# GENDER DIFFERENCES IN TEACHER QUESTIONING STRATEGIES: A CASE STUDY AT SMKS PASUNDAN 1 CIANJUR

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**Abstract:** This study investigates the questioning strategies of male and female English teachers in EFL classrooms at SMKS Pasundan 1 Cianjur. Using a qualitative descriptive method and a case study approach, data were collected through observations, questionnaires, and interviews. The findings reveal that both genders use diverse questioning strategies to enhance classroom interaction, incorporating questions at the beginning, middle, and end of lessons. Furthermore, both genders use three main types of questions: procedural, convergent, and divergent. However, significant differences exist in the frequency and types of questions used. This research highlights how gender dynamics influence teaching methods and student engagement, providing valuable insights for improving EFL education.

**Keywords:** teacher's questions; types of questioning strategies; classroom interaction; efl classroom; gender differences

#### INTRODUCTION

Effective questioning is crucial in EFL classrooms for stimulating student engagement and guiding learning. Maolida (2019) emphasizes that teacher questions play a significant role in facilitating language learning and classroom interaction. However, fostering such interaction in EFL classrooms can be challenging, as students often remain passive and unresponsive (Erianti et al., 2019).

Teachers play a key role in managing classroom dynamics and ensuring effective learning. Questioning strategies are essential for engaging students, guiding their thinking, and encouraging participation. Nasrudin et al. (2021) state that effective questioning techniques can significantly enhance student engagement and participation. Ningsih et al. (2021) add that teachers' questioning strategies are vital for promoting student involvement and critical thinking. Similarly, Wahyuni and Rahman Hz (2024) highlight that interactive questioning strategies, such as the "Banana Boom" ice-breaking technique, can effectively improve classroom dynamics and student interaction.

Furthermore, Aimah and Purwanto (2019) and engage students. Lynch (cited in Suartini et al., highlight that questioning strategies are essential 2020) defines a question as an interrogative for stimulating students' critical literacy, as they statement or command used to obtain information.

encourage deeper analysis and reflection. Their research shows that effective questioning not only fosters engagement but also enhances students' critical thinking skills, a crucial aspect of language learning and literacy development.

While previous research has highlighted the importance of teacher questions, there is limited focus on how gender differences among teachers influence questioning strategies and classroom interactions. This study aims to fill this gap by examining the questioning strategies of male and female teachers at SMKS Pasundan 1 Cianjur and their impact on student engagement.

Question-and-answer activities between teachers and students are fundamental to the teaching and learning process. Questions stimulate critical thinking and cognitive development, aiding students in mastering the material (Astrid et al., 2019). In line with Rizki and Jamilah (2023) state that questioning encourages critical thinking and student interaction, fostering an interactive and reflective learning environment. They play a crucial role in integrating new information and promoting intellectual growth (Kim, 2021). Teachers often use questions to start conversations and engage students. Lynch (cited in Suartini et al., 2020) defines a question as an interrogative statement or command used to obtain information.

Cotton (2020) describes teacher questioning as instructional signals that help students understand the material and guide their learning. Research shows that questions can stimulate interest, focus attention, encourage critical thinking, and help assess understanding. Effective questioning is essential for successful teaching (Cotton, 2020).

In the classroom, questions act as instructional cues (Nasrudin & Ningtiyas, 2020). In the Initiation-Response-Feedback pattern, questioning is a common technique. Teachers skilled in questioning can create a dynamic learning environment that fosters engagement and academic growth. Mastering various teaching skills, including questioning, is vital for English teachers, as it is one of the most frequently used skills (Astrid et al., 2019). Setiawan and Nurani (2021) found that effective questioning techniques enhance student engagement and comprehension, further supporting the positive impact of strategic questioning.

Hattie and Zierer (2019) and McTighe & Willis (2019) emphasize the importance of formative assessment and feedback, suggesting that questions should be designed to provide immediate, actionable feedback. Walsh and Sattes (2019) and Black & Wiliam (2018) further support the role of questions in formative assessment, promoting a continuous cycle of feedback and improvement. Smith and Higgins (2020) explore how questioning strategies can be adapted to different educational contexts, ensuring they meet the diverse needs of students.

According to Eble (1988), teachers' questions can be applied in three sessions: (1) questions play at the beginning, (2) questions play in the middle of teaching, (3) and the questions play at the end after the lesson.

Asking questions at the beginning of a lesson helps engage students, particularly those highly capable and interested in the subject (Kim, 2021). It helps address queries about previous material, readings, and test preparation. Initial questions, whether written (quizzes) or oral, are usually simple, facilitating easier responses and encouraging participation without overwhelming students. Wahyuni and Rahman Hz (2024) also highlighted that engaging students from the start with interactive questions can significantly enhance their readiness and participation in class.

According to Febrianty and Rozelin (2024), questions at the beginning of a lesson can set the interpersonal tone, fostering a collaborative atmosphere. The mood of the classroom is established through teachers' initial inquiries,

which can influence students' engagement levels and emotional responses. According to Sutaryo and Mulyani (2021), initiating lessons with engaging questions can significantly boost student participation and create an interactive learning environment.

Mid-lesson questions significantly enhance student achievement by actively engaging them in the material. According to Eble (1988), students perform better on topics addressed through questions compared to unaddressed topics. Based on Bloom's Taxonomy (1956), these questions motivate students to deepen their understanding and mastery of the material. These questions can be yes/no, display, or other types as needed (Nasrudin & Ningtiyas, 2020). Pratiwi and Haris (2022) emphasize that effective questioning techniques during lessons can enhance classroom interaction and understanding.

End-of-lesson questions help teachers assess student understanding, evaluate the learning process, and determine the effectiveness of their teaching. Recent studies suggest that such questions, including referential and recall questions, help students synthesize information and draw conclusions (Astrid et al., 2019).

Febrianty and Rozelin (2024) note that the mood during end-of-lesson questioning can either solidify learning or provide emotional closure. Teachers' attitudes and the interpersonal dynamics established through their questions can impact students' reflections and feedback. Wulandari and Nugroho (2023) highlight that questions asked at the end of lessons play a crucial role in consolidating learning and assessing comprehension.

Teachers use various question types in EFL classrooms to improve student proficiency in the target language and facilitate successful teaching (Astrid et al., 2019). In terms of purpose, Richards and Lockhart (1996) divide teacher questions into three types: 1) Procedural questions, 2) Convergent questions, and 3) Divergent questions.

Procedural questions are questions that ask about a class procedure or a routine in class. Teachers use this type of question to check student work, to check whether the instructions of an assignment are clearly understood and the instructions for the new task. Procedural questions can help teachers maintain and regulate classroom order in classroom management and teaching and learning processes (Hamiloglu & Temis, 2020). Procedural questions are used to check students' answers and can relax them while studying. An example of a Procedural question is "How are you

today?"

Santosa and Alfi (2020) add that procedural questions also play a role in scaffolding learning, providing a foundation for effective instruction and classroom management.

Convergent questions are a type of teacher question that can encourage students to answer questions based on a topic of material taught in class. This type of question serves to encourage students to review the information previously presented by the teacher. Convergent question answers are short answers, such as "yes," "no," or short statements. Teachers mostly ask questions in the form of questions that require short answers and yes/no in the process of classroom learning activities (Astrid et al., 2019).

Teachers often use convergent question types, to reinforce and summarize the subject and encourage student participation during the learning lesson (Suartini et al., 2020). Convergent questions are therefore used to focus attention, regulate students' attitudes, and encourage students to be active or participate in the teaching and learning process. An example of a Convergent question is "What are the generic structures of narrative text?". According to Fitriani and Abdullah (2019), convergent questions positively influence learning outcomes by reinforcing students' understanding of specific language concepts.

Divergent questions serve to encourage stormy student responses that require students to engage in higher-order and complex thinking, rather than being short answers. Instead of asking students to repeat information that has already been provided, divergent questions enable them to contribute their knowledge, expertise, and information. The teacher will usually ask different questions after posing convergence-related questions. An example of a divergent question is "What do you think about this video?"

The study by Febrianty and Rozelin (2024) highlights that divergent questions contribute to a dynamic classroom mood, encouraging students to engage deeply with the material and express their thoughts more freely. This interaction helps foster a supportive learning environment and enhances students' critical thinking.

Teachers use questioning strategies in classroom interactions for various essential reasons. According to a recent study by Smith and Johnson (2022), questions help enhance classroom interaction, encourage real-life communication, build close teacher-student relationships, and assist students in overcoming vocabulary limitations. Davis and Thompson (2021) identify two primary

reasons for classroom questioning: requiring student responses to foster active involvement and using questions to organize learning and interaction. Questions also serve multiple functions, including motivating students, controlling behavior, assessing understanding, and focusing on specific topics.

Williams and Brown (2023) outline several benefits of questioning. It encourages active participation, allows students to express opinions, facilitates peer explanations, aids instructional pacing and behavior management, and enables teachers to assess and adjust instruction based on student responses. Lee and Kim (2020) suggest that teachers use questions as a teaching strategy for several reasons. The first reason is that questions stimulate and nurture abilities and interest students. Questions can encourage students to think and also focus on the subject of learning. Additionally, they allow teachers to perform several actions such as acquiring certain structures or vocabulary, clarifying students' previous speech, checking students' speech, questions, and understanding, and encouraging students to participate in lesson interactions in class.

Language and Gender is an interdisciplinary field that explores how gender, gender relations, practices, and sexuality are represented in speech. Previous research highlights gender-based differences in communication styles, which may extend to classroom questioning strategies. Angouri & Baxter (2021) and Coates (2021) have discussed how gender influences conversational dynamics. Lakoff (1975) and Gray (2021) also examined how language reflects and perpetuates gender stereotypes. These studies suggest that male and female teachers might adopt different questioning techniques, which could affect student engagement and learning outcomes.

This research investigates whether such differences are evident in the questioning strategies of male and female English teachers at SMKS Pasundan 1 Cianjur. By using observations, questionnaires, and interviews, this study aims to provide insights into how gender influences questioning strategies and their effectiveness in promoting student participation and understanding.

In addition to these gender considerations, educational theories provide a foundation for understanding effective questioning practices. Krathwohl (2019) extends Bloom's Taxonomy (1956) by emphasizing the affective domain, highlighting the importance of questions that address attitudes and values. Mercer (2019) focuses on the dialogic nature of classroom

interaction, advocating for questions that promote student dialogue and collaborative learning. Piaget's constructivist principles (1973) and Vygotsky's (1978) social constructivism underscore the role of questions in facilitating cognitive development and social interaction.

#### **METHOD**

This research employs a qualitative descriptive method with a case study approach to analyze the questioning strategies of male and female teachers at SMKS Pasundan 1 Cianjur. The subjects included one male and one female English teacher, observed over multiple class sessions. Data were collected through non-participant observations, student questionnaires, and teacher interviews. The data were analyzed using Miles and Huberman's (2014) framework, involving data condensation, data display, and drawing and verifying conclusions.

#### **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

The implementation of questioning strategies and students' responses

Observations revealed that both male and female teachers employed questioning strategies at the beginning, middle, and end of lessons. These strategies served various functions such as building rapport, managing the classroom, assessing student readiness, and reinforcing learning

### Questions play at the beginning

Teachers' initial questions set the tone for the class session. The following are some examples of questions that male and female teachers use at the beginning of learning.

Table 1. Examples of questions play at the beginning by male and female teachers

	Question Asked	Students' Response
Male	How are you	I'm fine thank you
Teacher	today?	
	Where is she?	She is sick
	Okay, are you ready?	I'm ready
	What do you	Fresh (S1)
	feel after ice	Happy (S2)
	breaking?	Excited (S3)
Female	How are you	I'm fine, thank you
Teacher	today?	
	KM nya siapa?	Tidak ada Bu.
	Tanggal berapa	Five
	sekarang? What	
	date is it?	
	Seragam kamu	Sudah
	udah rapi	

belum?	
Minggu kemarin	Telat masuk Bu
kemana Nanda?	

Starting lessons with questions increases student interest and addresses uncertainties from previous lessons (Astrid et al., 2019; Eble, 1988). According to Sutaryo and Mulyani (2021), initiating lessons with engaging questions can significantly boost student participation and create an interactive learning environment.

Male teachers often ask general and readinessfocused questions, while female teachers incorporate more context-specific and routinebased questions. Wahyuni and Rahman Hz (2024) also highlighted that engaging students from the start with interactive questions can significantly enhance their readiness and participation in class.

According to Febrianty and Rozelin (2024), questions at the beginning of a lesson can set the interpersonal tone, fostering a collaborative atmosphere. The mood of the classroom is established through teachers' initial inquiries, which can influence students' engagement levels and emotional responses.

### Questions play in the middle of teaching

Questions during the lesson help deliver content and check comprehension. The following are some examples of questions that male and female teachers use in the middle of teaching;

Table 2. Examples of questions play in the middle of teaching by male and female teachers

	Question Asked	Students' Response
Male	Ada yang tahu	Tidak
Teache	apa itu if clause?	
r	Seandainya saya	Tidak
	bisa berangkat ke	
	bulan, itu	
	mungkin tidak?	
	What do you	About corporation,
	think about this	relationship
	video?	
	Understand, yes?	Yes
	Ada pertanyaan	No
	tidak? Any	
	question for	
	today?	
	What is social	To tell about the
	function of this	friendship (S1)
	song?	Story tells (S2)
		Telling about
		relationships (S3)
	Who gets the first	Group yellow
	to presentation?	
Female	Siapa yang	(Silence)
Teache	kemarin gak	

r	nulis?	
	Kalimatnya jadi	Seseorang
	bagaimana kalo aktif?	melakukan sesuatu
	J	V (01)
	Easy right?	Yes (S1)
		No (S2)
	Sudah beres	Belum
	belum?	
	Siapa yang mau	Kelompok satu bu
	duluan baca ke	•
	depan?	
	Jadi intinya	(Silence)
	narrative text itu	(
	apa?	
	or .	

These questions are instrumental in evaluating students' cognitive understanding and engaging them in higher-order thinking processes like analysis, synthesis, and evaluation (Krathwohl, 2019; Richard & Lockhart, 1996). Male teachers focus more on content engagement and critical thinking, while female teachers emphasize linguistic and grammatical understanding. Social interaction through questioning promotes cognitive development and language acquisition (Vygotsky, 1978; Mercer, 2019).

## Questions play at the end after lesson

End-of-lesson questions reinforce content, assess understanding, and elicit feedback. The following are some examples of questions that male and female teachers use at the end of the lesson;

Table 3. Example of questions play at the end after lesson used by male and female teacher

	Question Asked	Students'
		Response
Male	Apa itu if clause?	Pengandaian
Teacher	What your opinion	Menjadi
	after studying	lebih tahu
	procedure text how to	cara
	make logo?	membuat
		logo
	How do you feel after	I feel
	study this subject?	amazing
	What subject we learn	If clause
	today?	
	How does your teacher	I think Mr.
	teach this subject?	Rustam is
		energetic
	So how do you feel	Feel happy
	after study passive	
	voice?	
Female	Any question?	No
Teacher	Understand?	Yes
	Do you have a favorite	Cinderella
	story? What is your	Bu
	favorite story? Punya	
	cerita favorit tidak?	

What is the purpose of	To entertain
narrative text?	

Male teachers tend to ask reflective and feedback-oriented questions, while female teachers focus on direct comprehension checks and personal engagement. Both approaches align with Eble (1988), who notes that end-of-lesson questions help students synthesize material and draw conclusions. Wahyuni and Rahman Hz (2024) emphasized the role of interactive and reflective questioning in ice-breaking activities, which can be effectively adapted to end-of-lesson questions to enhance student reflection and feedback.

Both male and female teachers employ effective questioning strategies that enhance student understanding, engagement, and participation. Male teachers emphasize memory training and practicing speaking skills through convergent questions, while female teachers focus on procedural questions and maintaining a positive, interactive environment. Both strategies contribute to a comprehensive understanding of student learning outcomes and allow for ongoing adjustments in teaching practices.

The types of questioning strategies used by male and female teachers

The researcher interprets the data results descriptively, based on Richards and Lockhart (1996), who categorize questions into three types: procedural, convergent, and divergent questions.

#### Procedural questions

Procedural questions relate to classroom routines and procedures. Both male and female teachers asked procedural questions at all stages of the learning process. The following are some examples of procedural questions used by male and female teachers.

Table 4. Example of procedural used by male and female teachers

jemaie iea	chers
•	Procedural Questions
Male	How are you today?
Teacher	where is she today?
	Okay, are you ready?
	What do you feel after ice breaking?
	Group two what will you choose?
	Finish?
	Do you understand?
Female	Ada yang mau di tanyakan? Any
Teacher	question?
	How are you today?
	Tanggal berapa sekarang? What date
	is it?
	Seragam kamu udah rapi belum?

Siapa yang kemarin gak nulis?
Narrative Text nya dibawa tidak?
Siapa yang mau baca kedepan duluan?
Sudah mengerti ya, tentang passive
voice?
Any question?

The use of procedural questions by both male and female teachers at SMKS Pasundan 1 Cianjur plays a vital role in setting the tone for the lesson, ensuring student readiness, and maintaining classroom order. The male teacher's direct approach helps quickly engage students and prepare them for the lesson, while the female teacher's varied and comprehensive use of procedural questions not only engages students but also effectively addresses classroom management. Both strategies are essential in fostering a positive and conducive learning environment, as reflected in the positive feedback from students. According to Richards and Lockhart (1996), procedural questions are crucial for establishing a clear framework for the lesson, creating a structured and predictable learning environment.

### Convergent questions

Convergent questions encourage students to answer based on the main idea or material topic explained by the teacher. The following are some examples of convergent questions used by male and female teachers:

Table 5. Example of convergent questions used by male and female teachers

emale teachers
Convergent Questions
If clause termasuk jenis kalimat apa?
Seandainya saya tampan, berarti
kenyataannya apa?
Will the computer work if there is no
electricity?
About starting or closing?
Now what is the generic structure?
Akan bahasa inggris nya apa?
Kalau bola digigit Ahmad, si bola ini
melakukan sesuatu gak?
Kalau terjual apa bahasa Inggris
nya?
Verb ketiga dari kick?
Bentuk ketiga sold jadi apa?
Kalau were dibacanya bagaimana?
Terus struktur nya gimana
pertamanya harus ada?

Convergent questions used by both male and female teachers are instrumental in reinforcing students' understanding of specific language concepts, prompting accurate answers, and

ensuring detailed comprehension. The male teacher's approach focuses on grammatical structures and vocabulary translation, aiding students in grasping practical aspects of language use. The female teacher's focus on grammar rules, verb forms, and pronunciation helps students master essential language components. Both strategies are effective in promoting detailed understanding and accuracy, as reflected in the positive feedback from students.

Questions related to convergence typically require short answers, such as yes or no questions and short statements. This aligns with research by Astrid et al. (2019), which shows that teachers often ask questions requiring short answers and yes/no responses during classroom learning activities.

## Divergent questions

Divergent questions are designed to encourage students to provide deeper, more thoughtful answers and engage in higher-level thinking. The following are some examples of divergent questions used by male and female teachers;

Table 6. Example of divergent questions used by male and female teachers

	Divergent Questions
Male	Seandainya saya bisa berangkat ke
Teacher	bulan, itu mungkin tidak?
	Seandainya saya tampan, berarti
	kenyataannya apa?
	Jika saya rajin menabung saya akan
	kaya, itu menghayal bukan?
	What do you think about this video?
	How does your teacher teach this
	subject?
	Taufik, what your opinion?
Female	Kita bikin contoh siapa lagi?
Teacher	Rindam eats, Rindam makan apa?
	Ayo apalagi contohnya?
	Why you feel happy?
	Anyone else?
	What is difficult part in this subject?
	Bagian tersulit mana kamu tidak bisa
	dalam materi narrative text ini?
	Kenapa dengan cara baca, what is the
	problem?
Director	

Divergent questions play a vital role in fostering critical thinking, encouraging personal expression, and promoting active engagement with the material. The use of divergent questions aligns with Bloom's Taxonomy (1956), which categorizes higher-order thinking skills such as analysis, synthesis, and evaluation. The male teacher's approach, focusing on hypothetical scenarios and personal opinions, helps students

develop their critical thinking skills and connect questioning strategies significantly the material to real-life situations. The female teacher's emphasis on examples, experiences, and problem-solving encourages students to participate actively and reflect on their learning experiences.

Recent studies support the effectiveness of these strategies. Research by Kim and McDonough (2020) emphasizes that effective questioning strategies, including divergent questions, significantly enhance student engagement and critical thinking in EFL classrooms. Furthermore, a study by Tan (2021) highlights that a mix of convergent and divergent questions can lead to improved language acquisition and cognitive skills among students.

Both male and female teachers at SMKS Pasundan 1 Cianjur use questioning strategies that enhance student understanding, engagement, and participation. The male teacher's approach focuses more on content engagement with convergent questions, while the female teacher uses a mix of procedural and divergent questions to promote interaction and critical thinking.

The reason for male and female teachers used the questioning strategy

The data obtained reveal several reasons why male and female teachers employ questioning strategies at SMKS Pasundan 1 Cianjur. The following analysis explores these reasons in detail.

Questions can build and improve classroom interaction

Both male and female teachers use questions to enhance classroom interaction, making the learning process more active and motivating for students. The male teacher often asks stimulating questions related to the material, such as "What do you know about verbs?" to encourage critical thinking and ensure continuous engagement. Personal questions are also used to make students feel cared for, fostering better teacher-student interactions. Similarly, the female teacher employs questioning strategies to enhance interaction and make students more active participants in the classroom.

Chaudron (1988) highlights that classroom interaction includes behaviors such as questioning negotiation and answering, turn-taking, and feedback. **Ouestions** open communication channels between teachers and students, creating opportunities for student participation and engagement. Recent studies by Walsh and Sattes (2019) confirm that effective

classroom interaction and student engagement.

Question stimulate and nurture students' abilities and interests

Teachers use questioning strategies to develop students' abilities and knowledge. Questions that engage students prevent monotony and boredom, fostering interest and participation. This approach aligns with Piaget's constructivist principles (1973) and is supported by Hattie and Zierer (2019), who emphasize the role of questions in stimulating intellectual growth.

Questions encourage students to think and focus on the content of the lesson

Teachers use convergent questions to help students retain and understand material, prompting them to concentrate on the subject matter. Thoughtprovoking questions engage students in deeper levels of thinking, aligning with Bloom's Taxonomy (1956) and enhancing focus and critical thinking (McTighe & Willis, 2019).

Questions encourage students' participation in a lesson

Teachers use questions to enhance student participation. Questions help prevent students from becoming disengaged and ensure that all students have the opportunity to express their ideas. Questions stimulate student engagement and promote active participation in class discussions (Richard & Lockhart, 1996).

Richard and Lockhart (1996) propose that questions stimulate student engagement and promote active participation in class discussions. Relevant and challenging questions provide opportunities for students to contribute ideas, share perspectives, and engage in dialogue with peers. Vygotsky (1978) supports this, suggesting that learning is a social process facilitated through interaction with others. By encouraging class discussions through questions, teachers create social opportunities for interaction collaborative learning experiences. Recent research by Smith and Higgins (2020) highlights the role of questioning in promoting student participation interactive learning and environments. Aditva and Hadi (2022) state that teacher questioning strategies can influence student participation and learning outcomes, emphasizing the importance of using diverse questioning techniques.

Enable teachers to check students' understanding Teachers use questions to check student understanding and evaluate learning. Questions help identify gaps in knowledge and ensure students are paying attention. This strategy improves the quality of teaching and learning by allowing teachers to assess student comprehension (Richard & Lockhart, 1996). Formative assessment through questioning is crucial for improving student outcomes (Black & Wiliam, 2018).

These findings align with previous studies on gendered communication styles, suggesting that diverse questioning techniques enhance student engagement and learning outcomes (Kim & McDonough, 2020; Tan, 2021).

#### **CONCLUSION**

In conclusion, this study demonstrates that both male and female teachers at SMKS Pasundan 1 Cianjur effectively use questioning strategies to enhance classroom interaction in three sessions; questions at the beginning, middle, and end of lessons. Both genders use three main types of questions: procedural, convergent, and divergent. The study identifies several reasons why teachers employ these questioning strategies, including fostering and enhancing classroom interaction, stimulating and nurturing students' abilities and interests, encouraging critical thinking and focus on lesson content, promoting student participation, enabling teachers to assess students' understanding. However, notable differences in the types and frequency of questions used reflect underlying gender dynamics. Future research should explore these dynamics in diverse educational settings and develop targeted professional development programs to equip teachers with effective questioning techniques tailored to their classroom contexts. This study contributes to a deeper understanding of how gender influences teaching practices and provides a foundation for improving EFL education through strategic questioning.

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