

SERBIAN EFL TEACHERS' ATTITUDES TO ANDRAGOGY AND THE SIGNIFICANCE OF LIFELONG LEARNING

Abstract: The present study aims at exploring Serbian EFL teachers' attitudes to andragogy and the significance of lifelong learning. Furthermore, we attempt at investigating the potential factors affecting those attitudes, such as gender, age, level of education, work experience and adult tutoring frequency. Thus, we conducted a survey based on the questionnaires from two previous studies by Wang (2007) and Amel (2014). Statistical analyses of the obtained data generally demonstrated positive attitudes towards the implementation of andragogy in the EFL teaching of adults in Serbia, as well as towards the significance of lifelong learning. Regarding the potential factors affecting the teachers' attitudes to lifelong learning, work experience, age and tutoring frequency proved statistically significant, while the differences caused by gender and level of education were ascribed to mere chance. The paper likewise underscores important implications for Serbian teachers educating adult EFL learners.

Key words: *andragogy, lifelong learning, Serbian EFL teachers, attitudes, the factors of gender, age, work experience, level of education and frequency of teaching adults.*

INTRODUCTION

Taking the ongoing globalization process into consideration, speaking a lingua franca such as English has become one of the main prerequisites for successful career development, cultural exchange and international communication enhancement. English proficiency is reportedly a crucial factor influencing salaries and job opportunities (Martinez & Wang, 2006). Numerous studies have so far dealt with the issues concerning the optimal age for starting to learn a foreign language, as well as the way children and teenagers acquire language skills necessary for mastering a foreign language. However, the matter regarding adult involvement in foreign language acquisition is occasionally even more complex, especially considering the fact that extensive research investigating the effect of age on language acquisition demonstrated that learning a foreign language became more difficult as one got older (Krashen, 1973; Long,

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1990). Moreover, adult learners exhibit age-related memory and processing speed deterioration, which directly affects language learning (Salthouse, 2004).

If we take the U.S. education system for instance, it seems worth mentioning that it provides free adult EFL learning courses for those aiming at improving their English skills, and allegedly only about 45 percent of immigrants undergo the courses. The raising of adult literacy level is highly interrelated to employment and education requirements, according to the findings of the National Assessment of Adult Literacy (2003). Similarly, having in mind that English is necessary for international cooperation, being the predominant means of communication on the Internet, adult EFL education is likewise popular in Russia, for example, both in formal and informal settings (Biryukova et al., 2015). The document known as *Comparative framework* from 2005 provides instructions for including second language education at workplaces in Canada, as well (Gibb, 2008).

Decades of efficient research have confirmed that attitudinal factors considerably contributed to the outcomes of language learning. Therefore, the implementation of an innovative teaching method that would only focus on perfecting specific skills, without considering teachers' opinions, beliefs and practical findings, is deemed futile (Trigwell, Prosser, & Taylor, 1994), hence teachers' attitudes towards a particular subject matter are often regarded as indispensable in educational research. Taking the scarcity of research dealing with the relationship between EFL teaching and andragogy (here by andragogy we mean adult education in general, even though the term usually denotes a branch of education science), as well as the lifelong learning in Serbian scientific context into consideration, our study aims at investigating Serbian EFL teachers' attitudes to the principles of andragogy and the significance of lifelong learning, on one hand, and potential factors affecting such attitudes, on the other hand. After a brief theoretical background, the results of the conducted research are presented and discussed. Finally, in the concluding sections of the paper important implications for Serbian EFL classrooms are underscored, along with the listed limitations of the current study and suggestions for future research.

PRINCIPLES OF ADULT EFL TEACHING AND ENGLISH AS A LIFELONG LEARNING PHENOMENON

The differences between teaching young and adult learners have long been recognized in EFL methodology research, hence teachers who teach adults are advised to follow recommendations and principles of adult education (Fleming & Garner, 2009). Adults are said to differ from regular high-school, or university students, in that they are usually intrinsically motivated and have clear educational goals set, as well as accumulated lifetime experience. Their opinions and values are well-formed, thus their perceptions of the world should be carefully considered and respected, so as to avoid the issues of insecurity and lack of self-confidence

(Norris, 2003). Chopra (1993) claims that even a simple memory of a negative experience from the past can cause the turmoil of emotions equal in intensity as the current negative event, so it is recommendable to avoid unpleasant memories as much as it is necessary to avoid creating new ones in the classroom. We might add that the latter is true of all ages and not restricted to adult learners only. It seems essential, at the beginning of every language course, to establish the type of proficiency learners aim to achieve, whether full, including all four language skills, or just oral, or written, and adjust the goals to learners' individual abilities (Celce-Muria, 2001).

According to Quigley (1992), one of the main reasons why adults are frequently reluctant to take part in language learning courses is the fact that they cannot connect course activities to their current life situation. Therefore, teachers are advised to make learning more student-oriented, so that the learning program could respect learner needs and capabilities (Wrigley & Guth, 1992). Moreover, placing lessons in a meaningful context, providing modern instructional methods and technology, proved to be more successful in achieving educational goals with adults (Popp, 1991). Knowing how to balance learner differences and develop critical thinking and metacognitive skills is likewise very important, since learners will eventually be able to transfer the acquired knowledge to real-life situations more easily (Mikulecky & Drew, 1991). Additionally, teaching reading and writing should be purposeful, and enough practice accompanied by frequent discussions, debates and meaning negotiations, should be allowed (Fingeret & Danin, 1991). The latter is especially relevant for EFL learning contexts, and other foreign language learning contexts, as well.

Listening and speaking are allegedly the most difficult language skills to attain. The majority starts learning a foreign language so that they could master speaking, slightly neglecting grammar in the process, hence explicit error correction should be omitted, or at least indirect and cautious (Blumberg, 2013). However, enhancing vocabulary proficiency and enabling sufficient practice of target language words and phrases is what definitely facilitates communication in an L2 (Laufer, 1997). Thus, providing students with interesting, attention-grabbing and relatable reading material is claimed to boost vocabulary knowledge, and consequently improve communicative skills (Krashen, 2003).

Building a classroom atmosphere where students can work in groups or pairs, exchange their views, and use language for social interaction, results in longer and meaningful sentence production, and ultimately successful language use (Lantoff, 2006). Establishing personal relationship of trust and confidence is particularly important, so that learners can feel free to turn to teachers for any queries and uncertainties (Brookfield, 2013). Exhibiting noticeable interest in the subject area of teaching seems to considerably affect learners' motivation and eagerness to participate (Marshall, 2012). All in all, taking a holistic perspective to language learning, enabling inquiry-based lessons and curriculum negotiation,

along with providing authentic materials, facilitates adult learners' language acquisition (Schwarzer& Luke, 2001). Furthermore, allowing occasional use of mother tongue (in our case Serbian) for explanations, or vocabulary clarifications, is advisable and directly related to confidence and anxiety issues (Cummins, 2000).

A survey with Vietnamese adult EFL learners showed learners themselves lacked confidence believing that they were too old to acquire language, yet they were regardless highly motivated, probably due to the employment issues (Bernat, 2004). Educational background and motivational factors can strongly affect performance, which can be seen in a study by Hubenthal (2004), investigating Russian adult learners whose current educational goals and attitudes reflected their past educational experience. The importance of recognizing students' cultural identity and diversity is particularly evident in a study on Cambodian women by Skilton-Sylvester (2002). Related to the issues of identity and self-image, Jeon (2005) reported on a Korean mother learning English to establish her identity in a novel community.

The number of studies dealing with teachers of adult EFL learners is significantly smaller in number, however. Studies mostly deal with the corrective feedback employed by teachers (Panova&Lyster, 2002), assessment techniques for individual language skills (Brindley&Slatyer, 2002), or specially designed teaching methods, supported by technological innovations, and their effect on overall proficiency (Lee, 2000).

Coskun and Demirel (2012) recognize four aspects of a successful lifelong student: motivation, especially intrinsic, perseverance (the ability to continue to achieve goals despite obstacles), self-regulation (the ability to monitor one's progress and achievements and to take action when improvement is necessary) and curiosity (the desire to acquire new knowledge).

The inevitable interpersonal and intrapersonal communication makes learning languages a lifelong phenomenon, hence EFL studies likewise support the notion of lifelong commitment to acquiring and improving reading, listening, writing and speaking skills (Deveci, 2013). The benefits of language-related lifelong learning are particularly evident in employment and education area, as well as everyday home activities, as simple as finding directions to the newly invented game (Amel, 2014).

The present study relies on the research by two authors dealing with the relationship between English language learning and andragogy (Wang, 2007; Amel, 2014). The first one of the aforementioned studies dealt with the possibility of implementing "Western" (related to European and American society) andragogical principles to teaching English in a Chinese setting, and came to the conclusion that Chinese teachers' practice was more traditional than, for example, American, especially regarding students' involvement in class material and topic selection. The second paper by Amel (2014), set in Algerian teaching

context, focused on teachers' awareness of the necessity of lifelong learning and underscored the need for contextualized and problem-solving approach to learning, self and peer assessment, along with a more efficient way of using the Internet and computer technology in classrooms.

METHODOLOGY

The Aim of the Study

The present study aims at investigating Serbian EFL teachers' attitudes towards the principles underlying andragogy and the significance of lifelong learning. We likewise sought to explore potential factors affecting the teachers' attitudes towards the importance of lifelong learning, such as gender, age, work experience, level of education and the frequency of teaching adult EFL learners. The study is inspired by similar research by Wang (2007) and Amel (2014), yet in a modified way, with a different sample and additional analyses of factors affecting teachers' attitudes.

Research Questions

The research revolves around several research questions:

- What are Serbian EFL teachers' attitudes towards andragogy? More precisely, how do Serbian EFL teachers feel about several factors claimed to be of notable influence in the learning process of adult EFL learners?
- What are Serbian EFL teachers' attitudes to the significance of lifelong learning?
- Which personal and professional characteristics of teachers can potentially affect the attitudes towards the significance of lifelong learning?

Participants

A total of 44 EFL teachers from Serbian primary and secondary schools and universities from several cities: Belgrade, Jagodina, Cuprija, Paracin, Kragujevac, Nis, Pozarevac, Cacak and GornjiMilanovac, agreed to voluntarily participate in the study. The majority was from secondary schools (n=28), yet there were those teaching in primary schools (n=8), both primary and secondary schools (n=5), and a few at universities (n=3). All of the participants had had some experience teaching adults EFL learners, hence they were chosen for the present study. Unfortunately, we were not able to contact the teachers who worked with adults only, due to temporal and spatial restrictions. The participants of the study were the only ones who were currently available to us. Almost all of them taught adults individually (n=41 or 93.18%) and 32 of them had experience of group lessons with adults (72.73%). 14 participants reported to have been continuously working with adult learners (31.82%) and the rest of them said their adult teaching experience was occasional (30 or 68.18%). A more detailed account of the sample is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics for the Sample of Participants

Gender	Age	Work Experience	Level of Education	Experience with Adults
<i>Male</i> 18 (40.9%)	<i>25-30 years old</i> 21 (47.77%)	<i>0-5 years</i> 17 (38.64%)	<i>B.A.</i> 18 (40.9%)	<i>Tutoring Type:</i>
<i>Female</i> 26 (59.09%)	<i>30-40 years old</i> 17 (38.64%)	<i>5-10 years</i> 12 (27.27%)	<i>M.A.</i> 23 (52.27%)	<i>Individual</i> 41 (93.18%)
	<i>40-50 years old</i> 6 (16.64%)	<i>10-15 years</i> 7 (15.9%)	<i>PhD</i> 3 (6.82%)	<i>Group</i> 32 (72.73%)
		<i>15-20 years</i> 4 (9.09%)		<i>Tutoring Frequency:</i>
		<i>Over 20 years</i> 4 (9.09%)		<i>Occasional</i> 30 (68.18%)
				<i>Continuous</i> 14 (31.82%)

Instruments

The primary instruments for obtaining Serbian EFL teachers' attitudes were two questionnaires adapted from relevant studies (Conti, 1998; Wang, 2007) and (Amel, 2014), containing closed-ended questions, mostly 6-point Likert scale (in the first case) and 5-point Likert scale statements, along with two ranking questions (in the second case). The permissions for using the questionnaires were deemed unnecessary since the questions were entirely preserved in their original form, yet they were joined together for the sake of efficiency of the questionnaire need for our particular sample. The first questionnaire was coded from 0=almost always to 5=almost never, and the second one was coded from 1=strongly agree to 5=strongly disagree. The Likert scale answers were chosen instead of the original percentage count for the second survey (Amel, 2014), because we found that grouping teachers into two groups only (agree/disagree) was too rigid and did not allow degrees of opinion (Schuman & Presser, 1981). Having the afore discussed relevant research in mind, the first questionnaire contained statements exploring factors related to the way teachers regard the incorporation of learner-centred activities, personalizing instruction, relating knowledge to be acquired to the existent experience, assessing student needs, climate building, learners' participation in the learning process and flexibility for personal development (Conti, 1998; Wang, 2007). The statements were preceded by a set of personal and professional information questions, related to gender, age, work experience,

level of education and adult tutoring experience. The questionnaire instrument was chosen due to its acclaimed time and cost-efficiency, and efficiency in obtaining large-scale data from a great number of participants (Nunan, 1999; Brown, 2001).

Procedure and Data Analysis

The questionnaires were distributed personally or via email from December 2014 to October 2015. The estimated time for completing the questionnaires was thirty minutes.

The obtained data were later analysed by calculating medians of the responses. The answers were reversely coded when necessary. Based on the results of the attitudes towards the significance of lifelong learning, the participants were divided into three groups (those that mostly agree, mostly disagree and neither agree, nor disagree) to perform additional statistical analyses that would measure the effect of the selected factors on teachers' attitudes towards lifelong learning. The cut-off points among the groups were determined by counting the number of responses, relying on the suggestions by Wang (2007) and Amel (2014). The required descriptive statistics, percentage counts, Mann-Whitney U and Kruskal-Wallis Htests (the dependent variable being continuous) were performed using a SPSS version 20.0 statistical software package.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The first investigated factor in the questionnaire pertained to learner centred activities, and the results are shown in Table 2. The majority of respondents reported to be using appropriate forms of disciplinary action when it is needed and that they emphasized teaching knowledge in class, i.e. that they acted as a source of knowledge for students. Tests represent a predominant method of evaluating students and mostly written tests are used to assess the degree of academic growth rather than to indicate new directions for learning, which may be the result of traditional teaching approaches and testing criteria. The teachers say they identify the educational goals of their students and try to motivate them by confronting them during the discussions. However, our respondents do not prevalingly use what history has proven that adults need to learn as their chief criteria for planning learning episodes, which may result from the lack of knowledge, or the fact that they combine different approaches. The majority of teachers claim to use methods that foster quiet, productive deskwork, yet it is particularly alarming that the majority of respondents use the same material they use in primary and secondary schools. The fact that many teachers often fail to measure a student's long-term educational growth by comparing his/her total

achievement in class to his/her expected performance as measured by national norms from standardized tests, probably results from the lack of clearly defined national standards in EFL teaching and learning. The respondents fairly disagree that memorization leads to greater autonomy in thinking. Generally, judging by the results of the conducted survey, we could say that Serbian EFL teachers' base their lessons on learner centred activities, yet there is room for improvement especially in terms of forms of evaluation and teaching materials.

Table 2. Results of the Questionnaire for Factor 1: Learner Centred Activities
(0=almost always, 5=almost never)

Statement	Median	IqR
I use appropriate forms of disciplinary action when it is needed.	1	1.00
I emphasize teaching knowledge in class.	2	1.00
I identify the educational objectives of each of my students.	3	1.75
I plan units that differ as widely as possible from my students' socio-economic backgrounds.	3	1.00
I try to motivate students by confronting them during group discussions with their classmates.	2	1.00
I use one basic teaching method because I have found that most adults have similar learning styles.	2	1.00
I use written tests to assess the degree of academic growth rather than to indicate new directions for learning.	2	1.00
I use what history has proven that adults need to learn as my chief criteria for planning learning episodes.	3	1.00
I use methods that foster quiet, productive deskwork.	2	1.00
I use tests as my chief method of evaluating students.	1	1.00
I use materials that were originally designed for students in elementary and secondary schools.	3	1.00
I measure a student's long-term educational growth by comparing his/her total achievement in class to his/her expected performance as measured by national norms from standardized tests.	3	1.00
I believe memorization can foster greater autonomy in thinking.	3	1.00

Having in mind the responses to the questionnaire, we can say that the investigated participants tend to personalize instruction for adult learners in general (Table 3), yet they do not accommodate their teaching approach that often, and do not use different materials with different students, which can be

due to the lack of time during the class, or due to inadequate preparation. The majority of respondents allow students more time to complete the tasks when necessary, they adapt their teaching goals depending on students' abilities, and let each student work at their own pace. They encourage the search for real-life examples, provide assignments related to real-life situations, and encourage competition among students. The fact that teachers mostly use lecturing as the best way to present subject material and assign one and the same task to all students does not exactly go in line with the rest of the answers related to the factor of personalizing instruction, however, the situation may stem from the remains of traditional ex-cathedra teaching methods applied by their role-model teachers, or by temporal and curriculum restrictions.

Table 3. Results of the Questionnaire for Factor 2: Personalizing Instruction
(0=almost always, 5=almost never)

Statement	Median	IqR
I allow senior students more time to complete assignments when they need it.	1	1.00
I use lecturing as the best method of presenting my subject material to adult students.	1	2.00
I use different teaching techniques depending on the students being taught.	3	1.00
I let each student work at his/her own pace regardless of the amount of time it takes him/her to learn a new concept.	2	1.00
I gear my instructional objectives to match the individual abilities and needs of the students.	2	1.00
I allow a student's motives for participating in continuing education to be a major determinant in the planning of learning objectives.	1	0.75
I give all students in my class the same assignment on a given topic.	0	0.00
I encourage competition among my students.	0	1.00
I use different materials with different students.	3	1.00
I encourage a search for real-life examples, develop assignments related to real-life situations and embed the content of my course in everyday life.	1	2.00

Generally, Serbian EFL teachers say they relate what they teach to students' existent experience (Table 4), including planning lessons considering prior experience of students, developing learner autonomy, encouraging reflections about the social issues, organizing activities similar to the ones encountered in everyday life, and teaching units about the problems of everyday living.

Table 4. Results of the Questionnaire for Factor 3: Relating to Experience
(0=almost always, 5=almost never)

Statement	Median	IqR
I plan learning episodes to take into account my students' prior experience.	2	1.00
I plan activities that will encourage each student's growth from dependence on others to greater independence.	1	1.00
I encourage my students to ask questions about the nature of their society.	2	1.00
I organize adult learning episodes according to the problems that my students encounter in everyday life.	2	1.00
I help students relate new learning to their prior experiences.	2	1.00
I teach units about problems of everyday living.	2	2.00

Even though individual conferences for identifying student needs are not so frequent among our respondents, the sampled teachers generally assess student needs well, if we were to judge by the provided answers (Table 5). They report to be helping students diagnose the gaps between their goals and their present level of performance, counseling students informally, and helping them develop short-range, as well as long-range objectives. Organizing individual conferences is not a very frequent practice among Serbian EFL teachers and this may be caused by spatial and temporal inconveniences, which is perhaps the reason why the majority of our respondents reported to have had them only occasionally.

Table 5. Results of the Questionnaire for Factor 4: Assessing Student Needs
(0=almost always, 5=almost never)

Statement	Median	IqR
I help students diagnose the gaps between their goals and their present level of performance.	1	2.00
I counsel students informally.	1	1.00
I have individual conferences to help students identify their educational needs.	3	1.75
I help my students develop short-range as well as long-range objectives.	1	0.00

The teachers in our study invest effort to build positive learning atmosphere (Table 6), by encouraging dialogue, using adult competences already in-built to reach desired goals, and allowing students to take breaks fairly often. It seems particularly encouraging that the respondents accept errors as a natural part of the learning process, and design activities that build students' self-esteem and sense of accomplishment while delivering course content.

Table 6. Results of the Questionnaire for Factor 5: Climate Building (0=almost always, 5=almost never)

Statement	Median	IqR
I encourage dialogue among my students.	0	1.00
I utilize the many competencies that most adults already possess to achieve educational objectives.	0	1.00
I accept errors as a natural part of the learning process.	0	1.00
I allow my students to take periodic breaks during class.	3	1.00
I design activities that build students' self-esteem and sense of accomplishment while delivering course content.	2	1.00

When it comes to the issue of involving students in the learning process and lesson plan decision making (Table 7), the surveyed teachers of English seem to allow students' participation when it comes to lesson planning and teaching material selection, yet they do not seem so eager to accept students' involvement in evaluation. Reportedly, they let students identify problems that they wish to solve and discuss curricular priorities, but they use learning contracts when assessing adult students' learning less often.

Table 7. Results of the Questionnaire for Factor 6: Participation in the Learning Process (0=almost always, 5=almost never)

Statement	Median	IqR
I allow students to participate in developing the criteria for evaluating their performance in class.	3	1.00
I arrange the classroom so that it is easy for students to interact.	1	1.00
I allow students to participate in making decisions about the topics that will be covered in class.	2	1.00
I have my students identify problems that they wish to solve.	2	2.75
I negotiate curricular priorities with my adult students at the beginning of each course I teach.	1	1.75
I use learning contracts when assessing adult students' learning.	3	2.00
I involve adult students when planning lessons.	3	1.00

Judging by the respondents' answers, we notice that Serbian EFL teachers in our study do not allow much flexibility for personal development (Table 8). Namely, they say they are the providers of knowledge and strictly stick to the instructional objectives written at the beginning of the course, which may be a sign of inflexibility, but also of the outside restrictions in terms of curriculum planning and institutional requirements. They likewise tend to maintain a well-

disciplined classroom to reduce interference to learning and avoid discussions of controversial issues and issues related to students' self-image, which might be explained by teachers' desire to prevent serious confrontations and eventual unpleasant classroom atmosphere.

Table 8. Results of the Questionnaire for Factor 7: Flexibility for Personal Development (0=almost always, 5=almost never)

Statement	Median	IqR
I provide knowledge rather than serve as a resource person.	2	2.00
I stick to the instructional objectives that I write at the beginning of a program.	1	1.75
I maintain a well-disciplined classroom to reduce interference to learning.	2	1.00
I avoid discussion of controversial subjects that involve value judgments.	2	1.00
I avoid issues that relate to the student's concept of himself/herself.	2	1.00

Comparing the results of our study to the one done by Wang (2007), we notice that Serbian teachers are more prone to accepting the principles of Western andragogy, than their Chinese colleagues, which is understandable, if we take cultural, social and geographical factors into consideration. However, there are many points of agreement between the two groups of investigated teachers, especially regarding the overall teacher-centred organization of lessons.

The second part of our research was related to the attitudes of Serbian EFL teachers to the significance of lifelong learning. The results are presented in Table 9. The majority of our participants agree learning English is helpful and it should be a lifelong phenomenon. The teachers likewise believe that the Internet should be a part of regular assessment procedures. However, it seems discouraging that teachers think that students' general aim is to pass the exam, and that they cease learning English after they have completed a course or entire schooling. The majority of teachers agree that lifelong learning should be made an important part of educational policy, nevertheless, they predominantly disagree that sufficient measures are being taken by policy makers to arrest the loss of English language skills. The results prevailingly agree to the findings by Amel (2014), indicating that teachers from both Algeria and Serbia recognize the need for making English a lifelong learning phenomenon.

Table 9. Results of the Questionnaire: Awareness of the Significance of Lifelong Learning (1=strongly agree, 5=strongly disagree)

Statement	Median	IqR
Learning English as a Foreign Language helps students in a significant way.	1	0.66
Learning English should be a lifelong phenomenon.	1	0.78
Students usually continue the process of learning English even after they have passed off.	3	1.46
Lifelong learning should be made an important part of educational policy.	2	1.24
Sufficient measures are being taken by policy makers to arrest the loss of English language skills.	4	0.77
Modern communication facilities like the internet should be part of the assessment procedure.	2	0.88
Students generally think it is sufficient to learn English just to get through the exam.	2	1.49

When the participants were asked what benefits might be accrued to those interested in making the learning of English a lifelong experience, all of them agreed that it could help them in their professional life (44 or 100%) or gain higher education (40 or 90.9%). Interestingly enough, more than a half of the teachers said learning English continuously for the rest of one's life could help one enjoy it just for the pleasure of it (28 or 63.64%), yet only 5 of them (or 11.36%) said it could make them better citizens. The results diverge from the previous study (Amel, 2014), in that a larger percentage of Serbian teachers believes that English could help students in their professional life, or gain higher education.

The final question for the participants was to rank the approaches they thought could effectively help in the achievement of the goal of lifelong learning in the order of their effectiveness. The approaches were ranked based on the means of all the rankings, hence the approach with the lowest mean is on top position, and with the highest mean is at the bottom. Results are presented in Table 10. We notice that the highest ranked approach for adults to achieve the aim of lifelong learning is critical self-awareness, followed by reflective practice and student-regulated learning. The particularly interesting fact is that our participants ranked teacher-regulated learning and development of uncertainty management as the lowest in order of importance, which could indicate that teachers feel adult learners themselves are fundamentally responsible for the continuous learning and the very teachers have little effect and almost negligible role, compared to the rest of the approaches on the ranking scale. Our findings differ from the ranked responses from the previous study by Amel (2014), meaning that Serbian EFL teachers have slightly different priorities from their Algerian colleagues. The reasons may stem from diverse sources: national and cultural background,

educational policies, applied teaching approaches, general attitudes to and familiarity with andragogy, etc.

Table 10. Ranking of the Approaches According to the Effectiveness in Achieving the Goal of Lifelong Learning

Rank	Approaches	Mean	SD
1.	Critical self-awareness	1.82	1.72
2.	Reflective practice	2.84	2.11
3.	Student-regulated learning	3.23	0.94
4.	Learning through World Wide Web	3.60	1.06
5.	Peer-and self-assisted learning	4.68	1.49
6.	Promoting critical thinking	5.93	1.40
7.	Highly contextualized learning needed in practical life	7.11	1.81
8.	Productive learning practice	7.55	1.45
9.	Teachers' continuing learning of new research	8.66	1.12
10.	Teaching the skill of learning-to-learn (teaching learning strategies)	10.11	1.33
11.	Student support services like libraries and learning resource centers	11.23	1.05
12.	Task-oriented learning (problem-based learning)	11.98	1.15
13.	Process-oriented teaching	13.09	0.47
14.	Teacher-regulated learning	13.80	1.27
15.	Development of uncertainty management	14.30	1.27

To measure the effect of several factors on the participants' attitudes towards the significance of lifelong learning, we performed additional statistical testing for each of the independent variables (gender, age, work experience, level of education and frequency of teaching adults) described more precisely in Table 11. The age bands were determined based on the available sample. The percentage counts for the attitudes to the significance of lifelong learning were provided for each of the given variable, and it is important to note that the Table 11 only provides the summary for independent variables.

Table 11. Attitudes to Significance of Lifelong Learning Across Different Factors (%)

Attitudes	Gender	Age	Work Experience	Level of Education	Tutoring Frequency	
Mostly positive (n=28)	<i>Male</i> 46.43 <i>Female</i> 53.57	25-30	0-5	60.71	<i>B.A.</i> 35.71 <i>M.A.</i> 60.71 <i>PhD</i> 3.57	<i>Occasional</i> 92.86 <i>Continuous</i> 7.14
		82.14	5-10	32.14		
		30-40	10-15	7.14		
		17.86	15-20	/		
		40-50	Over 20	/		
Mostly negative (n=6)	<i>Male</i> 33.33 <i>Female</i> 66.67	25-30	0-5	/	<i>B.A.</i> 50.0 <i>M.A.</i> 33.33 <i>PhD</i> 16.67	<i>Occasional</i> / <i>Continuous</i> 100.0
		/	5-10	/		
		30-40	10-15	/		
		50.0	15-20	33.33		
		40-50	Over 20	66.67		
Neither positive nor negative (n=10)	<i>Male</i> 30.0 <i>Female</i> 70.0	25-30	0-5	/	<i>B.A.</i> 50.0 <i>M.A.</i> 40.0 <i>PhD</i> 10.0	<i>Occasional</i> 40.0 <i>Continuous</i> 60.0
		10.0	5-10	50.0		
		30-40	10-15	30.0		
		20.0	15-20	20.0		
		40-50	Over 20	/		

Mann-Whitney U test was performed to measure the effect of gender and investigate whether there is a statistically significant difference between male and female respondents regarding their overall attitude to lifelong learning, determined by comparing the responses *mostly positive/negative*, *neither positive nor negative*. The difference proved to be not statistically significant, whatsoever ($U=0.500p=1.000$), thus we concluded that gender does not considerably affect the attitudes towards lifelong learning.

Kruskal-Wallis H test presented age as a statistically significant factor ($\chi^2=25.487p=0.005$), yet the version of SPSS at hand did not allow further post-hoc examinations to determine the exact groups between which there is statistical significance. Based on the visible results, we can only say that the group 20-30 years of age generally shows more positive attitudes to lifelong learning, than the 30-30 years of age group. The difference may have resulted from the actual difference in attitudes of our respondents, or due to a methodological issue, related to the formulation of statements, or classification of respondents based on their answers. Likewise, the number of respondents with the expressed negative

attitude to lifelong learning was perhaps too small, hence unreliable. Additional research is necessary to obtain more valid conclusions.

Furthermore, we tested the effect of work experience and level of education on the opinions regarding lifelong learning. The results of the Kruskal-Wallis H test measuring the effect of work experience proved that work experience is a statistically significant factor affecting teachers' attitudes ($\chi^2=28.273$ $p=0.005$). Again, with no available post-hoc results, we can only notice that there were visible differences in the attitudes to lifelong learning between groups of 0-5 and 10-15 years of experience, as well as between the group of 5-10 and 10-15 years of experience. The groups comprising teachers with less teaching experience generally reported more positive attitudes to lifelong learning, yet further research is necessary to reach more reliable conclusions.

Unlike age and work experience, level of education proved to be not statistically significant factor affecting the attitudes towards lifelong learning, since the between group significance ($\chi^2=0.266$ $p=0.875$) showed lack of statistical significance.

The Mann-Whitney U test of the effect of frequency of working with adult EFL learners on teachers' attitudes to the significance of lifelong learning proved tutoring frequency to be the statistically significant factor ($\chi^2=12.000$ $p=0.000$), i.e. there were statistically significant differences in responses between the group of teachers who taught adults occasionally, and the ones who did it continuously. Generally, teachers from the latter group expressed more negative, or neither negative nor positive attitudes to the importance of lifelong learning, than the teachers working occasionally with adults. This may have been the result of some teachers' negative experience of working with adults, or the particular negative attitudes due to personality issues. Again, further research seems prerequisite to establish more reliable conclusions.

CONCLUSION

The current study attempted at investigating Serbian EFL teachers' attitudes to the principles of andragogy and the significance of lifelong learning. We further aimed at determining the possible factors affecting the teachers' attitudes towards lifelong learning. A total of 44 teachers working at primary, secondary and tertiary level of education in several Serbian cities, having at least occasional experience of working with adult EFL learners, participated in the study. The primary instruments for obtaining data were two questionnaires adapted from Conti (1998), Wang (2007) and Amel (2014). Data collection was performed from December 2014 to October 2015, and the results were later quantitatively and qualitatively analyzed.

The obtained findings related to the attitudes towards the principles of andragogy are similar to the conducted research by Wang (2007) in certain aspects, yet there are divergent findings, mostly related to the fact that Serbian EFL teachers are more eager to accept and apply adult education recommendations. More considerable agreement, nevertheless, was found comparing Serbian EFL teachers' attitudes to lifelong learning to the previously derived conclusions by Amel (2014). Except for the ranking of approaches according to their effectiveness in achieving the goal of lifelong learning, the rest of the results mostly confirm the previous results, differing, understandably, in the distribution of percentage and mean responses.

Additional analyses performed to investigate factors potentially affecting the participants' attitudes to the significance of lifelong learning proved gender and level of education to be not statistically significant, while, age, work experience, and adult tutoring frequency were shown as statistically significant influences on the teachers' attitudes. The existent negative attitudes to lifelong learning, though fairly scarce, could have resulted from personal negative experience, inadequately applied teaching approaches, or simply relevant knowledge deficiency.

The results of the present study have important implications for adult EFL education in Serbian context. More attention should be paid to introducing more suitable teaching material that would increase learners' interest, as well as to the testing format, that will direct students to further learning along with providing them with the information about the current progress. Teachers need to work on developing their role, more as an information resource, rather than as knowledge providers. Furthermore, extensive research and practice is necessary in order for teachers to familiarize themselves with the fundamental notions regarding adult education. Students should become aware that learning English is a lifelong phenomenon and that it should continue after schooling, hence EFL teachers may play the crucial role in familiarizing students with the ways to facilitate learning and enable them to continue their EFL education autonomously.

The possible limitations of the present study lie in the relatively small number of participants and the design of the instruments. Perhaps including several open-ended questions would have provided more revealing pieces of information. Moreover, the chosen sample could have included more teachers with longer experience of working with adults continuously.

Future studies may focus on other psychological, educational and socio-economic factors influencing the negative attitudes to lifelong learning, even though they were scarce in our research. Furthermore, future papers may investigate the effects of the preferred and applied teaching approaches of teachers and the afore mentioned psychological and educational factors on their attitudes towards learner centred activities, personalizing instruction, relating teaching to experience, assessing student needs, climate building, participation in the learning process and flexibility for personal development.

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STAVOVI SRPSKIH NASTAVNIKA ENGLESKOG KAO STRANOG JEZIKA PREMA ANDRAGOGIJI I ZNAČAJU DOŽIVOTNOG UČENJA

Rezime

U radu se ispituju stavovi srpskih nastavnika engleskog kao stranog jezika prema andragogiji i značaju doživotnog učenja. Takođe smo pokušali da istražimo moguće faktore koji utiču na date stavove, poput pola, godina starosti, nivoa obrazovanja, iskustva i učestalosti rada sa odraslima. Stoga smo sproveli istraživanje zasnovano na dve ankete iz prethodnih studija Venga (2007) i Amel (2014). Statistička analiza dobijenih podataka pokazala je pozitivne stavove prema primeni andragogije u nastavi sa odraslim učenicima engleskog kao stranog jezika uopšte uzev, kao i prema doživotnom učenju. Što se tiče faktora koji potencijalno utiču na stavove prema doživotnom učenju, iskustvo, godine starosti i učestalost rada sa odraslima su se pokazali kao statistički značajni, dok su razlike među polovima i nivoima obrazovanja proizvod puke slučajnosti. Na kraju rada se takođe potcrtavaju implikacije od posebnog značaja za srpske nastavnike engleskog kao stranog jezika koji rade sa odraslima.

Ključne reči: andragogija, doživotno učenje, srpski nastavnici engleskog kao stranog jezika, stavovi, faktori.