Critical Pedagogy and Language Education: Hearing the Voices of Serbian Students Studying Foreign Languages

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Abstract

Critical pedagogy is an issue which deserves a lot of attention from language teachers/educators. Understanding the relationships between language learning and social change can help all of us to become critically aware citizens. Drawing on a critical account of students majoring in foreign languages, this paper examines their ability to critically analyse the status of English as a global language, especially in relation to social, cultural and economic factors. In order to gain an in-depth understanding of the matter, the focus group methodology was used. Content analysis was conducted on the students' statements in order to identify trends and patterns that appeared within the focus group's discussion. Participant observation was also used. The results suggest that the Faculty of Philology students clearly perceive English as a language of power but are also willing to question the factors that led to it and the possible consequences of such beliefs. Further research may contribute to demonstrating how the current process of teaching and learning English as a lingua franca can establish a broader and more beneficial dialogue with other fields of knowledge which support and promote critical approaches to language pedagogy. *(примљено: 21. јануара 2022; прихваћено: 6. априла 2022)*

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1. Introduction

From the perspective of *critical applied linguistics*, foreign language learning is related to social and cultural factors in a complex manner. Classrooms become sites of cultural struggle, contexts in which different versions of the world are battled over; in this context, it is also possible to see how students and teachers operate in accordance with or in opposition to different cultural possibilities (Pennycook, 2001: 128). Classrooms should be seen as an important part of the social and economic policy of the state. The choice of English as a foreign language often means acceptance of the global political and economic order in which English is considered the first and most important *language of international communication* (Pennycook, 2001).

From the perspective of *critical pedagogy*, language is not simply a means of expression or communication; rather, it is a practice that constructs, and is constructed by, the ways language learners understand themselves, their social surroundings, their histories and their possibilities for the future (Norton, 2014: 1).

Given that classrooms are no longer considered autonomous islands of language learning, unaffected by the world outside (Pennycook, 2001: 116), the aim of this paper is to determine students' critical awareness of *English as a global lingua franca*. In addition, their critical reflections on the consequences the current status of English has on promoting certain language and social ideologies are assessed. This is in line with the goal of this research, which is to support the development of active, engaged citizens who will be able to participate more critically in the society, seeking its transformation through education, including *language education*.

2. Critical Pedagogy and Language Education

The very term *critical pedagogy* is often associated with the work of scholars such as Freire, Giroux, Luke, McLaren, Simon and Apple in the field of education. According to these authors, *critical pedagogy* aims to raise awareness about unjust social practices as well as to help students become active agents for social change (Norton, 2014). *Critical pedagogy* is a very complex term which is difficult to define in a brief manner. It includes the ways power operates to construct identities and oppress particular groups, the modus operandi of the ways social regulation operates, the complex processes of racism, gender bias, class bias, cultural bias, heterosexism, religious intolerance, the cultural experiences of students, diverse teaching styles, the forces that shape the curriculum, the often-conflicting purposes of education, and much more (Kincheloe, 2008: 24).

According to Shin, once we work in the field of *language education*, especially ELT in the contemporary international context, we need to challenge the predominant supposedly neutral orientation so dear to traditional language education and do *critical pedagogy* (Shin, 2004). Siqueira argues that *critical pedagogy's* main concern is power in the social and educational contexts. (Siqueira, 2021: 4). Rajagopalan asserts that the *critical pedagogist* by nature, is someone who disturbs and disrupts the general status quo. In their task of stimulating the critical view of their learners,

of fostering a critical posture, the critical educator has always been and will always be a threat to consolidated powers (Rajagopalan, 2003: 111). In addition, educational reforms are often aligned with the capitalist marketplace rather than democratic values, and schools often work to reproduce the dominant culture, but teachers and students can work together in schools to transform culture and institutions (Groenke/Amos Hatch, 2009: 19). Crookes argues that *critical pedagogy* in language teaching is a perspective in language curriculum theory and instructional practice that supports and advances teaching and the study of languages in ways that would promote social justice (Crookes, 2012: 1). Pavlenko turns her attention to understanding the relationship between power and knowledge and the role of language in production and reproduction of power (Pavlenko, 2004).

Once we conceive *language education* in broader social, cultural, and political terms, keeping in mind that ELT is far from being an ideologically neutral enterprise, English classrooms can naturally serve as safe spaces for teachers and students to work under a *critical pedagogy* perspective, empower themselves, and relate their practices to what happens in the world outside (Siqueira, 2021: 6).

Given the status of *English as a global language* and its prevalence and importance in education systems worldwide, this paper attempts to determine how familiar students in Serbia are with concepts such as *English as a global language*, *linguistic imperialism* and the role of English in promoting *neoliberal ideas and values* in capitalist societies. Moreover, this paper aims to describe the local context – situations and issues and sees local as important in order to modify or develop local practices having as its final aim to support learners, the process of learning and, consequently, social change.

This paper began by briefly discussing the relationship between *critical pedagogy* and *language learning*, particularly teaching/learning English as a foreign language. The main objectives of the research are clearly stated. The next section situates this study in the framework of focus group methodology and explains how the analysis was conducted. The penultimate section outlines the results of the study, which are discussed in depth. The paper concludes by considering the research implications of the findings for *English language education*.

3. Research Methodology

The focus group methodology was used in this research because it challenges study subjects to explore and even defend their opinions (Lune/Berg, 2017: 99). The aim was for the students to be involved in a process that intends to stimulate some kind of change in their attitudes (Breen, 2006: 468). My intention was to potentially foster social change while talking about power relations between language and social, economic and cultural variables. Content analysis was conducted on the students' statements in order to identify trends and patterns that appeared within the focus group's discussion. Participant observation was also used; particular attention was paid to body language, gestures and nonverbal clues.

3.1. The setting

Serbia is a country with a long and robust tradition of foreign language teaching, with English being the most common foreign language taught in both formal and informal education in recent decades (Filipović et al., 2007). The focus group research was conducted in 2021. The participants were eight undergraduate students studying at the University of Belgrade – Faculty of Philology. Two participants study English, two of them study French, two study Russian, one of them studies Arabic and one Spanish. Two participants were third year students, while the rest were fourth year students at the time of the interview. The students were highly motivated to participate in the focus group, as the topic was of interest and they had an opportunity to freely express their opinions about issues that concerned them. All of the participants were told that their views would be highly valued, while their identities would not be disclosed to anyone except the researchers. They confirmed that they understood their role in the research. The discussion session was carried out online, via Google Hangouts Meet software and lasted for approximately 60 minutes. The discussion was recorded and transcribed. The conversation was conducted in Serbian and the quotations in the paper are my own English translations.
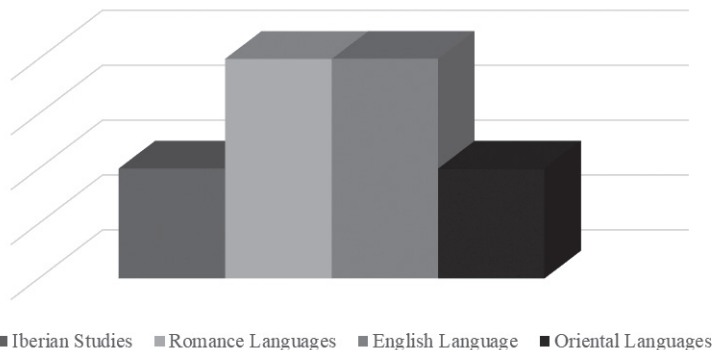

■ Iberian Studies   ■ Romance Languages   ■ English Language   ■ Oriental Languages

Figure 1. Participants studying at different Faculty of Philology departments
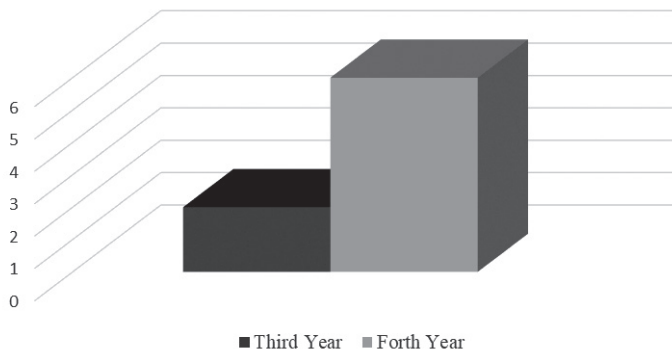

■ Third Year   ■ Forth Year

Figure 2. The year of study of the participants

3.2. Focus Group

Focus groups are one of the most commonly used techniques in qualitative research. They consist of an informal group discussion on a particular research topic or topics. The atmosphere is generally pleasant and friendly so that participants can express their opinions and ideas spontaneously and honestly without reservations. A typical focus group session consists of a small number of participants under the guidance of a facilitator, usually called the moderator (Lune/Berg, 2017: 94). Focus group data reflects the collective notions shared and negotiated by the group and is based on interactions, cross-conversation, negotiation, confrontation, and collective decision processes; therefore, participants do not merely answer questions when asked, but actively explain themselves to each other (Lune/Berg, 2017: 99). It is necessary to emphasize that it is not only important what the focus group participants say but also the way they do it – it reveals their attitudes towards the subject of the research and the feelings that arise during the discussion of a given topic (Seale et al., 2007). Focus groups provide a social environment suitable for articulating attitudes and opinions, which is one of the most important advantages of using this research technique (Breen, 2006). The methodology also provides a deeper understanding of the phenomenon, as well as new insights. The disadvantages of the focus-group methodology are difficulties preventing a particularly vocal or dominant participant from coercing others to agree with his/her views and the reliability of thematic analysis/perception (Breen, 2006: 467). Focus groups require the collection of data (discussion) and their interpretation, usually using a qualitative approach.

3.3. Research Questions

This study was guided by the following questions:
1. If you could choose, which foreign language would you learn and why?
2. Is English a global language? What does that mean? Why English?
3. Have you heard of *linguistic imperialism*? How would you define this term?
4. How significant a role does the English language have in promoting *neoliberal values* in capitalist societies?
5. What does the phrase *lingua franca* mean?
6. What is your main reason for learning English? Is it only a means of communication? Do you think that English today is worth learning? Why?

These questions provide the necessary data to analyse the status of *English as a global language* through the lens of student population and the ways they understand connections between a language and socioeconomic, political and cultural factors. Hopefully, the data collected will help us understand students' attitudes towards foreign language learning, and English in particular.

4. Results and Discussion

After listening to the recordings and examining the transcripts, I used an inductive approach to answer the research questions, by identifying emerging patterns and topics that arose from the data collected (Bori, 2020: 6). The findings

were analysed in light of the relationship between the English language and broader socioeconomic and cultural context from the perspective of *critical pedagogy*.

4.1. Status of English

4.1.1. The choice of a language

The first two research questions address the status of *English as a global language*. At the very beginning of the discussion, I asked them which foreign language they would learn if they could choose. When they heard the question, they immediately asked if they knew English at that moment. All of them thought that English goes without saying.

I would choose Spanish because of their amazing music... it is useful too... so many people speak Spanish worldwide. (student of Russian)

I would definitely choose Arabic. I can't explain, I am simply in love with Arabic ever since I was a kid. (student of Arabic)

I would prefer Chinese. In my opinion, being fluent in Chinese is very profitable because of fascinating number of people who speak it as their first language. Chinese culture is also very interesting. If I may add, so many people already speak English very well nowadays, but speaking Chinese would definitely make a difference! (student of French)

I would choose English mainly because of travelling abroad, it's easier if you speak English. My plan is to travel a lot and earn a living as a freelancer. (student od English)

The rest of the participants would choose English because of its usefulness and the number of people who already speak it as a first/second or foreign language. In my previous research regarding the same topic participants mainly majored in Information Technology (Gajić, 2020). When asked the same question, they all chose English. They pointed out the fact that English represents a huge competitive advantage in the labour market and is considered necessary in order to get a well-paid job. On the other hand, students of the Faculty of Philology were not only motivated by practical reasons; they wanted to deepen their connection with other cultures and see the world.

4.1.2. The number of speakers of English

At this point, I asked if they knew the number of speakers of English. I also emphasised the issue of unreliability of data sources, collected at different times by different institutions. They all agreed that there is approximately half a million people who speak English as their mother tongue. According to Crystal, there are 380,000–400,000 native English speakers (Crystal, 2003). Students were familiar with the fact that Chinese Mandarin is undoubtedly the most spoken language in the world. They added that Spanish has its nose in front of English and put it in second place. English, Hindi and Arabic were identified as the third, the fourth and the fifth most spoken language in the world. Students could also explain the difference between English as a second language and English as a foreign language.

4.1.3. English as a global language and the reasons for its spread

The next question refers to the status of English. I asked them if they consider *English a global language* and what that means. They all said yes, without a doubt.

It means that almost all people in the world speak English. (student of French)

The discussion became much more interesting when I asked them to state the reasons for the status of English.

Because it is easy, or at least it is easier that Chinese. (student of French)

I disagree. Maybe we (Serbs) can say that English is easy to learn, but what about people from China or Saudi Arabia? They do not consider it easy, that's for sure! (student of Arabic)

At that moment I pointed out that the ease of learning a foreign language is irrelevant and illustrated my point with Latin. I also wanted to ask them to think about the historical, cultural, political or economic reasons which could possibly contribute to the spread of the English language. However, there was no need to do so because they immediately continued with the conversation.

British colonies must be one of the reasons! (student of French)

Because of money, influence, control, important banks and organisations... economic factors mainly. Actually, a couple of days ago I talked to my friend about the status of English, we wondered if there was no English, what language would have the same status. It is difficult even to imagine. (student of Russian)

Why English precisely? Definitely because of the Internet and electronic media. Because of YouTube, social media sites, music and movie industry. (student of English)

When I started studying French, I began watching French movies and listening to their music. Before that, it was all English. (student of French)

I do agree. The same story with Spanish movies. You need to put an effort to find something not in English to watch or listen to. (student of Spanish)

Actually, I read all Harry Potter books in English! (student of Russian)

The answers indicate that students are aware of the two main factors why English became a global language; the first one is geographical-historical and the second one is socio-cultural. When they talked about geographical-historical reasons, they emphasised the expansion of British colonial power in the nineteenth century (Crystal, 2003). However, when compared to IT students, Faculty of Philology students did not mention the emergence of the USA as a leading economic power of the twentieth century. IT students also talked about Industrial Revolution in the context of global spread of English and paid particular attention to the fact that New York and London have long been the most important global financial centres (Gajić, 2020). Both groups of students find socio-cultural factors much more important and interesting, particularly the press, broadcasting, the film industry, popular music and the Internet. Nowhere is the effect of this expansion of English into new domains seen more clearly than in the communication on the Internet

and the development of net English (Graddol, 2000: 2). All of the students agreed that the invention of the Internet cemented the position of *English as the primary language of international communication.* According to Seidlhofer, for the first time in history, a language has reached truly global dimensions, across continents, domains, and social strata (Seidlhofer, 2011:7).

The previous research findings showed that IT students are highly influenced by the way political and economic issues in the region are discussed (Gajić, 2020). This can be seen clearly by the choice of words and phrases students used while answering certain questions and trying to explain their reasons – foreign investment, readiness for the arrival of international companies, highly competitive labour market, global trends etc. On the contrary, students of Faculty of Philology did not mention these reasons at all and did not use the same vocabulary in order to explain their point of view. While IT students were concerned with political and economic factors, foreign languages students primarily talked about the impact of the Internet and socio-cultural factors generally. To conclude this section, both groups of students were aware that the status of *English as a lingua franca* is both a cause and consequence of the globalisation process.

4.2. Linguistic Imperialism

All students said that they had never heard the term *linguistic/language imperialism*, and they had never used it themselves, but they thought they could define it. At least, they tried to explain it by helping each other.

When one language is stronger, more powerful and more dominant than other languages. (student of French)

It is also more important than any other language. (student of Russian)

That's obviously English. (student of English)

Maybe French or Spanish, but to a lesser extent. (student of Spanish)

Then, I read two definitions of this term to the participants and asked them to think about them and tell me whether they agreed.

Linguistic imperialism is the imposition of one language on speakers of other languages. It is also known as linguistic nationalism, linguistic dominance, and language imperialism. (Nordquist, 2019: 1)

English linguistic imperialism is the dominance of English asserted and maintained by the establishment and continuous reconstitution of structural and cultural inequalities between English and other languages. (Phillipson, 1992: 47)

There was no disagreement. Students confirmed they fully understood the concept of *linguistic imperialism*.

I think that language is primarily a means of communication, but it is also closely connected to culture. You cannot understand one's culture without accessing its language directly. Language is reflection of culture. (student of Arabic)

Language is much more than that. It is closely related to cultural, social and particularly political factors. Whenever I say I study Russian, people start talking about Putin. (student of Russian)

To conclude, it seems that participants are very aware of the complex relations between language and various political, economic and social factors. They particularly pointed out that language is complexly intertwined with culture. It is of the utmost importance to support young people to critically analyse these relations. It is encouraging that they wanted to discuss this issue which they found useful and interesting. All of the group members seemed to feel comfortable talking; they quite often used body language in order to encourage each other while answering the questions.

4.3. Neoliberal Trends in Education

4.3.1. The importance of English in promoting neoliberal values and ideas

The next couple of questions address the importance of the English language in promoting *neoliberal values and ideas* in capitalist societies, especially in the field of education. When interviewed, IT students said they had never heard of *neoliberal ideology,* nor could they explain it in any way. Despite that fact, I tried to encourage them to talk, but they simply shook their heads and remained silent (Gajić, 2020). To my great surprise, this time all students confirmed they have heard the term *neoliberalism.* They said the concept of *neoliberalism* sounded familiar from newspaper articles and television. However, it was difficult for them to immediately relate it to foreign language learning or education in general.

It seems like a political and economic issue... not an educational one. (student of English)

It refers to something liberal, free... something like free market or citizenship values or... it refers simply to the value of freedom. (student of Arabic)

At this point, I read the definition of *neoliberalism* from Cambridge English Dictionary:

Neoliberalism is the policy of supporting a large amount of freedom for markets, with little government control or spending, and low taxes.

I completely understand the term neoliberalism but I don't know how to put it in the context of education. (student of Spanish)

Ok, it can be negative as well. (student of English)

If it is not profitable, it is not worth learning. Am I right? Can literature be an example to support my thesis? (student of French)

Ooooo, that's the point! I understand, but honestly, I have never thought about it in such a way. (student of Russian)

This is a very complex issue; I feel I need to know more about it in order to talk. (student of English)

4.3.2. Language teaching materials and subtle ways of promoting English as a global language

I asked if they were interested in English literature, music or movies made in the English language or tourist attractions of the English-speaking countries while learning English. All of them answered affirmatively.

Absolutely! As I already said, you can't understand a culture without first learning a language. (student of Arabic)

Even if you're not interested in literature, I'm sure you'll be interested in popular culture. (student of French)

Another factor that has decisively contributed to the global spread of English is the ELT industry (Siqueira, 2021: 2). Language teaching materials are cultural artefacts from which meanings emerge about the language being taught, associating it with particular ways of being, particular varieties of language and ways of using language, and particular sets of values (Grey, 2013: 12).

When asked about the ways English publishing houses promote their culture, literature and lifestyle in the textbooks for learning English as a foreign language, they answered they are quite informed of that and even supported the policy. The students unanimously agreed that such a policy is great and to be expected, showing they are aware of the relationship between the choice of English as a foreign language and cultural factors. They were also aware of the fact that different cultural and social phenomena are subtly promoted through textbooks. Language is simply a reflection of a society's culture and its perception of the world.

There's nothing wrong with it. French authors do the same thing. (student of French)

Actually, we should do exactly the same thing – promote our cultural heritage and tradition in textbooks for learning Serbian as a foreign language. We do not appreciate our language and culture enough. Usually, people think that other cultures are more important than ours. (student of French)

I agree completely. We should learn something from the English. (student of Russian)

Additionally, they found it interesting to talk about the content of the textbooks they used. It seems participants are absolutely aware of the gap between what neoliberal textbooks present and how the real world works (Bori, 2020). Thus, we can conclude that students are aware of the fact that textbooks for learning foreign languages are ideologically coloured, that is, that they are carriers of cultural and ideological changes and that they are never neutral. In previous research, although aware of the status of English as a global language and the way the textbooks are shaped by the broader socioeconomic context of *neoliberalism*, IT students could not actually define *neoliberalism* (Gajić, 2020). This time, foreign language students showed knowledge of the concept and were more willing to think about possible relations between *neoliberalism* and education.

4.4. English as a Lingua Franca

All students said they are familiar with the phrase *lingua franca* and confirmed they could explain it or use it in a meaningful sentence. In addition, they immediately realized that *English as a lingua franca* means more or less the same as *English as a global language* or *English as the first language of international communication*. They also stated that it does not necessarily imply the fluency of native speakers of English but rather the ability to communicate in international surroundings.

I attended the elective course Sociolinguistics at the faculty and learned about these concepts. We investigated how social and cultural factors influence language and I simply became more aware of the language in its sociocultural context. We talked about plurilingualism, multilingualism, lingua franca language, etc. (student of Spanish)

At this point, I would like to comment previous research findings with IT students as participants (Gajić, 2020). They stated that it was always clear to them there was a need for the chosen language of communication between different people and that the language was English, but after the focus group discussion, it became clear why it was English. They pointed out that they had not thought at all about the political, economic, cultural and technological factors that contributed to the unstoppable spread of the English language. The discussion helped them to look at the English language from a completely different perspective, which was one of the research goals.

On the other hand, students of the Faculty of Philology showed knowledge of the concept, awareness of the various relationships between language and socio-economic, political, technological, and above all, cultural factors. They confirmed they do not often use terms such as *neoliberal trends* in higher education or *lingua franca* in everyday speech as such, but they actually quite often talk about these issues and their various implications. Apparently, certain departments at the Faculty of Philology make some room for critical reflection and discussion about the status of *English as a lingua franca* and its ideological, political and pedagogical implications.

4.5. Is English Worth Learning?

This section refers to English as a skill worth learning. All participants said they consider English *the first language of international communication*.

Absolutely, it is very important to know English. Actually, I cannot imagine not understanding English at all. (student of English)

Is it more important than other languages? It is very complex question. Honestly, I need to say yes and that annoys me, it shouldn't be like that. (student of Arabic)

It somehow goes without saying. I will work as a French teacher. Even though my job won't depend on my knowledge of English, I feel I need to know English, at least at intermediate level. (student of French)

Obviously, the English language has acquired so much power and prestige that an individual who has reached any formal educational background might

feel at a great disadvantage if he/she does not speak English at least at a certain level of proficiency (Siqueira, 2021: 1). Many authors agree that this acceptance of English normally happens when English is equated with modernity, progress and consumerism, whereas other languages are not (Bunce, 2016: 3).

5. Research Limitations, Further Research and Conclusions

5.1. Research Limitations

Frequent obstacles that occur during focus group discussions, such as lack of technical equipment, poor recording quality or reluctance, i.e., insufficient interest of participants to give comprehensive and meaningful answers to each question, were not observed in this research. On the contrary, the participants were excellent interlocutors, showing great interest in the topic.

I would also like to emphasize that I am aware of the amount of influence I had during the interview. Due to the fact I read certain definitions to the participants and the fact that, in *critical pedagogy*, there is no such a thing as a neutral text or comment, I may have introduced opinions to the group.

5.2. Issues for Further Research

This paper highlights the necessity of future research, the starting point of which should be the education of the student population, and young people in general, on the impact of language practices on the society as a whole. Further research may contribute to demonstrating in a synthetic way how the current process of teaching and learning *English as a lingua franca* can (and should) establish a broader and more beneficial dialogue with general education and other fields of knowledge which support and promote critical approaches to *language pedagogy* (Siqueira, 2021: 3).

5.3. Main Conclusions

Previous research findings showed that students who seek global career opportunities in the IT field consider English an indispensable tool for economic success and more useful than any other foreign language (Gajić, 2020). Consequently, their answers, especially when it comes to the usefulness of the English language and the importance of the existence of a global means of communication, are conditioned by specific market requirements in the field of information technology. These results inspired me to conduct the present research and determine how much the choice of career influence students' views regarding this topic. Detailed analysis showed that Faculty of Philology students clearly perceive English as a language of power but are also more willing to question the factors that led to it and the possible consequences of such beliefs.

The students are familiar with the phrases *English as a global language* and *English as a lingua franca*. They are mostly aware of geographical-historical and socio-cultural factors that have led to the current, inviolable status of English. The concept of *linguistic/language imperialism* was never heard of. However, students

tried to critically analyse and explain it by helping each other. Students also stated they are familiar with the concept of *neoliberalism* mainly from newspaper articles and television. However, it was difficult for them to immediately relate it to foreign language learning or education in general. To conclude, students should be educated on how to understand such concepts in a different context and connect them to political, economic, cultural and social factors.

Throughout the discussion, participants showed a high level of interest in the topic, enthusiasm, curiosity, willingness to learn something new and openness to different perspectives. It was motivating for me to hear they thought they had learned a lot during the focus group discussion; they found the topic extremely inspiring and useful as well. Their attitudes and answers greatly encourage me in the opinion that students' critical thinking skills can be developed via English language courses, that is, foreign language classes are ideal for the development of this skill. Their interest in the relationship between language and social factors leads me to think that more courses should be offered to students in the field of *sociolinguistics* and *critical pedagogy*, as this paper proves students are interested in such topics. At least, curricula may be modified in order to include such topics within existing foreign language courses. I am confident such a change would encourage the development of critical thinking skills. There is definitely enough room to challenge the ways we teach and learn a foreign language by redesigning language courses and establishing *critical pedagogy* in order to make it more intellectually stimulating for learners. In this context students gain the capacity to distinguish between oppressive and liberatory ways of seeing the world and themselves (Kincheloe, 2008: 28).

Only *critical global citizenship education* can initiate social change, that is, only engaged citizens are capable of critically reflecting on the phenomena that surround them and actively participating in its change, always keeping in mind the ethical and moral principles on which the democratic society rests. Understanding the relationships between language learning and social change (Norton/Toohey, 2004: 1) can help all of us to become critically aware citizens – teachers and learners, who are mindful that language education is shaped by a greater socioeconomic context (Bori, 2020: 12).

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Sažetak

KRITIČKA PEDAGOGIJA I NASTAVA STRANIH JEZIKA: GLAS SRPSKIH STUDENATA STRANIH JEZIKA

Kritička pedagogija je oblast koja zavređuje veliku pažnju svih učesnika u obrazovnom procesu. Razumevanje odnosa između učenja stranih jezika i društvenih promena može pomoći svima nama da postanemo građani sa razvijenom kritičkom svešću. Oslanjajući se na kritički prikaz odgovora studenata stranih jezika, ovaj rad ispituje njihovu sposobnost da kritički analiziraju status engleskog kao globalnog jezika, posebno u odnosu na društvene, kulturne i ekonomske faktore. Kako bi se ostvario dublji uvid u materiju, korišćena je metodologija fokus grupe. Analiza sadržaja je sprovedena kako bi se identifikovali najčešće pominjani trendovi i obrasci u okviru fokus grupnog razgovora. Rezultati sugerišu da studenti Filološkog fakulteta jasno percipiraju engleski jezik kao jezik moći, ali su spremni i da preispitaju faktore koji su do toga doveli i moguće posledice takvih uverenja. Dalja istraživanja mogu doprineti da se pokaže kako trenutni proces podučavanja i usvajanja engleskog jezika kao *lingua franca* može uspostaviti širi i korisniji dijalog sa drugim oblastima znanja koje podržavaju i promovišu kritičke pristupe jezičkoj pedagogiji.

Ključne reči:
engleski kao globalni jezik, kritička pedagogija, nastava stranih jezika, angažovano građanstvo, Srbija