-expression, self-exploration and psychotherapy”**. It observes the main fields of vocal psychotherapy, its methodology and its techniques which are practiced not only in the narrow field of vocal psychotherapy but in the wider field of general psychotherapy (Deker-Foigt, 2003; Menegetti, 2016; Nazarova, 2002; Petrushin, 2000; Ryumin, 2015; Shushardjan, 2005; Baker, 2015; Hallstrup, 2015; Monti, Austin, 2017; Uhlig, 2006 et al). The phenomenon of authentic voice of the inner self is established (Babakina, 2016; Zirko, Orlov, 2017a; Orlov, 1995).

Paragraph 1.1 “The foundation and development of vocal practices in self-expression, self-exploration and psychotherapy” reveals the historical development of vocal practices in different cultures and the healing effect of music and singing for psychological conditions in the sole of an individual (Shestakov, 1966). The development of vocal psychotherapy is described. The concepts of public and community singing are flushed out (Pascal, 2005). The phenomenon of intonations, which is important in the research of the role of vocalizations in individual psychological experiences, is described. The types of intonations are specified. Which inner states of a person they are associated with are described (Kuindji, 2011; Toropova, 2015 et al). The main research projects on sound perception are reviewed (Bazhin, Korneva, 1978; Gusev, 2007; Nosulenko, 1988 et al.).

In paragraph 1.2 “Vocalizations in self-exploration and in modern psychotherapy” the modern vocal practices and fields of vocal therapy are analyzed in depth (Austin, 2008; Halstrup, 2017 et al.) The peculiarities of authentic voice and authentic sounding are described. The sense of a sound in the body, the harmonizing of an individual’s experience with the help of voice sounds and the opportunities of self-expression and self-exploration within the voice sounds are shown (Austin, 2008; Reznikov, 1994; Uhlig, 2006 et al.).

In paragraph 1.3 “Person-centered approach in psychotherapy, self-expression and self-exploration” the history and contemporary conditions of person-centered approach and other relevant fields which are based on this approach are described. The opportunities of self-expression, self-exploration and psychotherapy with expressive arts and especially with vocalizations are shown. The sense of authentic vocalizations in person-centered approach is given. The main idea of person-centered approach states that every person has a positive potential and resource which facilitates their personal growth and development (Rogers, 1994). A person-centered psychotherapist helps clients to believe that they have every ability and full potential to have a positive life and to solve their life difficulties (Kolpachnikov, 2017). A person-centered psychotherapist pays great attention to the three basic conditions of the person-centered approach: congruence, empathy and unconditional positive regard (Rogers, 1994). If clients are unconditionally and positively accepted with all of their feelings and experiences, they will also fully accept themselves. During psychotherapy sessions psychotherapists congruently and sincerely share their experience with clients, which allows the clients to be more congruent. A psychotherapist is empathic and strives to accept all of the client’s experiences most accurately and help them realize this experience through reflecting the client’s feelings. The potential of the authentic vocalizations of inner self as the essence of an individual and their inner nature is deeply analyzed.

In chapter 2 “Empirical research of vocalizations in self-expression and self-exploration” the description of methodological bases, the model, methods and the results

of the research are provided. Then the results are matched with relevant and contemporary sources of literature.

In paragraph 2.1 “The author’s model and types of vocalizations in self-expression and self-exploration” the author’s model of the types of vocalizations is shown. This model was based on the concept of extra and inner self from the field of general psychology (Orlov, 2002). It was hypothesized that in person-centered expressive psychotherapy the inner self finds an authentic voice which is different from many artificial voices of extra self. The peculiarities of the extra and inner self can be matched with the peculiarities of its voice sounding. Based on this model and our current understanding of the phenomenon of authenticity the classification of vocalizations was given. Each type of vocalizations was matched with its own criteria. These criteria were created out of the analyzed literature (Babakina, 2016; Orlov, 2002; Rodjroers, 2015; Austin, 2008; Uhlig, 2006).

In paragraph 2.2 “The main items of the research” the methodological bases of the given research, its goals and stages are thoroughly described. To verify the empirical hypothesis of the research the researcher needed to use mixed methods (Creswell, 2017). First, grouping the indexes into the factors made data analysis easier. Then the regression models within the meeting number were built to follow the dynamics of vocalizations and the participants’ feelings. The regression models within a group number following the influence of the research conditions were also built/ The t-test was used to compare the participants from the expressive and from the impressive groups by the extracted factors. Cluster analyses of vocalizations was performed to reveal their empirical types. To answer the research question regarding the role of vocalizations in self-expression and self-exploration the entire process of the research was recorded onto a dictaphone. Then the transcripts of these recordings were created and analyzed through the procedures of thematic and phenomenological analysis.

In paragraph 2.3 “The pilot stage of the research” the pilot stage of the empirical research is shown. The phenomenology of the participants’ experience during self-expression and self-exploration is described. For one of the participants the research

sessions gave the opportunity to unblock her inner psychological tension with the help of vocalizations. The other participant tried to perform some standard musical pieces. She told the researcher about her resistance and her fear of self-disclosure. There were also the participants who found the given type of self-expression and self-exploration to be unusual and even scary. After this pilot stage of the research several conclusions and assumptions were made. First, an assumption regarding the necessity of conducting an introductory interview with each participant individually was tested. This interview was designed to establish a satisfactory trusted relationship with the researcher, to help each participant to find their own specific purpose for participating in the research and finally to choose the research group (the expressive group or the impressive group). Second, an assumption regarding the necessity of creating the research vocal course in order to follow the dynamics of self-expression and self-exploration in the situation of unconditional and positive regard and in the situation of evaluating was made.

Paragraph 2.4 “The sample, organization and materials of the research” thoroughly describes the sample, organization of the research, materials and instruments of the research (see also the introduction paragraph to the paper).

Finally **paragraph 2.5 “The quantitative results of the research”** offers the results of the empirical research. In order to lessen the number of indexes and to make the indexes themselves larger, they were combined into 6 factors: “Psychophysiological authenticity”, “Psychological authenticity”, “Satisfaction”, “Vocalization change”, “Perceived involvement” and “Perceived satisfaction”.

The regression models indicate the influence of the research conditions on the factors “Psychological authenticity” ($p = 0.048$) and “Satisfaction” ($p = 0.048$). The scores on the factor “Perceived satisfaction” grew in both groups (0.068 ; $p = 0.048$).

After the comparison of both groups with t-tests the significant differences were revealed within four following factors: “Psychophysiological authenticity” ($p = 0.027$), “Psychological authenticity” ($p = 0.001$), “Satisfaction” ($p = 0.001$) and “Perceived satisfaction” ($p = 0.027$).

After the cluster analysis, vocalizations were most optimally spread into four clusters: “Authenticity”, “Inauthenticity”, “Impressiveness” and “Expressiveness”. The greatest amount of vocalizations from the clusters “Authenticity” and “Expressiveness” appeared to be in the expressive group (64.3% and 74%). 63.3% the largest part of the “Impressiveness” cluster appeared to be filled with vocalizations from the impressive group. The “Inauthenticity” cluster contained vocalizations from both groups (42% and 58%).

Paragraph 2.6 “The qualitative results of the research” reveals the results of the qualitative study. In thematic analysis the following categories were established: “Experiences and feelings reflected through the voice and the body”, “Self-exploration”, “Resistance” and “Self-presentation.”

All in all the participants from the impressive group largely felt constraint at the beginning of the research and were able to free themselves by the end of it. They were concentrated on working with the sounds of their voices. They designed strategies for their performances and wanted to do more new and creative assignments at each research session to develop more features in their voices. It was important for them to know what impression the listener would have from their vocalizing.

The participants from the expressive group felt rather tense at the first research vocal session but acquired a larger sense of freedom vocalizing each subsequent time. Through the sounds of their voices they were able to feel something that they were unable to put into words but what was very important for them. The feeling of their voice gave them an experience of freedom and an opportunity to be themselves in any way and not think about the opinions or evaluations of others. After they felt and expressed their experience through the sounds of their voices the participants noted a feeling of inner strength and a solid foundation inside them.

In paragraph 2.7 “The limitations and the strong points of the research” the limitations and potential of the research is discussed. At first glance it is impossible to spread the results into a larger and more representative sample because the participants

were not randomized before the research. Furthermore, it was impossible to completely separate the motivation and final results of the participants. However, the importance of the unique case studies is emphasized taking into account the premises of their participation and the unique processes of self-expression and self-exploration of each participant. The opportunity to train the human voice in the situation of evaluation by correcting the apparent lacking qualities is opposed to the opportunity to get closer to one's own inner essence with the help of the individual's authentic voice in the situation of unconditional and positive regard. The opportunity to effectively match the fitting programs for each category of people is discussed. After the research was conducted the perspectives of the following research in the sphere of self-expression and self-exploration through voice sounds were laid out.

In paragraph 2.8 “Discussion” the results of the research are analyzed through the relevant views on the problem of vocalizations in self-expression and self-exploration. The participants from the expressive group felt more relaxed and free during vocalizing in comparison to the participants from the impressive group. It was also easier for them to vocalize. The feelings they expressed through their voices were spontaneous and corresponded to their actual inner experience compared to the feelings and emotions which were vocalized in the impressive group. They also felt more satisfied during and after vocalizing. This can be explained because the participants from the impressive group did not express their own feelings but acted out the emotions that were put on paper in a task. They also had to constantly evaluate themselves regarding how they performed their tasks. The participants from the expressive group were in a valuing atmosphere and expressed the experience that came at a very specific moment. The high authenticity of their vocalizations was related with the works of C. Rogers, N. Rogers and relevant contemporary investigations (Melnikova, Orlov, 2016; Rogers, 1994; Rogers, 2015 et al). In the impressive group a gradual growing confidence of the participants while performing their tasks was observed. This conforms to the work of L. Pascale (2005). At the same time in the transcripts of the participants from the expressive group, a category

of self-exploration which was revealed in the feeling of unity between the inner experiences and resources of the participants was widely spread.

In the **conclusion**, the results of this theoretical and empirical research are evaluated. The perspectives of the future and on-going investigations are laid out.

General conclusions of the study:

1. Expressive vocalizations were more authentic and facilitated self-expression and self-exploration in comparison to impressive vocalizations.
2. At the beginning of the research the participants in both groups felt rather constraint. However, the participants from the impressive group gradually grew more confident while the participants from the expressive group felt a bigger sense of freedom, inner strength and integrity.
3. The practice of expressive vocalizations makes self-expression and self-exploration easier than the practice of impressive vocalizations.

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2. Zirko A. V., Orlov A. B. Vocal therapy: research perspective // The psychological studies. 2017. Vol. 10. Iss. 53. P. 3. URL: <http://psystudy.ru/index.php/num/2017v10n53/1426-zirko53.html> date access: 14.05.2019. (In Russian).
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