

This article will discuss two issues:

1. What is the difference between the native(NS) and non-native speaker(NNS) of English?
2. Discussing the difference in position between NS English teachers and NNS English teachers.

The difference between NS and NNS English speaker

There is no clear definition of the difference between NS and NNS, and different experts and scholars have different views, of which the following are three representatives.

1. Davies' and other scholars' views

In *Native Speakers in Applied Linguistics*, Davies (1991, quoted in Braine, 2010) claims that there is no proper definition of a 'native speaker'. A similar claim can be made for the term 'non-native speaker'.

Although the rapid spread of English from the sixteenth century onwards gave rise to a horizontal growth in English language teaching, allowing English speakers to spread across the globe, and enterprising NNSs may soon undertake the role of English teachers in other countries (Braine, 2010, p.15). But there was little research into the differences between NS and NNS until the 1990s, and it was not until more than two decades ago that issues related to them were openly discussed and studied. One important reason for this was the traditional linguistic theory that the mother tongue was the only reliable source of linguistic data (Chomsky 1965, quoted in Braine, 2010). The first attention to (non-)nativism was given by Paikeday (1985, quoted in Braine, 2010), in his book *The native is dead*, who introduced the term 'proficient user' to refer to all those who can successfully use a language. In 1990, Rampton(1990, quoted in Braine, 2010) also proposed the equivalent 'expert speaker' to refer to any person who can successfully use a language.

Davies (1991, 2003, quoted in Braine, 2010), by further studying the identity of the 'native speaker', has come to the important conclusion that L2 learners can become native speakers of the target language and can acquire the same characteristics of language use as native speakers, including linguistic intuition, creativity, spontaneity, grammar, interpretation quality and pragmatic control. Depending on the different research methodologies, Piller (2002), Inbar-Lourie (2005), Moussu (2006, quoted in Braine, 2010), Park (2007) and Faez (2007, quoted in Braine, 2010) agree with this view. And Faez demonstrates through empirical research that linguistic identity is complex and dynamic, related to relationships and conversations, and highly context-dependent. So in some cases, the distinction between NS and NNS is blurred.

They argue that ultimately a fairly important factor in determining the social identification of NS and NNS is whether the speaker is acceptable to a community. This social identity is usually based on judgments of the speaker's accent, and people usually show considerable talent and ability in voice recognition (Munro & Derwing 1994; Fledge, Munro & Mackay 1995; Munro & Derwing 1995), in other words, if the listener finds that the speaker's accent is different from his or her own, or any other accent is known to him or her, then the listener will classify the speaker as a non-native speaker (Moussu & Llurda, 2008).

2. David Crystal's view (Interview with David Crystal 2014)

Simply speaking, the way to tell the difference between NS and NNS is dependent on how they learn the language.

A non-native speaker (NNS) is a person who learns one or more languages in the same way that children usually learn languages. NNS, on the other hand, usually start learning from the standard dialect or prestige accent spoken by adults of that language, focusing more on learning the language that is useful for their communicative needs, whether informal or formal (2014).

In short, NNS learning is purposeful and limited, and the language learned by NS is rich and varied, covering all aspects of life, from the simplest, most concrete language content to generalised, abstract language content, growing naturally in a bottom-up approach to acquisition. In contrast, the NNS approach to language acquisition is top-down, skimming over the initial stages of children's language acquisition at the outset, so that there is a tendency for NNSs who are proficient in L2 language to be more skilled than NSs in some aspects of language and far less capable than NSs in other aspects of life. In reality, however, this focus on how children acquire language is a view that there can never be a really clear distinction between NS and NNS because speakers can begin learning and acquiring a language at any age, differing only in the number of NS intuitions acquired depending on the age of acquisition.

In David Crystal's (2014) view, a native like NNS does not differ significantly from an NS in terms of phonological, orthographic, grammatical, lexical and discourse mastery, but from a sociolinguistic perspective, we cannot compare NS and NNS across age, class, gender, occupation, education, etc., because each category of people, whether NS or NNS have a different level of mastery of the language and proficiency in some aspect of the language. For example, just as an NNS physicist who is fluent in English would know far more terminology about physics than an average NS would know. But in a basic life scenario, an NNS biologist might not have the same level of command of the language as an average NS. So it is only relatively reasonable to compare like with like. By comparison it is easy to see that NNS are far

less intuitive and sensitive to local accents and dialects than NS, because in real life NNS do not need this ability and intuition, and it would not be a barrier to them becoming a proficient L2 speaker. Conversely, NSs are not as comfortable as NNSs in being able to handle a range of formal kinds of language unconsciously. This is because there is no need for deliberate practice in this area during their formative years either. In short, NS is more intuitive than NNS in accents and dialects, while NNS is more intuitive than NS in dealing with formal variety.

3. George Braine's view

George Braine(2010) generalises that an NS of a language is someone who speaks that language as his/her first language, while an NNS is someone who speaks that language as a second or foreign language. But BG does not want to explore the question of the difference between NS and NNS, because in his view it is a problem that has no solution. He sees the term 'native speaker' as undoubtedly having positive connotations: it represents an innate right, fluency, cultural affinity and sociolinguistic competence. By contrast, the term 'non-native speaker' carries the burden of being a minority, implying marginalisation and stigmatisation, and thus discrimination in the job market and career advancement(Braine, 2010 p.9).

However, in a study by Inbar-Lourie (2001, quoted in Braine, 2010) on why some Israeli teachers perceive themselves as English-speaking NS found that teachers' self-perceptions could be explained by nine variables, with two of the most influential variables best predicting this self-identification , one is speaking English from age 0 to 6. The other one is others' perceptions of them as English-speaking NS. To some extent, these findings support the most obvious ways of identifying NS and NNS is by country of origin, name, race, skin colour and accent.

Summary

As can be seen from the above, no scholar has been able to give a precise definition to describe NS and NNS, as there are many variables involved. Of these, accent, the way language is acquired in childhood and community acceptance are the elements that are more commonly agreed to distinguish NS from NNS. A large body of literature on NS suggests that the use of the NS/NNS dichotomy is inappropriate and that such a distinction can mislead people to view NS and NNS as two distinctly opposing and separate groups.However, some scholars also acknowledge the practical expediency of maintaining the distinction between NS and NNS, and that all work based on NNS teacher research implicitly accepts the fact that there is a separation between NS and NNS.

Overall, while it may be useful to distinguish between NS and NNS, there is still no theoretical evidence that such a distinction is necessary. Under the argument that English is an international language (Modiano's, 1999), many non-English speakers

can communicate more effectively in English in an international setting than many NSs, and many of these so-called NSs speak far less easily in a global context than those who are well-educated and proficient in L2. As languages are used by people with different expertise and experience, there will inevitably be perceptual differences in their use of English, and NS and NNS are only roughly and intuitively evolved and constructed from these differences.

It is important to note that both categories do not actually accurately reflect the true level of speakers' mastery of a language and can sometimes be misleading, leading people to believe that one group of speakers has a higher and more comprehensible level of communicative competence than another.

Discussion

In fact, before exploring the differences between NS and NNS, we can try to discuss what are the similarities between NS and NNS. After excluding the similarities, those differences that are more influential and widely mentioned and recognised may be the differences between NS and NNS, and it is worth noting that differences are not the same as opposing.

As mentioned above, the main elements that influence the differences between NS and NNS are nationality, name, race, colour, accent, mode of language acquisition (0-6 years/childhood), community recognition (social acceptance), whether English is the first language, and English proficiency. I will analyse each of these in turn.

Nationality, as we all know, people of different colours and races can have the same nationality. Apart from being born with this attribute, speakers can also acquire it by their own choice, for example, citizens who immigrate from Singapore to the UK, as NNS Singaporeans can acquire the same nationality as British NS citizens, so NS and NNS can have the same nationality, therefore I think nationality cannot be the essential element of difference between NS and NNS.

Name, usually given by a parent or significant other, is a reflection of the speaker's background by birth, including ethnicity, nationality, colour, etc. It can also be chosen by the person himself or herself as he or she grows up. For example, a Chinese person can have a Chinese name and an English name, they can use a name that is more suitable for their communication or work in their daily life to suit the environment they are in. For example, many English teachers or employees working in foreign companies. For example, many English teachers or employees in foreign companies usually have a local name (mainly used in family communication) and an English name used in formal situations (mainly in the workplace). So in a certain social context, NS and NNS can have identical or stylised names, and even if there is a difference between NS and NNS in terms of names, it is not ultimately an important factor in determining whether a person is NS or NNS.

Race and colour, it is well known that a country's NS can be made up of people of different colours and different races, for example, the NS of the United States includes white NS and black NS as well as others. NS and NNS can be of the same or different races and colours. Therefore, race and colour cannot be used as criteria for judging NS and NNS.

Accent, which is the most mentioned and widely recognised factor by various researchers. But it must be admitted that although the accent is a very good factor in distinguishing NS from NNS, it is true that with careful practice and the influence of the environment, there are many NNS who can sound as good as NS. Besides, not every NS has perfect pronunciation. So it is possible for NS and NNS to have the same accent, so I would argue that while accent recognition is certainly an easy and quick way to distinguish NS from NNS, it is also not the essential factor in distinguishing NNS from NS.

How language is acquired, David Crystal(2014) defines NS as someone who learns a language or languages in an identical way to the normal process of language acquisition by children. NNS, on the other hand, usually start learning from the standard dialect or prestigious accent spoken by adults of that language and focus more on learning the language that is useful to them in their communicative needs, whether informal or formal. Although David Crystal(2014) has also said that this does not sharply distinguish between NS and NNS, as people can acquire language at any age - 2, 4, 6, etc. - on the whole NNS cannot compensate for this process of language acquisition in childhood (if the NNS only starts learning English as an adolescent). Thus, how children acquire language is, to some extent, a criterion for distinguishing between NS and NNS. Furthermore, the Inbar-Lourie (2001, quoted in Moussu & Llurda, 2008) report identifies an important variable in determining NS as whether the speaker speaks English between the ages of 0 and 6. It is after this stage that the vast majority of NNSs begin to learn English formally and receive a formal education in English.

Community recognition (recognition by others), there is no doubt that an NS's status is recognised and accepted by other NSs in the community as being of the same kind as him/herself or as being officially/nationally recognised as a national citizen, whereas an NNS's status is recognised by other NSs as not being of the same kind as him/herself. In some special cases, even if an NNS has received national identification (i.e. immigration), his/her NS status will not be easily accepted in real life if he/she is not recognised by other NSs in his/her community. In this respect, there is a difference between NS and NNS that cannot be changed in the short term. In other words, even if a speaker immigrates to a country where English is the first language and receives an identity card from that country if the rest of the community does not recognise him/her as an NS and merely considers him/her to be an NNS with a local identity card only, he/she will still be an NNS in the eyes of others, regardless of his/her level of English and whether or not he/she has received

an identity card from that country. This may only change after a long period, or after the next generation of the immigrant is born, to be recognised by the rest of the community. Thus, community recognition can be used as a general criterion for judging whether a person is an NS or NNS.

Whether English is the speaker's first language or not, in general, most NNSs do not speak English as their first language and begin to learn it formally only after reaching a certain age. It is generally after they have mastered their mother tongue and are able to use it for normal communication activities that they are exposed to English. So from this point of view, it seems that NS and NNS are not identical. Roughly speaking, it is possible to use whether English is the speaker's first language as one of the variables for determining whether the speaker is an NS or an NNS. However, it is necessary to be cautious in the case of children from multilingual families, such as bilingual or trilingual families, where the child has acquired two or three languages almost simultaneously from an early age, making it difficult to determine which language is the child's first language, or even if two or three different languages are both the child's first language. Therefore, the use of English as the speaker's first language as a criterion for determining whether a speaker is an NS or NNS needs to be very carefully considered, taking into account the background of the speaker's language acquisition. Of course, this criterion is still valid for children who grew up or were raised in monolingual homes during childhood. In other words, the criterion of whether English is the first language can be used to distinguish between NS and NNS, but in particular cases, such as speakers who have acquired two or three languages almost simultaneously since childhood, this criterion is not precise enough to cover all cases.

English proficiency, a variable that is taken for granted in the general public perception as a reason to distinguish between NS and NNS, since it is not normally possible for an L2 speaker to have a language level equal to or higher than an L1 speaker. However, as mentioned earlier, Davies (1991, 2003, quoted in Moussu & Llorca, 2008) clearly states that L2 learners can become native speakers of the target language and can acquire the same characteristics of language use as natural native speakers. This means that NNS and NS can achieve the same level of language proficiency, language skills and language awareness as L1 speakers. David Crystal(2014) also states that a well-educated L2 speaker can speak at a higher level than an average L1 speaker. Therefore, English proficiency cannot be used as a variable to distinguish between NS and NNS.

To summarise, of the various variables mentioned to distinguish NS from NNS, only the three variables of language acquisition (0-6 years/childhood), community acceptance and whether English is the first language can be used to distinguish NS from NNS to a certain extent, but each of these factors has its shortcomings and not all of them can be judged accurately. And it is not just one factor that should be used as a basis for judgement, but a combination of all three.

Reflections and perspectives.

In the increasingly rapid process of globalisation, English, as a medium of communication linking countries, has begun to gradually integrate into national language systems. As time goes on, I venture to guess that a form of English language with the characteristics of each country's language will emerge, and at that time, will there still be a distinction between NS and NNS? I guess that when globalisation reaches a certain stage, there will no longer be a distinction between NS and NNS, but rather a distinction between national English, such as Chinese English, Japanese English, Korean English, etc. Of course, a lot of scientific research is needed to verify this claim, following the pace of the times.

the difference in position between NS and NNS English teachers

Discrimination in the position of NNS teachers

Although NS teachers are recognised as the authority and standard in English-speaking countries, there appears to be some power struggle between expatriate NS and native NNS teachers in the EFL environment (Braine, 2010, p.2).

As early as 1992, Phillipson discussed the origins of this issue about the position of NS and NNS teachers. The view that NS teachers are superior to NNS teachers in terms of knowledge and performance is generally accepted in language pedagogy (Braine, 2010, p.2), and this advantage is supported by Chomsky's (1965, quoted in Braine, 2010) view that native speakers are ideal providers of grammar because the native speaker is the authority on the language. However, Phillipson challenges this view by explaining that language teaching is not the same as cultural transmission in ELT and that NNS teachers can achieve competent language proficiency through training, in which NNS teachers undergo the process of learning a non-native (second) language, so that English can not only be taught by culturally diverse and competent NNS teachers but also NNS teachers are better qualified than NS teachers to teach English. (Braine, 2010, p.3)

Peter Medgyes (1994, quoted in Moussu & Llurda, 2008) was the first to have explored the issue of NNS teachers, and he proposed three hypotheses based on the assumption that 'NS and NNS teachers are two different species': (1) there are differences in language ability and teaching behaviour between the two. (2) Most of the differences in teaching practice stem from differences in language ability. (3) Both can be equally good teachers on their terms.

Braine (1998, quoted in Braine, 2010) points out that few positions in the job market are suitable for NNS English teachers, and the qualifications, experience and

competence of NNS English teachers do not assist them in finding a job. Even though TESOL organisations explicitly oppose the discrimination against NNS teachers in the hiring process, the invisible rules of the market make most employers and ELT administrators refuse to hire NNS, with the reasons being the legal complications of hiring foreigners/NNS and the preference of second language school students for NS teachers. But Braine(2010:4) sees subtle opposition to NNS teachers from academics as a deeper contributing factor.

But ironically, in an ESL teaching environment that promotes multiculturalism, diversity and other socio-political causes, NNS English teachers, who are effective in promoting these factors and have both multicultural and multilingual experience are kept out of the classroom(Braine, 2010, p.4). Also, even NNS English teachers who have obtained teaching qualifications and higher degrees in the West are not always able to gain employment when they return to their home countries. For example, language learning programme managers in countries such as South Korea, Japan and Hong Kong even prefer uncertified NS English teachers to certified NNS English teachers. This phenomenon puts NNS English teachers in an awkward, frustrating and confusing situation, which at the same time negates the training they have received(Braine, 2010, p.4).

Especially in the early days, there seemed to be a default rule that NNSs were not required to apply for English-educated positions and to follow the "native English speaker" criteria, applying for positions were often rejected by project managers or employers, and they were sometimes even openly opposed in professional meetings and job interviews(Braine, 2010, p.10).

Since Braine's (1998, quoted in Braine, 2010) public article in 1998 on the complaints of NNS English teachers, NNS English teachers have been openly discussing the discrimination they experience from various groups, including employers, fellow teachers, students and parents of students. In addition to being rejected for jobs in English-speaking countries, NNS English teachers have to compete for jobs with expatriate NS English teachers even when they return to their own country (where English is a second language or an Outer Circle country). Such competition, prejudice and discrimination have not disappeared. Whether or not the home country of the NNS teacher is prosperous or influential in the world, this competition exists to a greater or lesser extent, but it varies in intensity(Braine, 2010, p.11). Generally speaking, there is less competition between NS and NNS teacher in countries with a weaker overall national or economic position, and vice versa. This is because more NS English teachers are attracted by attractive salaries, travel allowances and other benefits. Some public schools or training centres advertise openly discriminating against NNS English teachers by claiming to be recruiting only NS teachers. To be more serious, academic qualifications are not always mentioned in these advertisements and instead, a 'British accent is required, so in some cases, NS teacher only needs a little enthusiasm to get a good job teaching English, contrary to

the qualifications for teachers of other subjects where a degree is a primary requirement(Braine, 2010, p.11).

In 2006, the South China Morning Post (Heron, 2006, quoted in Braine, 2010) in Hong Kong provided a more detailed survey data report on the demand for NS by private English language centres and private tutoring clients showing a need for NS English teachers of 67% and 43% respectively. In terms of employment, white English teachers were twice as successful as Asian teachers in applying for positions. In terms of salary, white female English teachers earn on average about US\$6 per hour more than Asian teachers. According to the head of careers, many institutions immediately reject an applicant from China as soon as they see the photograph or name. Unfortunately, this discrimination does not only happen to native Chinese English teachers but also to Chinese American teachers as well(Braine, 2010, p.13).

Do NS English teachers really have an advantage over NNS teachers?

In the above, it is easy to see that NNS has been treated unfairly for a long time and that they are in an unequal position with NS. The thought-provoking question is whether the NS really has an advantage over the NNS in English teaching practice? The answer is definitely no.

In the 1980s scholars began to reflect on the differences between NS and NNS English teachers. One of the most representative is Medgyes' (1992,1994, Moussu & Llurda, 2008) view, which describes six characteristics of strengths as an NNS English teacher, summarised as role models, effective teaching strategies, solid professional grounding, the ability to accurately anticipate learners' difficulties, empathy, and the use of L1 to facilitate L2 teaching.

In more detail, firstly, the NNS English teacher as a successful language user not only has solid professional knowledge but more importantly, presents an excellent role model to the students, which not only motivates them to learn but also makes them feel confident in learning English. Secondly, as it is inevitable that NNS will encounter learning difficulties in the process of learning English, NNS English teachers can draw on their own learning experiences to effectively draw out teaching strategies that can be applied to help students learn English effectively. Besides, NNS English teachers are able to use their own learning experiences to accurately predict and judge what difficulties students will encounter in learning English, and through empathy, they are able to deeply perceive students' state of mind when encountering learning difficulties and cultural conflicts by understanding students' needs and giving them positive feedback, so NNS teachers are usually able to establish a good relationship with students, which greatly improves communication between teachers and students. Finally, and this is a particular advantage of NNS teachers, they can use L1 to help students understand the complex and difficult issues encountered in L2, and in addition, NNS teachers are aware of the negative

transfer effects of L1 and can effectively help students to compare the two languages so that they can avoid some of the mistakes that they tend to make in L2.

In terms of teaching practice, there is an overwhelming consensus that there are differences between NS and NNS English teachers in terms of teaching methods, skills, content and objectives (Moussu & Llurda, 2008). NS teachers were seen as fluent, accurate, authentic, informal users of conversational English, understanding the subtleties of the English language and teaching communication as a goal rather than preparation for exams (Moussu & Llurda, 2008). Rarer still is the ability to provide students with the need and opportunity to use English in a classroom setting.

NNS teachers in contrast teach intending to prepare for exams and therefore usually teach in a more formal and grammatically correct manner. Specifically, NNS will focus more on the accuracy and formal form of English at the expense of the communicative role of the language, so this often results in students not performing well in everyday interactions with people and performing better in reading and writing. NNS teachers usually take the goal of helping students pass exams as their teaching objective, so they do not pay enough attention to students' English communication skills and over-rely on textbooks in the teaching process, which makes English classes seem rigid and boring, lacking innovation and creativity, and not attractive enough for students, even making them resentful. This is because students do not like the filling-in and over-correction of grammatical errors, nor do they like teaching for the purpose of examinations.

However, overall the students had positive attitudes towards the NNS English teachers, and even the Korean and Chinese students who had negative feelings towards the NNS teachers at the beginning showed a clear positive change in their attitudes at the end of the period (although still not highly rated, their attitudes improved), and these attitudes became increasingly positive as they were exposed to the NNS teachers over time (Moussu & Llurda, 2008).

A small survey of attitudes towards hiring NS/NNS English teachers conducted by Moussu (1991, quoted in Moussu & Llurda, 2008) showed that no one would be willing to recruit an unqualified NS, but would be willing to employ a better NNS if the NS was having teaching difficulties, although they would be willing to hire an NS if the level of teaching was equal, and of course, a proportion of people did not think that it would be a factor between NS and NNS teacher in choosing whether to offer employment to the teacher (Moussu & Llurda, 2008).

The above information shows that NS teachers are not always better than NNS teachers. More correctly, there is no simple comparison between NS and NNS English teachers. As mentioned above, employers do not blindly hire unqualified NS

teachers, but it is puzzling why there is still discrimination against NNS teachers in the marketplace. I would hazard a guess that apart from the subtle opposition to NNS teachers from academics mentioned earlier, the two main reasons are the attitudes of students and parents towards NS teachers and the operation of the market.

Overall from the primary level to the university level, students prefer NS teachers, and the extent of this preference increases as the level of education increases. In addition to this, students who have been taught by NS English teachers also show a significant preference for NS teachers (Braine, 2010, p.34). Students also expressed a desire for NS teachers in the areas of pronunciation, vocabulary, speaking, civility and culture. However, in the fields of grammar and teaching strategies, students would prefer to be exposed to NNS English teachers (Braine, 2010, p.34). This is why schools and language training providers prefer to employ NS English teachers in order to meet the needs of their students. In addition to this, some so-called international schools and language training institutions often use the number of NS English teachers as a promotional indicator in order to build their brand and expand their publicity. The simple fact is that, on the one hand, businesses want to increase the competitiveness of the industry and create a market for NS, and on the other hand, there is the 'mother tongue fallacy' of ordinary people, with many parents believing that if they want their children to learn authentic English, they should follow the right NS teachers, not caring about their professional skills and academic level of teaching the language.

The good news is that not every country in the world suffers from this apparent discrimination. For example, in Singapore, where the majority of students and teachers speak English, they do not see foreign English teachers as unreservedly welcome and see NNS teachers as a national recognition of the diversity of the local English language. Nor is it common for NNS English teachers to have a lower status than NS (Braine, 2010, p.50).

Summarise

firstly, an NS teacher would certainly be better than an NNS teacher if language ability was the only determinant in the process of ELT practice (Medgyes, 1992). But teaching English is not as simple as that. It also involves the interaction of various variables such as teaching skills, experience, personal attractiveness, motivation, teaching strategies, empathy and so on. Secondly, the advantage of an NS over an NNS is mere that he or she has better English language skills, but when teaching English in an EFL environment, the NS will show a lack of sensitivity to students' problems and an inability to provide effective solutions. So overall, language proficiency is the only thing that hinders NNS teachers. Of course, the many burdens imposed on NNS teachers and their insecurities (which stem from the lack of

knowledge and professional confidence of language) cannot be ignored. In short, there are significant differences between NS and NNS teachers in terms of English language teaching practices, mainly due to their different language backgrounds, but the effectiveness of English language teaching is not determined by whether the teacher is an NS or an NNS.

As English teachers, NS and NNS teach different things, and both NS and NNS teachers should acknowledge this difference and accept their limitations, and be clear about their strengths, maximise them in the teaching process and maximise their potential within their own limitations.

Conclusion

The NNS is responsible for systematically teaching professional and academic language knowledge, helping students to develop a language system and framework that will help them understand the structure and rules of the English language and equip them for their future academic careers. The NS is responsible for the practical teaching of practical skills to help students understand the background culture and adapt to life abroad (even if they do not have the opportunity to go abroad as background knowledge of the English language is quite good). So both NS and NNS teachers need to learn to work with the other type of teacher, to explore co-teaching methods and strategies, and to learn more from each other and complement each other's strengths so that they can maximise their respective strengths and give their students the best and most comprehensive English language teaching.

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