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AN ASSESSMENT OF KATHARINE GELBER'S SPEAKING BACK ARGUMENT IN THE CONTEXT OF ETHNIC RUSSIANS LIVING IN ESTONIA

Bachelor's Thesis in Philosophy

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Introduction

Hate speech is a phenomenon which is widely spread and relevant in today's society. There are different definitions and approaches to the term "hate speech", but despite this, this pair of words has found wide use all over the world. As a starting point, the United Nations webpage offers a definition for hate speech which states the following: “In common language, “hate speech” refers to offensive discourse targeting a group or an individual based on inherent characteristics (such as race, religion or gender) and that may threaten social peace” (United Nations). Katharine Gelber proposes the following definition: “..., hate speech is a harmful speech, in particular speech that harms equal participation in democratic deliberation” (Gelber 2021: 393). This bachelor thesis focuses on assessing Katharine Gelber’s approach for combating hate speech.

Why is it important? As both of the definitions above show, hate speech includes some sort of harm or damage that is caused to the target. Hate speech has become a problem in liberal democracies where liberal foundations of free speech are being used in some cases for negative purposes to incite hatred. Harms occur as a consequence of hate speech acts which include inciting discrimination and causing the target's beliefs or behaviours to alter, at the same time promoting injustice or violence towards them (Gelber 2021: 398). This consequently affects the people experiencing hate speech, because hate speech is not just sharing ideas that might include a certain kind of hatred and derogatory attitude. Hate speech creates a situation where someone is being wronged on deceitful reason based on some kind of social category such as ethnicity, nationality or sexuality.

When engaging with other people it is possible to ignore or not pay attention to a lot of features of that person. But there is also an option to make the person's characteristics relevant if there is a desire to do it. Constantly drawing attention to these features such as ethnicity or nationality, then these characteristics are made relevant by the speaker when there really is no necessity to do it. Hate speech can be designed to induce or bring forward a broad range of various emotional effects or cognitive states in the listener such as shock, excitement, or pleasure (Brown 2017: 441). What can be concluded is that hate speech is not just offending somebody, it's a systematic way of making someone's everyday life harder and affecting their psychological well-being.

Here is an example of a 33-year old Iranian man who moved to Estonia to study and later started working in Estonia as a manager in a specific mechanical engineering project. After

five years working and studying in Estonia the man decided to leave Estonia as fast as possible due to the racial prejudices and verbal attacks which started to occur on a daily basis. An example of some phrases used towards the Iranian man were “Go home!”, “What are you doing here?” and “Black” for example. (Parksepp, 2019) This fairly direct example of discrimination and unequal treatment of a person due to his origin shows also how a person's life can be made uncomfortable and almost unlivable with hate speech having real-life consequences for the victim.

The spread of hate speech has caused governments to act, because hate speech is not tolerable and all members of society must be granted the right to a harassment free life (Gelber 2002: 96). Hate speech laws are speech restricting measures whose goal is to reduce hate speech circulating in society. By taking away people's right to say certain things and punishing them for saying particular things, it is possible to reduce the amount of hate speech (Gelber 2002: 131). Many countries in Europe, especially the ones which are governed by democratic values, have enacted laws over the past decades to fight against hate speech. In 2008 the European Union introduced a framework of laws in order to fight against certain forms of public incitement to hatred regarding racist and xenophobic expressions (European Commission). Based on the European Union's proposed framework in 2008, for example Germany banned all kinds of things related to Nazi symbols, as well as criminalised hate speech both in public space and on social media that incites hatred against someone's skin colour, religion, national or ethnic background (Glaun, 2021).

Broadly speaking there are 2 ways for combating hate speech. The first way is to enact laws restricting speech, as was previously seen in the case of Germany and the second is to find alternative ways to reduce hate speech. This bachelor thesis focuses on one alternative method, namely the speaking back approach developed by Katharine Gelber, which means providing institutional, educational and material help to the targets of hate speech (Gelber 2012: 53). Katharine Gelber proposed the speaking back argument as a counterweight to speech restricting hate speech laws. Speaking back represents a policy that provides marginalised people the opportunity to fight back against hate speakers by raising contemplating views in the public discourse so that disadvantaged groups or individuals can stand for themselves. (Gelber 2012: 52) There are certainly several other speech-restricting and speech-enabling policies that can be implemented for combating hate speech, but within the scope of this thesis I will focus only on Gelber's speaking back argument.

The aim of this bachelor's thesis is to assess whether the speaking back policy presented by Katharine Gelber would work in the Estonian context considering ethnic Russians living in Estonia as a minority. The thesis is divided into three major parts, in the first part I will introduce Gelber's speaking back argument and the reason why she is proposing an alternative method for combating hate speech. In section 1.1 I will give an overview of speech acts and the relation between speech acts and speaking back argument. Introducing speech act theory is important to create an understanding of what are the speech capabilities that are taken away from people who are experiencing hate speech. Then in section 1.2 I will introduce felicity conditions on which successful and unsuccessful utterances can be distinguished. Then in section 1.3 I will show what importance carries uptake and how hate speech deprives the target from getting the uptake.

In the second part I will be introducing the Estonian context. In section 2.1 I will introduce the historical viewpoint and relations between Estonian and people of Russian ethnicity. Section 2.2 creates a deeper understanding of the Estonian context and what are the peculiarities of this context. Section 2.3 is insight to the differences that distinguish Estonian context from other contexts where speaking back method possibly could work. After that I will show examples of harmful and discriminating speech towards Russian people, which have occurred in the recent past in Estonia. Through context creation and real-life examples, I will create an understanding of what is special about the Estonian context that differentiates Estonian context from other countries.

In the third section I will start by giving insight of what could the speaking back look like in Estonia and then I will move on to assess the speaking back approach in Estonian context to show how and why the speaking back approach fails in the Estonian context. My goal is to demonstrate that the universal speaking back method, which is providing help and resources for certain groups of minorities, would not work in the Estonian context due to the history of Estonia. Namely because the implementation of such an approach in Estonia would receive negative backlash from Estonian people and by boosting the voices of Estonian Russians there is a possibility of boosting the voices of propagandists which could become a matter of national security, considering the geographical location of Estonia and its eastern border with Russia.

1. Speaking back

In this section, I will describe Katharine Gelber's proposed argument for combating hate speech. According to Gelber, combating hate speech should not only be done by imposing

restrictive laws, but there are other ways that the government could possibly fight against spreading of hate speech. Katharine Gelber proposes a speaking back policy which means providing institutional, educational and material help to the targets of hate speech (Gelber 2012: 51). Speaking back policy provides marginalised people the opportunity to fight back against hate speakers by giving the minorities the platform to participate actively in public discourse so that disadvantaged groups or individuals can make their voices heard (Gelber 2012: 52-53).

The proposed help includes for instance providing victims of hate speech with the resources to carry out campaigns to raise awareness about racist prejudices in order to combat racist stereotypes and writing articles or publishing advertisements in the media (Gelber 2012: 53). It is important to introduce the speaking back approach, because this approach forms the core of this thesis and will be later applied to the Estonian context in order to find out whether speaking back, which is presented as a universal theory, has taken into account all the possibilities that exist in different countries in different contexts and is still applicable in Estonia.

In order to understand the need for an alternative way for combating hate speech I will introduce what Gelber thinks the problem currently is with the hate speech laws. Hate speech restricting laws are not addressing the real problems of hate speech and they are not as successful as they could be in ameliorating the harms which are caused by hate speech (Gelber 2002: 1). Which means that hate speech laws are indeed prohibiting the saying of certain things, but they do not engage with the hate speaker and do not change people's views and racist prejudices are still widespread.

Creating an analogy with preventative medicine, a person who eats a lot of fatty foods increases the chances of getting a heart disease. One way of dealing with heart disease is to have a surgery to help the person. The other way is to change lifestyle and eating habits. Without changing the habits, the person will still end up getting heart disease because there is no change to the living habits. This can be implied to the relation of hate speech and speaking back policy. Implementing laws does not necessarily change the opinions of some people, it just restricts them from saying some things that are considered hate speech due to enacted legislation.

To combat hate speech, it is necessary to bring a change in people's views, and according to Katharine Gelber, this cannot be done successfully with laws. Instead, it could be done with alternative methods, such as the speaking back method. Gelber (2002) believes that speech

restricting laws are not directly addressing broader harms caused by hate speech. These broader harms include psychological harms and reducing people's various life opportunities, such as opportunities to get a job. Speech-restricting laws are more focused on the individualised hate speech incidents and resolving them which isn't necessarily helpful in reducing hate speech.

As stated before, the speaking back approach means providing resources for groups of minorities in order to ameliorate the harms of hate speech. The purpose of this approach is to help the people who are being persecuted to fight back against hate speech and thereby fight against the effects of hate speech. (Gelber 2012: 52) This means that the purpose of the policy is to give the people the opportunity to fight back immediately. By counteracting hate speech at the exact moment hate speech occurs, it would decrease marginalisation and discrimination which in turn reduces the negative effects of hate speech.

Speaking back is a speech-based approach. There are other approaches which fight prejudices and discrimination and are related to combating hate speech, but Katharine Gelber's speaking back policy is focusing especially on speech and on speech capabilities in certain contexts and how the speech capabilities are harmed and can be enhanced. (Gelber 2012: 55) Speaking back is a capabilities-oriented approach which means that all the help that is ought to be provided by the government to the minorities is done in order to defend or to provide the people with the resources so their speech capabilities could be enhanced or protected (Gelber 2002: 117). This means that speaking back policy would give people who are being discriminated the feeling of inclusion among other members of society.

Why is speaking back a more effective way to fight against hate speech? In all likelihood probably speaking back policy would not eliminate hate speech from happening again. It is also not believable that it would ever be possible to eliminate hate speech from the world with some method, but I am not focusing on those possibilities right now. My goal is to show that the speaking back approach is successful in combating hate speech in such a way that it brings the problem of hate speech closer to people and it raises general awareness on the subject of hate speech. The purpose of this policy is to swift the focus from blocking speech possibilities for hate speakers to enhance the speaking possibilities for the targets (Gelber 2012: 51-52). By acknowledging hate speech and its harms it is possible to understand what are the effects of hate speech and how hate speech causes harm to the victims.

Gelber's proposed speech policy focuses on enhancing capabilities and would increase citizens' participation in expressive activities. By recognizing speech as a conduct, it creates

the possibilities to explore different ways how speech capacities could be enhanced or protected in order to help hate speech victims and reduce hate speech. Giving the victims of hate speech the opportunity to stand for themselves creates an opportunity for them to firstly develop and strengthen their capabilities to perform speech acts, and it also creates an opportunity for them to fight back against hate speech on a public level. By receiving help from the state, it is possible to successfully fight against hate speech, which helps both the self-development and the refutation of misconceptions in society.

1.1 Speech acts

In this subsection I will be focusing on speech acts and introduce the possibilities of what can be done with speech. This is important in order to make the speaking back theory more understandable. I will start with introducing Austin's speech act theory and in the second part I will move on to connecting speech act theory with felicity conditions and uptake which includes emphasis on circumstances, understanding and communication between two or more people. Introducing speech act theory is necessary for understanding speech capabilities and how speech capabilities are taken away from the victims of hate speech.

Introducing the speech act theory, I am relying on J. L. Austin's proposed speech theory which states that when speaking, a person is not just verbally saying words, but during speaking, a person is committing a speech act. Each utterance made is some sort of speech act, which conveys information while performing a task. Uttering a sentence is not describing something, the utterance itself contains an action that is being performed. (Austin 1962: 5-6) Speech acts have an important role in the thesis, because in order to create an understanding why there is a necessity for the speaking back policy to come into force, it's necessary to create an understanding of how people are able to perform speech acts.

Austin differentiates between three sorts of speech acts and I will illustrate the three sorts of speech acts with the example of a police officer, who pulls over a speeding driver. Firstly, there are the locutionary acts which is the act of saying something. (Austin 1962: 94) Locutionary acts are utterances at the simplest level, they are verbally expressed thoughts. Let's imagine a police officer pulling over a speeding driver and the driver greets the police officer with a sentence "Here is 100 euros". At first glance this sentence is just an utterance, a locutionary act, but the driver also commits an illocutionary act, because in saying those words in that order, the driver performs an action (Hornsby, Langton 1998: 24). In this example the action is bribing the police officer. Moving on, a perlocutionary act means that by saying some words,

certain consequences or results follow (*ibid.*). So when the driver is successful with bribing the officer then the driver escapes a fine. Meaning that by saying those exact words "Here is 100 euros" there followed a certain consequence, which in this case was escaping a fine which means the driver had performed a perlocutionary act (*ibid.*). As can be seen, the distinction between illocutionary acts and perlocutionary acts can be made based on the act itself. Illocutionary act means performing an act simultaneously in saying a sentence (Langton 1993: 300). Perlocutionary acts are acts which come as a consequence by saying something (*ibid.*).

Having now found out that while uttering a sentence a person is performing an action it is possible to conclude that words and utterances can be attributed great influence. For example, let's consider a situation where a company's owner has a meeting with a worker in company facilities and the owner says to the worker "You are fired!". This three-word utterance in this certain context means that the worker is released from the duties. The company owner has the institutional power over the worker because at some point they have previously made a contract. But if the company owner or whoever would walk on a street and approach a random person and utter "You are fired!" then this wouldn't have the same effect or same consequences because at this point the circumstances are not sufficient for this speech act to work to fire a random person on a street somewhere.

What can be concluded is that a speech act alone is not enough for a sentence to have its intended effect. Utterances, regardless of their content, purpose or consequences, are uttered in a specific context at a specific time. Austin emphasised that it's important not to study the sentences alone, but the focus should be on the speech situation or so-called total speech act (Austin 1962: 138). In a sense that individual sentences get their meaning from the surrounding environment and different circumstances, which means that same sentences can have different meanings in different contexts. Performing a successful utterance derives from the statements or utterances coherence with well-known facts or laws (Austin 1962: 139). Speech acts can be assessed on the basis of the act itself meaning if the environment and the utterance meet the criteria and there exists an understanding between both the speaker and the hearer then the setting matches with the necessary conditions for the utterance to be successful. (Gelber 2002: 52)

1.2 Felicity conditions

I have come to understand that speech is not just describing something, but it is possible to perform speech acts with sentences. Also, I concluded that sentences need certain conditions

for their success, so that they are able to perform the task they are meant to fulfil. In the following subsections of felicity conditions and uptake, I will look at the ways how hate speech reduces the target's speech capabilities, more precisely by what means hate speakers take advantage of the environment when committing hate speech acts. Finally, I plan to show how hate speech reduces speech capabilities and in what way speaking back policy combats this speech against reducing capabilities.

Felicity conditions are conditions in which the utterances are successful, infelicities are failed actions. When looking into large amounts of utterances it is possible to come to a conclusion why some locutionary acts fail in certain situations and others don't and thereby bring forward the infelicities. Austin (1962) proposes felicity conditions for uttering sentences which need to be satisfied in order for the illocution to work. This means certain utterances in this particular context need to be consistent with known facts and practices in the situation which has developed over time. The situation of exchanging sentences must be understandable by both sides of the conversation and take into account what the other person has said. Furthermore, everybody involved in the dialogue must have sincere intentions, which means not to do harm to another person on purpose. Since people's ideas and opinions can differ drastically, everybody should be treated equally and without prejudices. Finally, a person's behaviour must match the sentences uttered. If a person's utterances fail to satisfy one or more conditions, then the utterance turns out to be infelicity.

1.3 Uptake

Speaking of speech acts, for any illocutionary act in order to be successful it is essential to achieve uptake which means reaching a mutual understanding between a speaker and the listener (Austin 1962: 138). Uptake is necessary for performing successful illocutionary acts because in this way both sides of the conversation understand the action which the utterance is intended to perform. When a speaker is trying to perform an illocutionary act and the hearer understands this action by the speaker, then it is enough for the speaker to be successful with the action. (Hornsby, Langton 1998: 25)

When people are communicating, and their utterances satisfy the felicity conditions and there exists uptake between both sides then it is possible for the people to have a meaningful conversation. With the current laws a person's ability to perform an illocutionary act is overlooked, which creates an opportunity for some to take advantage of this situation and silence the targets (Hornsby, Langton 1998: 21). If there is no uptake from one of the sides,

then the illocutionary act made by someone does not perform the task it is meant to do. For example, I am warning my friend that his bike is getting stolen at the exact moment of speaking. If his reaction to my utterance is, for example, laughing or replying with a mocking comment, then there was no uptake between us, and my friend did not understand my illocutionary act. In order for a speaker to perform an illocutionary act there has to be an understanding by the other person of what the first person, the speaker is trying to do.

Hornsby and Langton (1998) claim that silencing can be seen as a failure to perform an illocutionary act. This failure derives from the illocutionary disablement which means that the acts that speakers wish to perform are unspeakable for them. Some people are unable to perform speech acts due to failing to satisfy the felicity conditions or they do not get uptake in the conversation. They can utter the words, but they are unable to perform the intended illocutionary act with the utterance. For example, a woman who lives under Islamic law wants to divorce from the husband but even by saying the words "I want a divorce". The woman has no authority under Islamic law, so the illocutionary act made by the woman fails because there is no uptake from the other side or the man she is married to, and this means she is unable to divorce.

If the utterance cannot satisfy the felicity conditions, it means that this utterance is not able to fulfil the task that the illocutionary act was intended to convey (Austin 1962: 16). If illocutionary acts have an uptake condition, then in order for someone to perform an act they need to be recognised performing them. Due to this it is possible to silence people by restricting them from getting uptake or by ignoring their attempts to perform speech acts. By doing so, the person whose uptake is being restricted or whose attempts are being ignored has speech capabilities disabled and this is exactly what hate speech does. Hate speech stops one side of the conversation from getting uptake, and by creating a situation where one participant in the conversation is deprived of the uptake or ignored then the person does not have the capacity to perform illocutionary acts. Which in turn means that this person is not able to perform intended actions with sentences.

So far I have concluded that speech is not just uttering words, but speech includes the capacity for a person to perform speech acts. Based on the previous subsections it can be also concluded that hate speech deprives the victim capacities to perform action with their utterances. By inhibiting someone's ability to speak this simultaneously inhibits their development of individual capabilities. (Gelber 2002: 47) As can be concluded, it is possible to do things with

words which will ultimately cause people to act or change their mental states on the basis of utterances which have been expressed. The speaking back policy combating hate speech would be enacted with the main focus on enhancing speech capabilities for the hate speech victims whose speech capacities have been limited (Gelber 2002: 89-90).

The purpose of this speech policy is to help people who need help to develop or maintain their individual capabilities, which are the foundation of living a good life. Hate speech policy which focuses on protecting the victims' capabilities is justified on the basis that discrimination and silencing have a harmful effect on the people experiencing it (Gelber 2002: 118). If hate speech prevents people from performing certain speech acts, such as illocutionary acts, then hate speech laws do not help people regain those capabilities to perform speech acts. Therefore, a good way to combat hate speech would be the speaking back approach, which does not focus on the punishment of hate speakers, but focuses precisely on enhancing speech capabilities of the victims, in order to enhance their possibilities to perform illocutionary acts to speak back.

2. Estonian context

Having created an overview of the speaking back argument presented by Katharine Gelber, it is time to move on to introducing the Estonian context. Estonian context is the context on which the speaking back approach will be applied to. The purpose of doing this is to assess whether speaking back policy would work in Estonian context. I will start by giving a brief insight on Estonian history over the past one hundred and twenty years in order to create a base on which to build the Estonian context. I will proceed to describe the Estonian context and what are the peculiarities of the Estonian context in relation to people of Russian ethnic origin[1]. Then I will show how and why Estonian context differs from other contexts and after that I will see how the speaking back approach would fit into the Estonian context and whether it could potentially work or not.

2.1 Estonian history

During a time period between 1940-1991 Estonia was twice occupied by the Soviet Union. The first occupation was in 1940-1941 and the second occupation took place 1944-1991, lasting over forty years. Both occupations were forced on Estonia which means that Estonia, along

[1] In this work, I will be describing Russian people living in Estonia with different expressions, such as the people of Russian ethnicity, Estonian Russians, Russian people or the people of Russian origin/ethnic origin. All these terms describe the Russian-speaking population living in Estonia. When talking about Russian citizens who live in Estonia, I use the term Russian citizens which derives from their Russian citizenship.

with other Baltic states, was occupied by force. As a consequence of occupations, major changes were carried out in the organisation and functioning of the state. Different political restrictions were established, new taxes were introduced and numerous crimes were committed against Estonian people. (Eesti 1940-1991)

During the second occupation which started in 1944 similar economic and political orders were brought back which were enforced in 1940, but this time with an even more ambitious plan to turn Estonia into an industrial country. This also included the plan to bring more than 150 000 workers from the Soviet Union to live and work in Estonia, so that an industrial revolution in the country would be possible. Workers who were brought here were promised free land and housing. From the 1950's, collective farms were created, and people of Estonian origin were repressed by demanding high taxes and unnatural living conditions. This time is summed up by the word stagnation when the living conditions for Estonians became particularly bad. (Eesti 1940-1991)

Since the 1980's, when liberalisation and economic restructuring took place in the Soviet Union, living conditions in Estonia also became slightly better, and terror against Estonians reduced. The massive immigration in the early 1950's and 60's had a huge effect on the ethnic composition of Estonia. If Estonians made up 95% of the population in Estonia in 1944, as a result of russification in 1989, this percentage of native Estonians among the population had dropped to nearly 61%. Eventually after the collapse of the Soviet Union, the Republic of Estonia regained its independence on August 20, 1991. (Eesti 1940-1991)

2.2 Estonian context explanation

Having introduced Estonian history, in this section I will be exploring the special features of the Estonian context and how these different factors that are specific to the Estonian context ultimately affect the application of speaking back in Estonia. It has to be noted that I don't think that the speaking back argument would not work only in Estonia, but speaking back has a big chance of failing in other former Soviet Union republics that are independent states today. Although the population of ethnic Russians living in these republics differs in these countries then the same problems which will be described in the upcoming section can be found on a smaller or larger extent also in Latvia and Lithuania for example and in other countries that emerged after the collapse of the Soviet Union. Nevertheless, I focus more precisely on the Estonian context and evaluate the speaking back argument within the Estonian context.

To start with the hate speech that has occurred towards people of Russian ethnicity in recent past, in 2015, an Estonian politician made a statement on social media about people of Russian nationality living in Estonia, using the derogatory Estonian term "tibla" to refer to Estonian Russians, and found that they "parasitise" in this country without having adapted to the local culture and values (Vasli, 2019). This is an example of hate speech which has discriminatory characteristics embedded in the utterance, which increases the inequality between two ethnic groups, Estonians and Russians living in Estonia. As the example of an Estonian politician who said his utterance on live TV, it had a strong response from people of Russian ethnicity.

During the Soviet occupation thousands of people from the Soviet Union were moved to Estonia whose descendants still live here nowadays. There are approximately three hundred thousand people living in Estonia who are from Russian ethnicity or have Russian ancestors. Some of these people do not speak Estonian, some of these people do speak Estonian, and some of these people also have Estonian citizenship (Dougherty, Kaljurand 2015: 4-5). Since the population of Estonia is small, approximately 1.35 million people, the minority group of 300,000 people constitutes a rather significant part of the total population of Estonia.

Although recent studies on demographics in Estonia are implying that inter-ethnic relationships are improving, especially in the eastern part of Estonia, the socioeconomic and political inequalities between two ethnic groups have increased over time. For the people of Russian ethnicity, it is more difficult to find jobs outside of eastern Estonia, especially in places where the percentage of Russian speakers is significantly smaller than the Estonian speaking community, such as southern and western Estonia. As a result of recent studies organised by the Estonian government, it has been found that trust in the state apparatus is significantly lower among Russians living in Estonia than it is among Estonians. The negative affiliation of the people of Russian ethnicity towards NATO and the West also stands out in the northeastern part of Estonia. (Dougherty, Kaljurand 2015: 4-6)

In 1991 when Estonia regained its independence then there were enacted restrictive measurements on obtaining Estonian citizenship by the state. This was done in order to maintain and defend the Estonian nationality, culture and the language. (Cianetti 2019: 39-40) Estonian government did not want to hand out citizenship to every person that migrated to Estonia between 1940 and 1990, because giving people the citizenship eligibles people to take part in political processes such as elections. The purpose of such activity was to limit the opportunities of people who migrated here from Russia to participate in elections, in order to

keep the politics Estonian-centric, which would have as little influence as possible from Russian citizens and Russian Federation (Cianetti 2019: 40).

In the case of Estonia, it is also necessary to mention the media consumption of the Russian people living in Estonia. Large majority of the Russian speaking community living in Estonia has followed Russian media outlets for decades. After the start of Ukrainian war in 2022, propagandistic and biased views about war are filling the Russian media space, which shape the worldview of people who consume Russian media, also the worldview of those who live outside the borders of the Russian Federation, but follow the same media outlets. (Dougherty, Kaljurand 2015: 9) This means that those people who do not speak Estonian and follow Russian media are people who live in Estonia but move around in a different information space. Which in turn means that these people may have adopted views that match the narratives spread in the Russian media, rather than what is actually truth.

This could mean that these people base their decisions and choices on what they hear and see from the Russian media, not on what is really happening or what information is being shared in Estonia and western countries. By conducting research among Russian people living in Estonia, it turned out that the Russian media has successfully convinced many Russian speakers with the Kremlin's description of the conflict in Ukraine which was caused by "fascists" supported by the West (Dougherty, Kaljurand 2015: 14). Such people who physically live in Estonia but move in a different informational space could be a possible threat, because they most likely are not integrating into Estonian society and they are more likely to support pro-Russian worldview and narratives which they obtain from Russian media.

The integration between the two ethnic nationalities is hindered to some extent by the negative attitude of Estonians towards the Russians living in Estonia. Many Estonian people tend to have a negative attitude towards people from Russian ethnicity, which derives from the occupation introduced in the second chapter. There are examples where Russian people living in Estonia are referred to as "occupiers" (Dougherty, Kaljurand 2015: 17). Which shows how strong the mark the occupation left on Estonian people and the negative attitude towards Estonian Russians is the consequence of the shared trauma which Estonian people went through in the second half of the twentieth century.

On an Estonian news portal, a Russian mother living in Estonia expressed her opinion about the attitude towards Russians in Estonia. More specifically, the parent wrote how she has felt arrogant behaviour towards her because of nationality. The woman also pointed out that there

have been situations where her 9-year-old child's schoolmates do not want to visit the child because he is Russian. Her child has also been looked down upon, and his peers have attributed this to the fact that Russia once occupied Estonia. The mother points out in her article that adults who speak negatively of Russians often do not think that their children can hear it and will form an opinion based on it. (Eesti…,2014) This is also how a negative attitude is passed down through the generations.

People of Russian nationality have admitted that they feel unequal treatment compared to Estonian people, and they also feel that they have missed out on things that were promised to them, such as more support from the state in eastern Estonia. (Dougherty, Kaljurand 2015: 18) The above explains why some people of Russian nationality prefer to follow Russian media channels and communicate in Russian and live in areas where the number of Russian speaking population is higher. They have a feeling of inferiority and do not feel supported by the government, so it is easier for them to live in an environment where the number of Russian speakers is higher.

Also, Russians living in Estonia may feel excluded as a result of the steps taken by the Estonian government lately. For example, by 2027, all of Estonia will switch to the Estonian-language curriculum, which means that studying in Russian will be abandoned. Also the topic has been discussed in the light of the Russo-Ukrainian war, whether the right to vote in local elections should be taken away from citizens of Russia and Belarus who live here permanently (Raistee, 2022). The new government coalition reached an agreement in April 2023 that a legal framework had to be found to suspend the right of citizens of the Russian Federation and Belarus to vote in local government elections. The coalition shared a common opinion that the constitution will not be changed, which concluded that if it is possible to suspend the right to vote without changing the constitution, it will be done, otherwise the right to vote will remain. (Klementi, 2023)

2.2 Contextual differences

Having established Estonian context quite thoroughly I will shortly show why Estonian context differs from other contexts or countries such as the United States, Australia, Germany or any other country. I will present three arguments, the first one is geographical argument, the purpose of which is to show the weakened position of Estonia in front of Russia. The second argument is a historical argument related to power, and the third argument is related to

information and the ability to spread information and thereby influence people. This is all done in order to prove that Estonian context is unique among other contexts.

Estonia is a neighbour with Russia which means that persons of Russian ethnicity living in Estonia always have their homeland or the land where the ancestors lived, close by. Before the beginning of the war in Ukraine many people of Russian ethnicity living in Estonia crossed the Estonian-Russian border to shop for cheaper goods or gas on a daily basis. People of Russian ethnicity and Russian citizens are used to the comfort zone that in case of something inappropriate or unpleasant should happen, it is possible to quickly return to Russia and continue living there. The comfort zone also derives from the fact that Russian speaking people can manage their daily tasks without speaking Estonian, at the same time living in Estonia. It shows that the people of Russian origin who live in Estonia are not too motivated to integrate into Estonian society, because it is possible to live without integrating or learning the language.

For example, comparing the Estonian context to minority groups in the United States then no matter how populous or widespread certain minority groups are, their home countries do not pose a threat to American independence. The home countries of the representatives of minorities living in the United States are located far from the American continent, and even if they are not, for example, Mexico, then Mexico does not pose a military threat to America. This is because America is a superpower, which it would be extremely difficult for smaller countries to fight against. In the case of Estonia, the situation is exactly the opposite. In Estonian context, Estonian neighbour Russia is a superpower, a large group of Russian people are living in Estonia and Estonia's military capability is several times lower than Russia's.

Also, what distinguishes the Estonian context from other contexts is the history, which was viewed earlier in this thesis. Namely, if we compare Estonia with America, where there are examples of discrimination towards the Spanish speaking community, especially Mexican people, then Spanish speaking people have never been in power in America. This means that the minority group has not had power in the country and then lost that power at some point in time. In the case of Estonia, this precedent exists, precisely because the Soviet Union was in power in Estonia in the majority of the second part of the 20th century, meaning that in Estonia the Russians are a subpopulation, who once were the ruling ethnicity. This, in turn, could justify the negative attitude among Estonian people towards Russian people living currently in Estonia because native Estonian people still remember the times when this subpopulation was in power.

The last point is about information sharing which could also be related to the geographical location of Estonia, but it is more related to the capacities in relation to a smaller and larger country. Namely, it has been found that the Russians use large units of internet trolls, whose goal is to express support in different social media platforms all over the world for the Russian regime, as well as, for example, to justify the war in Ukraine. The goal of these trolls is to influence public opinion as much as possible in a way which is favourable to the Russian state to pursue its goals. This includes examples of social media attacks against various famous politicians and social figures, what can be categorised as information operations aimed at damaging the reputation and credibility of these individuals. (“Troll..., 2022) This is again an example of Russia's tremendous abilities, because having internet-troll units set in place in order to change opinions and perceptions circulating on social media, then Russian internet-trolls could possibly influence Estonia if necessary.

3. Speaking back in Estonian context

So far, I have introduced the speaking back approach presented by Katharine Gelber and I have introduced the Estonian history and context on which the speaking back approach will be applied in order to assess whether the speaking back approach would work in Estonian context or not. First, I will present my vision of what the speaking back approach could be in Estonia, and then I will present my reasoning why the speaking back approach would not work in Estonia, even if this approach could work in some other countries.

Recalling again, the speaking back approach consisted of providing material, institutional and educational help to minorities in order to enhance their speech capabilities. Some examples were publishing articles in the press and speaking out in the media to raise awareness about hate speech and helping the minority group to stand up for themselves. This would be done in order to enhance the speech capabilities and overall opportunities for these people in order to improve their well-being and inclusion in society.

In the context of Estonia, it could look like something like the state investing money in these regions where the majority of Russian speaking people live, such as Ida-Virumaa county, in order to increase work and study opportunities there. It would also mean conducting a large-scale integration campaign and promoting Russian people and culture with the aim of creating a feeling of inclusion for the people of Russian ethnicity living in Estonia. These kinds of measurements would most likely increase Estonian Russians' faith in the direction of the

Estonian government and make people associate more with Estonian topics, language and culture.

3.1 Why does speaking back fail in Estonian context?

In this subsection I will try to show that the Estonian context has some specialities compared to other contexts which Gelber's universal speaking back theory hasn't noticed. As a result of these contextual differences, it would not be possible to apply the speaking back approach in Estonia. I will present three main problems that the speaking back approach encounters in the Estonian context and I will also consider some responses to each problem to see what could be possibly done to overcome the problems.

3.1.1 Resentment

Firstly, there is the problem of resentment because if the government of Estonia were to uplift people of Russian ethnicity, there would be backlash from people of Estonian nationality. By providing the people of Russian ethnicity the resources and the necessary tools in order to enhance their living conditions and greater possibilities to make statements in a public space it would receive some sort of resentment. Estonian people would not understand the government's strong support for Estonian Russians since there are places and problems elsewhere in Estonia where resources and finances could be directed.

Furthermore, if the government was to direct money to certain regions where there are large proportions of Estonian Russians living such as Ida-Virumaa, then this too would bring out opposition among the Estonian people, because taxpayers would not see the reason why the government prefers one certain region over others. In order for taxpayers not to have strong opposition with the people living in Ida-Virumaa, it is necessary to reach a situation where directing a large amount of money there is justified and clearly understandable to Estonian people. This means the taxpayers see the goal that is being pursued by the government with this kind of money allocation.

But still despite the possible necessity to direct money to northeastern part of Estonia in order to integrate the people living there into Estonian society, Estonian people would feel this kind of channelling of money is unnecessary and that people of Russian ethnicity living in Estonia not deserving the support and benefits that they could potentially get. In the current situation, it is difficult to make the taxpayer understand the justification for such support because the many people of the 300,000 Russian speaking population living in Estonia see themselves as

Russians. Nearly three quarters of people of Russian origin living in Estonia are moving in the Russian information space daily and many of those people classify Estonia as home or the place they are living, but they still see Russia as their motherland (Dougherty, Kaljurand 2015: 4-6).

Approximately a third of all people of Russian ethnicity living in Estonia are integrated into the Estonian community and can speak Estonian and Russian language, but there are another two thirds from which half cannot speak Estonian and another half are Russian citizens (Dougherty, Kaljurand 2015: 7-8). Which is an indication that these people are not interested in integrating into Estonian society, because as found earlier in Chapter 2, in the areas along the border between Estonia and Russia, there is a large Russian-speaking population who can manage their daily tasks by communicating in Russian. Which means that these people have no direct need to learn Estonian and a significant amount of them have no intention to do it.

The resentment that would arise as a result of the issues discussed in the previous paragraph would be a problem because by giving funding and resources to the Russian speaking minority who are not willing to integrate in Estonian society, would enhance the division that exists between two ethnic groups living in Estonia. This could lead to increased hate speech and conflicts among the representatives of two groups which in turn leads to polarisation. People of Russian nationality may start to look more towards Russia and antipathy among Estonians towards Russian people increases. Overall this kind of situation leads to social unrest, which can eventually turn out to be a problem for the state.

In the following paragraphs, I will compare Estonia and Germany to highlight the differences about the backlash between the two countries. It does not have significant importance to which country the context of Estonia is compared to, because the same conclusions will be also reached by comparing Estonia with other countries from different continents. The largest minority group after ethnic Germans living in Germany are Turks, people of Turkish roots (Tinc, 2021). Around three million Turks, estimated 4% of the whole German population, live in Germany and approximately half of them do not have a German citizenship (*ibid*.). Germany has taken a new direction with the new government to make the naturalisation process easier for people of non-German origin and providing furthermore protection for minorities and people representing different religions (Abdelaziz, 2021).

In the light of the German example, it is possible to understand that the country has introduced measures with the aim of including the largest possible number of people physically living in German territory in its society, so that the largest possible number of people have the right to

vote. The new government got its mandate and support from the citizens of Germany, which means that German citizens support this kind of policy and find it necessary to involve as many people living in Germany to be included in political processes as possible.

This is where the distinguishing feature emerges compared to the Estonian context. Namely, the people of Germany and other Western European countries are more receptive to the upliftment of minorities and giving them wider opportunities, because the people of Germany have not been under Turkish rule in recent history. As mentioned in the previous chapter, the people of Estonia have lived through two occupations by the Soviet Union in the previous century, as a result of which thousands of Estonians were killed, and the Estonian people were repressed for several decades. For this reason, it is also understandable why Estonia might experience a stronger backlash if the state were to implement a policy that included supporting people of Russian ethnicity in Estonia. Estonian citizens still remember the Soviet Union times and things that happened, so the resentment derives from the fear and the shared experience that people have.

3.1.2 Propaganda

The second reason why the speaking back approach would not work in Estonian context is the possibility of boosting the voices of propagandists. It has been stated that over three quarters of the 300 000 Russian speaking population living in Estonia are following Russian media outlets on a daily basis (Dougherty, Kaljurand 2015: 4). The reason why the speaking back argument fails in Estonian context is associated with speech because by boosting voices of Estonian Russians, there is also a possibility of boosting voices of propagandists. Thus, by helping the people of Russian ethnicity and helping them to improve their speaking opportunities, these people will have a wide sounding board, and on the example of Estonia, some Russian people living in Estonia who do not share Estonian and democratic values, could use this opportunity to spread propagandist pro-Russian views that they obtained from following the Russian media.

Estonian Russians who are following Russian media outlets live in different information fields and they are not so much following the information that is being shared in Estonia. This means that the information they receive does not come from the government of the country they are living in, but from elsewhere. (Dougherty, Kaljurand 2015: 15) Views of the people who follow the Russian media on a daily basis are not influenced by Estonian politics and the western values represented by the Estonian state. If Russian people living in Estonia already follow

Russian media, they receive everything they need from Russian media, including entertainment and news. This means that they are not following Estonian media channels and Estonian news. This is a danger, however, because the Russian media tends to be biased and distributes propagandistic messages, with the purpose to justify and promote Russian politics at the same time relating negatively with Western countries.

Examples of presenting biased information about various events occur on Russian media daily. For example, during a commercial break in a Russian news channel an ad appeared which seeked justification for Russia invading Ukraine and stated that Ukraine, a country which represents Western values, prevents Russia from entering Crimea which has been part of Russia since its annexation in 2014. (Dougherty, Kaljurand 2015: 9-10) This is just one example of Russian media affecting the people's worldview and creating an understanding that is false, but at the same time believed by many people both living in Russia and in other countries outside of Russia.

Propaganda is a problem because it creates misconceptions among people. People who get their information from Russian media channels tend to establish a pro-Russian mindset, because they have no alternative sources from which to acquire information. Since the Russian news channels are under the control of the state and distribute information under strict control, the people who consume it have a high tendency to obtain false information. This is crucial because approximately three quarters of the Estonian Russian population follow Russian media, which means that by boosting the voices of people of Russian ethnicity there exists a possibility of propagandistic ideas to spread in Estonia. Which in turn does not allow people of Russian ethnicity to integrate into Estonian society, but rather makes them associate more with views presented in Russian media and Russian propaganda. As a result, distrust towards the Estonian government and the media could grow, which in turn could affect domestic security, because spreading the Kremlin's ideas in Estonia would weaken the Estonian state in the eyes of some people.

It is impossible to stop the spread of Russian media machines and propaganda, but it is possible to create something to oppose it. In 2015, the Estonian government decided to create a new TV channel, ETV+, which is a Russian-language channel that broadcasts both news and series in Russian language. ETV+ was created with the aim of including Russian-speaking people in the Estonian media sphere, offering them an alternative way to receive news, which would reduce their need to consume Russian media. (Dougherty, Kaljurand 2015: 12-13) This was a step

towards inclusion, so that Russian speakers would not feel separated or excluded from Estonian society.

The creation of the ETV+ channel has been a good way to approach the Russian-speaking population, but at the same time, the Russian speaking population is still preferring to Russian media outlets. Because Russian media offers such a large number of different programs, shows, and news that there is simply more to choose from. Since people have no previous experience with monitoring Estonian media, they are not so easily willing to move from one information room to another. This means that Estonian Russian-language media space and Russia's Russian-language media space differ in terms of content, and Russian-speaking people tend to prefer the media that they have been following for decades. Therefore, it is difficult to change the habits and the worldview of these people, and if these people are given a greater possibility to speak in the public discourse, a precedent may arise when propagandist pro-Russian ideas will start spreading among other things.

3.1.3 Security

In the form of Russia, there is always an existing danger next to Estonia which derives from the proximity. Therefore, the implementation of the speaking back policy in Estonia and most likely in other former Soviet Union republics also is complicated. Mainly because Russia is a neighbour of these countries, which means a direct possible threat from the Russian Federation if something would cause some sort of damage to the Russian population who are living in the countries outside Russian Federation.

This coincides with the previous resentment and propaganda problems, because these are situations where conflicts could potentially start. These conflicts may arise after the state starts to implement, for example, the speaking back approach. When boosting the speech capabilities of Russian people, then some sort of resentment will arise and this resentment leads to dissatisfaction, which could potentially lead to conflicts between the representatives of the Russian and Estonian ethnicity and also Estonian people conflicting with the Estonian government. In both of these examples, the disorder would create a situation that could easily be exploited by the Russian Federation.

In the Estonian example, Russia is right beside the eastern border and has many times greater capabilities both militarily and in terms of population than Estonia will ever have. As can be seen from the example of Internet trolls mentioned earlier, Russia also has a desire to interfere

in the internal affairs of other countries and influence them in a favourable way. Also, the context of Estonia cannot be compared to other countries because in the example of Estonia and Russia, the home country of the largest ethnic minority group living in Estonia is located directly next to Estonia. Thereby enhancing the speech capabilities of Russian people living in Estonia would be more dangerous due to Estonian geographical location and size of the Russian speaking community living in Estonia.

In addition, if violent conflicts between the Estonian and Russian people would start to appear as a result of enhancing the speech capabilities of Russians people, then it could become a matter of national security. Namely, it is known that Russia has adopted a law which stipulates that the Russian Federation is obliged to protect its citizens outside the country's borders (Wild, 2008). This shows how conflicts which may occur as a result of implementing the speaking back policy can end up with countermeasures by the Russian Federation in order to protect its members living in Estonia, which in the worst-case scenario could end with a military invasion of Estonia. Therefore, it is reasonable both in Estonia and in other republics that emerged after the collapse of the Soviet Union to pursue other kinds of integration policies. Because even if implementing the speaking back policy works in some countries then in Estonian context it could potentially lead to conflicts, which in the end can turn out to be much more dangerous than the desired outcomes of the policy.

Conclusion

In this section, I will summarise the bachelor's thesis and its conclusions. The thesis focused on assessing whether the speaking back policy presented by Katharine Gelber would work in a context like Estonia. I started by introducing hate speech, which is a growing problem in today's society. Hate speech causes harm to victims, which in turn diminishes the target's speech capabilities and takes away their feeling of inclusion in society. I found that there are two ways to combat hate speech, one is speech restricting laws and the other is using alternative approaches such as the speaking back approach.

In the first chapter I introduced the speaking back approach which means providing the minorities with educational, institutional and material help in order enhance their speech capabilities. The purpose of this policy is to give the minorities the possibility to speak out in public, thereby fighting against hate speech and ameliorating the harms of hate speech. By raising people's awareness and fighting against negative racist stereotypes publicly, it is possible to reduce harm of hate speech. Speaking back is a better way for combating hate speech because laws restricting speech do not address the causes of hate speech, which means that laws only restrict and punish hate speakers. The speaking back approach would bring a change in people's views, which Katharine Gelber thinks would be a better way of approaching the problem of hate speech.

After introducing the speaking back policy, I moved on to Austin's speech act theory to introduce the difference between locutionary, illocutionary and perlocutionary acts. This was done in order to show how hate speech deprives targets of their ability to perform certain speech acts. I came to a conclusion that people are performing speech acts with their utterances and for an utterance to be successful, it is necessary to satisfy the felicity conditions. For example, the utterance must be committed in the right environment and in the right circumstances in order to perform a certain utterance. The boss of the company is able to fire a worker from the factory by saying "You are fired!", but it is not possible to fire somebody just by going up to a random person in the street uttering the same sentence, because in this case of doing it on the street, the person uttering the sentence would not meet the felicity conditions to actually fire somebody.

At the end of the first chapter, I also introduced the importance of uptake, which means the shared understanding two people have when talking about something. This means that if there is uptake between two people, then one person understands what the other is trying to

convey in their utterance. As a result, I showed that it is possible to stop a person from getting uptake, which means that this person is silenced and the speech capabilities are taken away. Inhibiting someone's speech capabilities counts as hate speech and is unfair towards another member of society. As a result, even if the victim of hate speech performs a speech act, he or she does not have the capabilities to perform an action with the utterance.

In the second chapter I moved on to introducing the history and context of Estonia and gave an overview of the last one hundred and twenty years and explored the peculiarities of the Estonian context. The special distinguishing features were introduced in order to create an understanding of Estonian context. I found that the Estonian context has specialities, such as the geographical location and the large number of people of Russian ethnic origin, as well as the history between the two countries, which cannot be found in other contexts. I also admitted that, although my thesis is based on an Estonian example, it is very likely that similar results that I reached could be reached, when looking at other countries that gained their independence as a result of the Soviet Union collapse in 1991. Nevertheless, within this thesis I focused only on Estonian context and introducing the Estonian context was necessary in order to be able to apply the speaking back policy introduced in the first part to the Estonian context in order to find out whether the speaking back approach would work in Estonia.

In the third chapter I gave the reader an idea of what speaking back might look like in the context of Estonia focusing on the types of government assistance which might be given to people of Russian ethnicity. These measures can include directing finances and resources to the eastern part of the country to create better living conditions in places where the main population is Russian-speaking people. I reached a conclusion that applying the speaking back argument to the Estonian context would not be possible because certain unavoidable problems would arise. Firstly, there is dissatisfaction among Estonian people towards the state because it would remain incomprehensible for Estonian people why the government needs to direct such a large amount of resources to help one specific group, approximately half of whom do not even follow Estonian media and a third of whom do not have Estonian citizenship. Another problem that may arise is the problem of propaganda, because knowing that approximately three quarters of the 300,000 population living in Estonia follows Russian media daily then by boosting the voices of Estonian Russians, the Estonian government might be boosting the voices of some propagandists. This would lead, for example, to the emergence of pro-Russian views in the public sphere in Estonia, which in

turn would cause disagreements and potential conflicts. Finally, there is the security problem, which arises from the geographical location of Estonia and sharing a border with the Russian Federation. Russia is an aggressor country that has attacked its neighbouring countries where a large number of people of Russian ethnicity live under the pretext of protecting ethnic Russians. This means that conflicts that may arise for example as a result of the resentment problem or for some other reason may lead to a conflict between two ethnic groups living in Estonia, which in turn may escalate into a national security issue and a potential military conflict.

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KATHARINE GELBERI VASTURÄÄKIMISE ARGUMENDI HINDAMINE EESTIS ELAVATE VENELASTE KONTEKSTIS

Resümee

Vaenukõne on levinud probleem nii Eestis kui ka mujal maailmas. Vaenukõne põhjustab ohvritele kahjusid, mis takistab neil inimestel täisväärtusliku elu elamist. Vaenukõne vastu võitlemiseks on suures plaanis kaks eri võimalust, kas teha seda kõnet piiravate seadustega või alternatiivsete meetodite teel. Üheks alternatiivseks meetodiks vaenukõne vastu võitlemisel on vasturääkimise meetod, mille esitas autor Katharine Gelber. Vasturääkimise meetod hõlmab vähemustele materiaalse, institutsionaalse ja haridusliku abi pakkumist, mis hõlmab tagakiusatud inimestele platvormi andmist avalikkuse ees, et võidelda vastu diskrimineerimisele ja ebaausale suhtumisele (Gelber 2012: 53). Käesoleva bakalaureusetöö eesmärk on uurida, kas Katharine Gelberi välja käidud vasturääkimise ettepanek oleks rakendatav ka Eesti kontekstis.

Vaenukõne piirab ohvrite kõnevõimalusi, mis tähendab, et nendel inimestel ei ole teistega samaväärset võimekust korda saata kõnetegusid. Kõneteod tähendavad mitte vaid lause ütlemist, vaid lause ütlemise kaudu ka mingi tegevuse, nõudmise, hoiatuse või mõne muu tahtluse edasi andmist (Austin 1962: 72). Vasturääkimise meetod keskendub just vaenukõne ohvrite kõnevõimaluste parandamisele ja upitamisele avalikus sfääris. Katharine Gelber esitleb oma vasturääkimise argumenti kui universaalset teooriat, mida on võimalik rakendada kõikjal. Sellegipoolest ei arvesta Katharine Gelberi universaalne teooria geograafilise asukoha, etnilise vähemuse arvukuse ja ajaloolise kontekstiga, mis eristab Eestit ja teisi endisi Nõukogude Liidu liiduvabariike teistest maailma riikidest. Seega märgatav valitsuse poolne toetamine ja vene rahvusest kodanike eelistamine tekitaks vastuseisu Eesti inimeste hulgas. Tulenevalt Eesti geograafilisest asukohast ja ajaloost ei oleks võimalik vasturääkimise meetodit rakendada Eestis, sest see põhjustaks arusaamatust Eesti inimeste hulgas ja konflikte, mis võiksid potentsiaalselt ohustada riiklikku julgeolekut.

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