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THE SIGNIFICANCE OF CULTURAL AND LINGUISTIC HERITAGE THROUGH THE LENS OF SERBIAN-MAJOR STUDENTS AND STUDENTS OF OTHER LANGUAGES

With the rapid development of technology and the availability of mobile devices of various types and purposes, people and their entire reality are being moved into a virtual world where the levelling of diversity and multiculturalism is emphasized and cultivated. Therefore, in sociolinguistics and other social sciences, there has been an ongoing interest in the issue of the cultural identity of digital citizens. As, at a certain point, education became almost entirely dependent on digital platforms and the global network, students of philology found themselves in a similar situation. Bearing the aforementioned in mind, the present paper examines the attitudes of Serbian-major students and students of foreign languages, primarily English, German and Spanish, regarding the importance of preserving Serbian (in this case, native) cultural and linguistic heritage. The results demonstrated that the participants had generally shown positive attitudes. However, a more precise statistical testing revealed that there was a statistically significant difference in both the knowledge and attitudes between Serbian-major students and students of other languages. Gender likewise proved to be a statistically significant predictor of variation in attitudes, with male respondents and students who declared to be a gender other than male or female, inclined toward less positive attitudes. Year of study, the socio-economic and educational background of students' parents were not statistically significant factors in predicting the variation in the responses. The findings have important pedagogical implications emphasizing the need for continuous education in matters pertaining to cultural and linguistic heritage.

Keywords: cultural heritage, attitudes, national language, Serbian, foreign languages

1. *Introduction: Cultural Heritage in the 21st Century*

The development of technology and rapid influx of information have doubtlessly altered an individual's participation in social communities and added novel routines in everyday activities. People's social lives have been

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transferred to digital environments and the Internet seems to represent the place where diverse cultures meet and their cultural singularities are often levelled out to support the ideas of transnationalism, global village, virtual communities and World Wide Web that connects everything and everyone. The greatest impact has been evidenced in younger generations and their sensitivity to cultural values. However, there is a noticeable contradiction in governments' attempts to address the issues of globalisation, the overarching influence of English and the so-called "hybrid languages" through educational and language policies (Liddicoat, Taylor-Leech 2015). On the one hand, there are tendencies toward preserving the national curriculum and emphasizing standard language use, while on the other hand, there is ongoing pressure to promote linguistic diversity.

The current state of affairs has had tremendous effects on educational systems that have to keep up-to-date with the latest developments, especially paying attention to the preservation of cultural heritage, ensuring that there still be a substantial connection between the past and the present (Tezer et al. 2020). Possessing the ability to transpose the knowledge of past experiences and events to ongoing, present actions and occurrences, seems a prerequisite for the development of a gratifying and respectful sense of self-identity (Ashworth 2011). UNESCO's definition of cultural heritage recognizes the role of the past in a culture's formation and existence, seeing it as a collection of artistic and symbolic signs from the past that shape the culture as it is (UNESCO 2003).

Cultural heritage includes *tangible* (monuments, works of art, archive materials etc.), *intangible* (language, tradition and folklore) and *natural* heritage (biodiversity and geographical locations of cultural significance). Nowadays, along with its basic definition, the term "heritage" carries along the idea of international prestige and tourist attractiveness together with the social value of "common good". The meaning has evolved from society's testimony of the history as early as the 18th century, a cultural asset with intangible importance in the 19th century to the cultural and social value of the community having economic potential in the 20th century (Graham et al. 2000; Harrison 2012). The perspective of heritage having a unique intrinsic value that has to be protected by the relevant institutions represents a classical view on the matter, while according to the more recent constructivist perspective or the "values-based approach" heritage is a social construction of a social community that establishes the set of cultural patterns to be represented by symbolic assets, or intangible heritage (Poulios 2014). Heritage is thus regarded as a social and political concept, opposing the ideas of its inherent properties, yet the interesting fact is that the two perspectives complement each other and contribute to generally more democratic participation in heritage management (Smith 2006). Furthermore, the addition of the anthropologic emphasis on the effect of heritage on the identity of a social community underlines a more profound shift of focus on the creators, rather than the created objects of heritage (Fontal, Gómez-Redondo 2016).

Society and culture are closely intertwined, bearing in mind that the simplest definition of culture assumes the lifestyle, beliefs symbols, practices, values and norms of a society (Kececi, Kececi 2016). International institutions, following UNESCO recommendations, have thus endeavoured to emphasize the importance of the preservation of cultural heritage. Their predominantly archival approach has been recognized as one of the major pitfalls among scholars emphasizing the need for intangible culture dissemination and transmission (Ott, Pozzi 2011; Colace et al. 2013; Van Boxtel et al. 2016). Numerous academic studies have underscored the significance of the relationship between cultural heritage and education (Corbishley et al. 2004), some of which empirically demonstrated that groups of children receiving education on cultural heritage had more positive attitudes toward it than the group that did not (Donmez, Yesilbursa 2014). In a study with teachers of social studies, Metin Goksu (2021) underscored the importance of students' knowledge of their attitude to cultural heritage. Hence, education can be viewed as a conveyor of culture, and culture can be viewed as a source of education (Gürel, Çetin 2017). Nurturing a sense of responsibility to heritage and increasing public awareness is closely intertwined with heritage conservation and can be amplified through the systematic development of critical thinking during the earliest educational stages (Curtis, Seymour 2004).

2. *Language Attitudes, Multilingualism and Cultural Heritage*

Being able to speak two or more languages not only increases the number of people one can interact with, but also affects the overall cognitive development and academic achievement (Lee 2002). The positive correlation between bilingualism and cognitive flexibility was recognized more than sixty years ago (Peal, Lambert 1962). Speaking more than one language is likewise related to elevated ambition in education and occupational aspirations, and it goes without saying that it directly affects the number of job-related opportunities (Portes, Schaufli 1995). However, studies have also shown that those learners who continue to appreciate their native languages while learning a more dominant world language, develop a stronger sense of cultural identity and self-esteem (Pigott, Kabach 2005). Thereby, a language learner benefits both from the understanding of the target cultural and intercultural communication, yet also from the national wisdom and accumulated knowledge of history contributing to the overall deeper comprehension of multiculturalism and the evolution of humankind.

The outcomes of language contact are familiar and well-researched in the relevant literature on various languages (Mougeon, Nadasdi 1998; Sankoff 2001). Understandably, a multitude of studies has dealt with the effects of English as a *lingua franca* on national and minority languages, stirring renewed interest in the issues of language shift or loss, as well as language maintenance. The use of English is emphasized in education, especially, in creating a specific form of hierarchy with it being on top (Milroy, Milroy 2012). Some views are so extreme that, for example, the former British Prime

Minister, David Cameron (2016)², presupposed English as the language of liberation, and suggested that the ones who are unable to speak it belong to terrorist and extremist groups. Naturally, such monolingual ideologies further contribute to the divide between minority and majority languages.

There is a general agreement that linguistic vitality will largely depend on the attitudes of the speakers of the community (Holmes 2013). Gardner (1985) defined attitude as a set of beliefs that makes a person act or evaluate behaviour of others in a certain way. Consequently, a language attitude is a complex and dynamic notion describing one's disposition to respond to language and its users (Baker 1992; Tódor, Dégi 2016). Language attitudes have three components: *cognitive*, referring to thoughts formed based on stereotypes about languages and their speakers, *affective*, related to a person's feelings regarding language, and *behavioural*, describing how people act towards a language (Garret et al. 2003). Through interaction with a community, a person constructs language attitudes comprising socio-economic and socio-personal values of the language in question (Ciscel et al. 2000). The socio-economic component's instrumental role has been recognized long before the expanding digitalization era (Eastman 1983). The attitudes often arise from the perceived economic and social networking value of the language. Hence, speakers may use the language but be reluctant to promote it (Ehala, Niglas 2006). If they recognize the opportunity to be identified with a more dominant or significant group through language which in turn results in the advancement of their social or economic status, speakers will develop positive attitudes and prefer the language in interactions. Nevertheless, the opposite situation may result in negative attitudes and resistance to the recognition and promotion of a particular language or variety (Dweik, Qawar 2015).

Serbian scientific literature is quite prolific in terms of studies dealing with cultural heritage and tradition from anthropological, sociological or historical perspectives (cf. Bazić 2007; Božilović 2010; Vasić 2013), yet few fairly recent studies seem to be directly related to the topic of the present paper and deserve special mention here. Namely, comparing the attitudes of English-major students and students of Mechanical Engineering to the usage of Cyrillic and Latin scripts, Stamenković et al. (2014) concluded that the students of English preferred Latin script due to a more frequent usage in reading and writing. Moreover, Miketić-Subotić and Kićović (2022) investigated speakers' attitudes to Standard Serbian and the participants included Serbian-major students and students of non-philological orientation. The study demonstrated a stronger inclination of Serbian-major students toward Standard Serbian in all aspects of the questionnaire, which the authors explained by the fact that these students were professionally accustomed to standard language ideology. Investigating the attitudes to the introduction of Serbian as a mandatory subject in the tertiary-level curricula, Novaković (2022) found that the majority of participants were eager to see Serbian as part of their study programmes.

2 One of the examples can be found here: <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2016/jan/18/guardian-view-on-david-cameron-learn-english-message-finger-wagging-bad>.

However, he noticed slight differences in professional orientation, as well. The students of History, Sociology, Philosophy and Psychology were less adamant than the students of Communication and Public Relations, Communicology, Journalism, Social Politics and Community Service and Welfare, who completely agreed with the idea of introducing Serbian as a mandatory subject.

Cultural heritage and its preservation represent one of the two priorities of the *Strategies for the development of the culture of the Republic of Serbia* (2020-2029)³ along with contemporary artistic creation. The strategies in question recognize the importance of scientific research attempting to unveil the needs and solutions in successful cultural heritage preservation following along the principles of developmental potentials and plurality of identity. The measures for the cultivation of linguistic heritage refer to the mandatory use of Cyrillic script on national television, stimulation of businesses to resort to logos in the Cyrillic script, supporting the distribution of scientific and professional literature, and fiction in a Cyrillic script, as well as the enhancement of the existing curricula by adding the content and activities aimed at nurturing the Serbian language and Cyrillic script.

3. Methodology

3.1. Aims of the Study

Having in mind the significance of research in the field of cultural heritage preservation, as well as the proposed goals in the aforementioned national *Strategies for the development of culture* (2020-2029), the present study aims at investigating the attitudes of students of philology towards the significance of cultivating cultural and linguistic heritage of Serbia. A brief segment was likewise dedicated to the students' actual knowledge regarding the Serbian cultural and linguistic heritage. Along with investigating the general attitudes, the goal was also to explore potential sociolinguistic factors that contribute to the attitudes in question, primarily gender, particular study programme, year of study, and socio-economic and educational status of parents.

3.2. Research Questions

The current investigation was based on the following research questions:

- How do Serbian students of philology feel about the importance of preserving national cultural and linguistic heritage? Are their attitudes positive or negative?
- How familiar are students with the selected facts about national cultural heritage?
- What suggestions do students of philology provide for enhancing the current state of affairs related to national heritage preservation?

3 Available online: <https://www.kultura.gov.rs/extfile/sr/3993/strategija-razvoja-kulture-od-2020--do-2029-godine.pdf>

- Are there any differences in attitudes in relation to sociolinguistic variables such as gender, particular study programme, year of study, and socio-economic and educational status of parents?

3.3. Participants

A total of 108 students of philology participated in the study. The students are all currently attending either the Faculty of Philology and Arts, University of Kragujevac, or Faculty of Philosophy, University of Niš. The majority of participants come from Kragujevac (N=34) and Niš (N=21), also from Aleksinac (N=6), Kruševac (N=6), Kraljevo (N=6), Vranje (N=5), Jagodina (N=5), Paraćin (N=4) and Leskovac (N=4). There were other towns stated, too, such as Prokuplje, Svrljig, Bor, Valjevo, etc. with one or two individual representatives. All the participants were undergraduate students. More detailed demographic data on the sample of participants are provided in Table 1.

Table 1. Demographic Information on the Participants

Gender	Year of Study	Major Language (Study Programme)	Parents' Level of Education	Parents' Socio-economic Status
<i>Male</i> 26 (24.07%)	<i>I</i> 13 (12.04%)	<i>English</i> 45 (41.67%)	<i>Primary</i> 7 (6.48%)	<i>Low</i> 11 (10.19%)
<i>Female</i> 75 (69.44%)	<i>II</i> 26 (24.07%)	<i>Serbian</i> 41 (37.96%)	<i>Secondary</i> 64 (59.26%)	<i>Middle</i> 67 (62.04%)
<i>Other</i> 7 (6.48%)	<i>III</i> 27 (25%)	<i>Spanish</i> 13 (12.04%)	<i>Tertiary</i> 37 (34.26%)	<i>High</i> 19 (17.59%)
	<i>IV</i> 42 (38.89%)	<i>German</i> 9 (8.33%)		<i>Don't want to reveal</i> 11 (10.19%)

Initially, the aim was to include other study programmes, as well, but the number of respondents was insufficient to make any valid conclusions. The educational level and socio-economic status were important variables to gain more information on the social background of the participants. Socio-economic status was regarded in terms of monthly income and the overall financial situation in the family. Hence, *low* meant low monthly income, insufficient to meet basic daily needs with constant financial struggles, *middle* meant monthly income sufficient to meet basic daily needs with occasional financial struggles, *high* meant monthly income that exceeds basic needs with no financial struggles, and *don't want to reveal* was the option for the ones that did not want to report their own socio-economic status. These explanations for the descriptors were provided in the questionnaire, as well.

3.4. Instruments and Procedure

The primary instrument was a questionnaire prepared by the author of the paper consulting relevant sources (e.g. Işik 2013; Petronela 2016; Rasoolimanesh, Jaafar 2017). The questionnaire contained the introductory part and three main

parts related to the actual topic of the research. The introductory segment was related to the general demographic information on the participants to obtain more information on the relevant background of students.

The first part of the main segment of the questionnaire contained ten multiple-choice questions designed to test students' knowledge⁴ on the subject of cultural and linguistic heritage. It was not a standardized test of any kind, yet it was offered merely to establish students' approximate cognisance of the matter.

The second part contained eighteen statements with 5-point Likert scale answers (1-strongly disagree, 5-strongly agree) aiming to divulge students' attitudes to Serbian cultural and linguistic heritage.

The third and final part contained two open-ended questions with the goal of discovering students' suggestions on how the officials and people in Serbia can contribute to the promotion of national cultural and linguistic heritage. Therefore, the entire questionnaire included thirty questions, excluding six introductory ones.

The survey was distributed online in September and October 2023/2024 academic year. The questionnaire was originally written in Serbian and was later translated to suit the needs of the present paper. The gathered data were analysed using the SPSS software package, version 20.0 (Field 2009).

4. Results and Discussion

For the sake of convenience and clarity, the results of the knowledge test are presented in Table 2. The correct answers are underlined in the right section of the table, accompanied by the percentage of students' answers in bold.

Table 2. Results of the Knowledge Test

Questions	Answers (%)
1. Cultural heritage comprises cultural artefacts and monuments of public interest defined by ...	a) movable cultural heritage 12.04% b) tangible cultural heritage 16.67% c) <u>the Law on Cultural Heritage</u> 58.33% d) the Regulations on Culture and Information 12.96%
2. The institution in charge of immovable cultural heritage is called ...	a) <u>Republic Institute for the Protection of Monuments of Culture</u> 29.63% b) Republic Institute for the Protection of Nature 4.63% c) Republic Institute for the Preservation of Cultural and Historical Heritage 59.26% d) Republic Fund for Culture and Monuments 6.48%

⁴ Most of the questions were adapted from https://provveznanja.rs/provera_znanja/kulturna-bastina-srbije-test-za-8-razred/.

3. Movable cultural heritage is preserved in ...	a) archives 7.41% b) museums and galleries 11.11% c) libraries 2.78% d) <u>all of the above</u> 78.7%
4. The monument <i>Hajduk Veljkova barutana</i> is located in ...	a) Niš 13.89% b) Vršac 12.04% c) Novi Sad 5.56% d) <u>Negotin</u> 68.51%
5. The monumental complex <i>Kadinjača</i> is related to ...	a) Fajront Republic 3.7% b) Weimar Republic 6.48% c) <u>Republic of Užice</u> 76.85% d) Republic of Srpska 12.96%
6. The symbol of the golden age of Serbian statehood, the monument devoted to Stefan Nemanja, is located in ...	a) Subotica 2.78% b) Kraljevo 12.04% c) <u>Belgrade</u> 75.93% d) Smederevo 9.26%
7. What was the written language of Saint Sava?	a) Proto-Slavonic 5.56% b) <u>Church Slavonic</u> 73.15% c) Serbian Slavonic 16.67% d) Proto-Serbian 4.63%
8. What was the first book written using the Cyrillic script reformed by Vuk Karadžić?	a) Serbian Dictionary 40.74% b) <u>Little Serbian Songbook of the Common People</u> 48.15% c) Miroslav's Gospel 9.26% d) Mrkalj's Glagolitic Script 1.85%
9. The name <i>Dubrovnik</i> is mentioned for the first time in the oldest diplomatic document written in a vernacular, and the name of the document is ...	a) Miroslav's Gospel 18.52% b) <u>Charter of Ban Kulin</u> 50.0% c) Temnić Inscription 12.96% d) Serbian Grammar 18.52%
10. The oldest Slavonic script is ...	a) Cyrillic Script / b) Latin Script / c) Clementic Script 6.48% d) <u>Glagolitic</u> Script 94.44%

Judging by the results, some questions posed greater difficulty than others. Generally, about fifty percent of students provided the correct answer every time, yet, for some questions higher results could have been expected, especially for questions 8 and 9. Around 60% percent of the students answered correctly that cultural heritage was defined by the Law on Cultural Heritage, while the other options showed quite an even distribution of answers. The second question was a bit misleading on purpose, which resulted in only about a third of the population answering correctly. About 80% of students knew the answer to the third question regarding the places where the movable cultural heritage was kept safe. The following three questions were related to some significant historical monuments and their geographical locations, and about 70% of students on average answered correctly. The last four questions were directly related to linguistic heritage. The students were the most successful in answering the last

question regarding the oldest Slavonic script and they were also pretty familiar with the standardized form of language used during the time of Saint Sava, the first Archbishop of the autocephalous Serbian Orthodox Church. The eighth question related to the first piece written in a reformed Cyrillic script was also quite confusing for the students, although the given options are ultimately fairly close in terms of periods in history. However, one would expect the students of philology to know the exact answer to these questions, particularly considering the fact that history of Serbian is a mandatory topic in the process of preparation for the entrance exam to the faculty of philology. The ninth question was expected to be less familiar, particularly for the students of foreign philology. Nevertheless, the name of the book should give clues on its geographical origin, thus helping students to choose the correct option.

To further explore the differences in students' performance on the knowledge test, appropriate statistical testing was performed to obtain more precise information. The only factor that proved to be statistically significant was the study programme. Kruskal-Wallis H test demonstrated that there was a statistically significant difference in the answers ($\chi^2(3)=40.026$ $p=0.001$) with the mean rank knowledge score of 34.50 for Serbian, 65.70 for English, 63.58 for Spanish and 76.50 for German. The results suggest that the students performed differently depending on their major language, more precisely, the majority of Serbian-major students answered correctly to almost all the questions, while the answers of students of other study programmes displayed greater variation. The situation could be explained by the fact that the actual curriculum devotes more attention to the history and cultural heritage of Serbia, which is understandable for the Serbian Language and Literature study programme. The other factors were analysed and proved not to be statistically significant, yet, having the proposed research questions in mind, the details of the results will not be discussed any further here.

Table 3 presents the results of attitude testing. The responses are provided in the right section of the table with the percentage for each option on the Likert scale.

Table 3. Results of Students' Attitudes Questionnaire

Statement	Responses (%)				
	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
1. Cultural and linguistic heritage preserves the identity of a nation.	/	2.78%	6.48%	26.85%	64.81%
2. Without preserved traditions and cultural monuments, people easily accept foreign influences regardless of the consequences.	/	4.63%	11.11%	39.81%	44.44%
3. Cultural heritage is not only composed of the most important monuments, but special attention must be paid to linguistic heritage, as well.	/	/	4.62%	37.96%	57.41%

4. Cultural and linguistic heritage should be exploited for the purpose of developing tourism and the state's economy.	/	5.56%	31.48%	39.81%	23.15%
5. Cultural heritage has the same importance as the natural resources of a country.	0.93%	10.19%	13.89%	36.11%	38.89%
6. The protection of cultural heritage plays an important role in environments where different cultures meet.	6.48%	8.33%	18.52%	29.63%	37.04%
7. Cultural and linguistic heritage must be the subject of constant consideration, planning and scientific research.	12.96%	15.74%	26.85%	25.93%	18.52%
8. Spreading awareness about the preservation of one's own cultural heritage is an important part of young people's education in the 21 st century.	8.33%	11.11%	17.59%	26.85%	36.11%
9. Profound knowledge of one's own cultural heritage and language contributes to the improvement of relations with other cultures.	4.63%	13.89%	14.81%	31.48%	35.19%
10. Supporters of the preservation of Serbian cultural heritage should fight against globalization and the influence of foreign cultures.	8.33%	22.22%	39.81%	17.59%	12.04%
11. Serbian cultural heritage should only be learnt from books, visits to galleries and museums.	12.96%	46.3%	14.81%	12.04%	13.89%
12. Television and the Internet can have a positive effect on raising awareness of the Serbian cultural and linguistic heritage.	8.33%	13.89%	13.89%	40.74%	23.15%
13. I am happy to talk about the Serbian cultural and linguistic heritage when I meet foreigners.	2.78%	3.7%	25.93%	30.56%	37.04%
14. I believe that I have enough knowledge to explain the importance of Serbian cultural and linguistic heritage to a foreigner.	1.85%	24.07%	33.33%	23.14%	17.59%
15. I have a strong emotional attitude towards the destruction of cultural monuments.	5.56%	/	33.33%	31.48%	26.63%
16. I am proud of the cultural and linguistic heritage of Serbia.	2.78%	/	11.11%	35.19%	50.93%
17. When a person goes abroad, they have to adapt to a new culture and it will be easier to forget one's own cultural heritage.	38.89%	46.3%	10.19%	0.93%	3.7%
18. I believe that people from foreign countries often have stereotypes about Serbian cultural heritage.	0.93%	7.41%	19.44%	44.44%	25.93%

As can be seen from Table 3, almost 90% of students believe that cultural heritage preserves the identity of a nation. A slightly lower percentage (about 85%) agree that people easily accept foreign influences disregarding the consequences, if their traditions and cultural monuments are not preserved. About 85% of the sample find that linguistic heritage needs to be paid special attention to. However, about 60% of the students state that cultural and linguistic heritage should be exploited for the purpose of developing the economy, while about 30% are neutral. About 75% consider cultural heritage to be equally as important as natural resources. The majority (67%) of the respondents feel that the protection of cultural heritage plays an important role in environments where different cultures meet. Nevertheless, about 44% of the respondents think that cultural and linguistic heritage must be constantly considered and scientifically investigated, while almost a third of the respondents (27%) are neutral on the issue. Again, the majority (63%) believes that spreading awareness about the preservation of one's own cultural heritage is an important part of young people's education in the 21st century and the majority likewise finds knowledge important for the improvement of relations with other cultures (67%). A similar percentage both agrees and disagrees with supporters of the preservation of Serbian cultural heritage fighting against globalization and the influence of foreign cultures (about 30%), while about 40% of the students are neutral on the issue. Almost 60% of the respondents disagree that books, visits to museums and galleries should be the sole source of information on Serbian cultural heritage. Surprisingly, there are students who disagree that television and the Internet can have positive effects on raising awareness of Serbian cultural and linguistic heritage (about 22%), while around 14% are neutral. About 68% of the sample feel happy to talk about the Serbian cultural and linguistic heritage with foreigners. However, only 41% feel they possess enough knowledge to explain the importance of Serbian cultural and linguistic heritage to a foreigner. Furthermore, only 58% have a strong emotional attitude towards the destruction of cultural monuments, which may seem a bit disconcerting. About 86% are proud of the cultural and linguistic heritage of Serbia and a similar percentage disagrees that when a person goes abroad, they have to adapt to a new culture forgetting one's own cultural heritage. The majority (78%) of the respondents believe that people from foreign countries often have stereotypes about Serbian cultural heritage, which is an argument against the recognition of cultural diversity and plurality in the modern world.

Generally speaking, about 60-70% of the students have positive attitudes toward the preservation of cultural and linguistic heritage, whereas there is about one-third of the sample that is either reluctant or indecisive. The situation may point to the necessity of emphasizing the issues of cultural and linguistic heritage throughout the educational cycle, providing the students with adequate knowledge and resources to build firm opinions.

When it comes to the potential factors guiding the participants' responses, i.e. the differences in their attitudes with regard to sociolinguistic factors, adequate non-parametric statistical tests were conducted to obtain the answers to the proposed research questions.

Kruskal-Wallis H test demonstrated that there was a statistically significant difference among the participants of different genders ($\chi^2(2)=11.165$ $p=0.004$) with the mean rank attitudes score of 66.92 for male, 51.36 for female, 42.00 for other. This means that students who belong to different gender groups expressed diverse attitudes in the questionnaire, with the tendency of male respondents and those who professed as other than male/female giving less positive attitudes than female respondents. The reason may lie in the traditional sociolinguistic interpretation that women pay more attention to the issues of language and culture, while men seem to be interested in other social topics. The factors such as year of study ($\chi^2(3)=3.834$ $p=0.280$), parents' socio-economic status ($\chi^2(3)=5.211$ $p=0.157$) and parents' education ($\chi^2(2)=1.011$ $p=0.603$) were not found to be statistically significant. This points to the conclusion that the respondents' answers in the questionnaire were not shaped by any of the factors. However, another factor that proved to be statistically significant, just as was the case with the knowledge test, was the particular study programme, i.e. the students' major language. Kruskal-Wallis H test demonstrated that there was a statistically significant difference in the answers ($\chi^2(3)=21.625$ $p=0.001$) with the mean rank attitude score of 42.00 for Serbian, 63.60 for English, 54.46 for Spanish and 66.00 for German. If the results of Serbian-major students are investigated compared to the other examples of foreign philology more closely, it may be concluded that their attitudes towards the national cultural and linguistic heritage are more positive overall.

The final segment of the questionnaire contained two open-ended questions related to suggestions on what the people and the state officials can do to enhance the preservation of cultural and linguistic heritage in Serbia. The majority of answers regarding what the state can do to promote cultural and linguistic heritage preservation revolved around the introduction of a separate school subject in the existing curricula (26.85%), promoting cultural and linguistic heritage through TV and mass media (19.44%), financial investment in the public institutions related to culture (13.89%), strict regulations on vandalism (11.11%) and the development of the country's economy in general (10.19%). When it comes to the question pertaining to what the people can do to help to enhance the preservation of cultural and linguistic heritage, the respondents opted for respecting tradition (23.25%), striving to be educated (14.81%), promoting culture outside Serbia (11.11%) and refusing to accept foreign language vocabulary (9.26%). Interestingly, 16.67% said that they had no adequate idea on how the people can contribute to the preservation of cultural and linguistic heritage.

5. Conclusion

The present study aimed at investigating the attitudes of students of philology to the importance of preserving cultural and linguistic heritage of their native, Serbian people. More precisely, the goals were to compare the knowledge and attitudes of Serbian-major students with the students of other

languages, and to further explore the potential sociolinguistic factors affecting the current state of affairs.

The results of the survey and the appropriate statistical testing demonstrated that Serbian-major students possessed more information on the cultural and linguistic heritage of Serbia and generally showed positive attitudes only, unlike students of other languages who displayed more variation in their answers. It was exactly the study programme that turned out to be a statistically significant predictor of the differences in the knowledge and attitudes on cultural and linguistic heritage, at least when it comes to the sample of respondents in the current paper. Moreover, gender proved to be a statistically significant factor predicting variation in terms of attitudes, with male respondents and respondents of other genders (other than male/female) showing tendencies towards negative attitudes. Year of study, the socio-economic and educational background of the participants' parents did not yield statistically significant differences in responses.

The general conclusion about the concise cultural and linguistic knowledge test is that further emphasis should be placed on education and instructional material with the aim of increasing students' awareness of the subject matter of cultural and linguistic heritage. Considering the fact that the test was initially aimed at pupils at the end of elementary school, the information distribution should be kept continuous throughout the three educational levels. The results thus underscore important pedagogical implications not only for students of philology and humanities, but other fields, as well.

The present study emphasized similar issues introduced in previous investigations (e.g. Corbishley et al. 2004; Colace et al. 2013; Donmez, Yesilbursa 2014) reexamining the factors and underscoring their importance for the development of national educational policy. Future research may concentrate on the attitudes of students in other scientific and educational areas, and also on the comparison between the attitudes of students of philology towards the national, as well as target cultural and linguistic heritage.

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**СТАВОВИ СТУДЕНАТА СРБИСТИКЕ И СТРАНИХ
ФИЛОЛОГИЈА О ЗНАЧАЈУ ОЧУВАЊА КУЛТУРНОГ И
ЈЕЗИЧКОГ НАСЛЕЂА**

Резиме

Са брзим развојем технологије и доступношћу мобилних уређаја различитих типова и намена, људи и њихова целокупна стварност се премештају у виртуелни свет где се помало контрадикторно наглашава и негује различитост и мултикултуралност, док се истовремено ради на изједначавању диверзитета и глобализацији. Стога је, у социolingвистици и другим друштвеним наукама, константно отворено питање културног идентитета дигиталних грађана. Како је у одређеном тренутку образовање постало готово у потпуности зависно од дигиталних платформи и глобалне мреже, студенти филологије су се нашли у сличној ситуацији. Имајући све наведено у виду, у раду се испитују ставови студената србистике и студената страних филологија, пре свега енглеског, немачког и шпанског, о значају очувања српске (у овом случају значајне, изворне) културне баштине. Резултати су показали да студенти углавном исказују позитивне ставове, али је прецизније статистичко тестирање показало да постоји статистички значајна разлика како у познавању тако и у ставовима између студената србистике и студената других страних језика. Пол се такође истиче као статистички значајан предиктор варијације у ставовима, при чему су испитаници мушког пола и студенти који су се изјаснили да не припадају ни женском ни мушком полу склони мање позитивним ставовима. Година студија, социо-економски статус и образовни ниво родитеља студената нису били статистички значајни фактори у предвиђању варијације у одговорима. Резултати рада имају значајне педагошке импликације и наглашавају потребу за континуираним образовањем о темама које се односе на културно и језичко наслеђе.

Кључне речи: културно наслеђе, ставови, национални језик, српски, страни језици

*Примљен: 18. јун 2023. године
Прихваћен: 20. фебруар 2024. године*