

Chapter XXI

**PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCIES OF FOREIGN LANGUAGE
TEACHERS IN ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS**

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Abstract: The process of globalization and the development of a knowledge-based society has greatly influenced all spheres of social life, especially in the area of education that has a primary task, which is to enable an individual to live and work under these new conditions. This also requires new competencies and new, demanding tasks are being set before teachers on a daily basis, which is expanding their freedom of actions. They are required to improve the quality of the teaching process constantly by introducing various innovations in teaching and to undergo continuous professional development that needs to be a dynamic and durable process. In this respect, foreign language teachers have a particularly important role in trends related to the improvement of the quality of education and teaching. Through their work, they create a teaching environment that supports the development of competencies necessary for life and work in the 21st century. There is no doubt that the need for continuous professional training of all those involved in the educational process is a necessity and obligation. So, this topic is certainly up-to-date and so far not many studies have been carried out about it, especially in Herzegovina-Neretva Canton elementary and secondary schools. Therefore, the purpose of this paper was to clearly highlight the professional competence and professional development of foreign language teachers, their attitudes and assessments related to the possibilities for continuous professional development and adopting new learning strategies. The main aim of the research was to gain insight into the attitudes of foreign language teachers towards the importance of continuous professional development and its impact on improving professional competencies.¹ The research was conducted in elementary and secondary schools in Herzegovina-Neretva Canton, Bosnia and Herzegovina, on a sample of 91 foreign language teachers (English,

¹ In effect, *competence* and *competency* (from Latin *competentia* which meant an agreement, a conjunction, and possibly expertise) are interchangeable, though *competence* is more often used to describe a person's general ability, while *competency* is more often used to describe a person's ability to perform a certain task (<https://grammarist.com/words/competence-and-competency/>).

German, Turkish, and French). The following methods were used: descriptive method and survey method. After conducting the research and the obtained data, analysis and interpretation of the results were performed.

Key words: *professional competence, professional development, foreign language, foreign language teacher.*

Introduction

The traditional system of education functioned on the basis of syllabi and curricula that represented summaries of the content the teachers were supposed to adhere to, and the focus was on the transfer of knowledge and the contents of what would be taught. For the past decades, there has been a significant departure from such an approach and a turning point that, instead of a uniform transfer of knowledge, implies the development of competencies. There are different interpretations and meanings of the word *competence*, and it is easiest to say that it is the ability someone has. It comes from a Latin verb *to compete*, which means *to achieve, to be better* (Anić 2001: 710), and may indicate recognized expertise in some field, competence (Čedić et al. 2007: 299). Greene (1999) defines competencies as measurable working habits and personal skills used to achieve work goals, while Mijatović (1999) understands competence as a personal ability to function, perform, manage, or operate at the level of specific knowledge, skills and abilities a person can prove in his work.

The focus is on teaching concentrated on students, and on determining teaching goals as measurable learning outcomes². This approach implies the design of competence-based curriculum as a new paradigm in education (Previšić 2007). For this reason new, demanding tasks are being set before all teachers on a daily basis, which is expanding their freedom of actions, and their competencies are growing. They are required to improve the quality of the teaching process constantly by introducing various innovations in it, and by continuous professional development that needs to be a dynamic and durable process. Along with the development of technology and science, the knowledge about newer and more effective teaching methods is being developed, and therefore professional qualification and training are a constant, as well as the legal obligation of each educator.

Professional training of employees in education as an integral part of professional competencies has become an indispensable segment of lifelong learning and the improvement of the quality of work of all educators, professional associates and headmasters. The professional qualifications, which implies

² Learning outcomes state what a learner is expected to know, be able to do and understand at the end of a learning process or sequence (http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/files/4156_en.pdf).

both school and out-of-school activities, must be taken into account by every educator who wants to improve his/her work, make it more quality, more creative, more receptive to today's students.

Theoretical framework of research

It is obvious that education and training for quality life in the 21st century is focused on building competencies different from those that were dominant in the past. (Vrkić Dimić 2013). Contemporary access to teaching is based on outcomes and the key is the ability to show what is learned. Strengthening the inner potential of the school is achieved through the professional development of teachers and other associates. The quality and continuous professional training of teachers is regulated differently by different institutions, depending on the country. Educators, teachers, associates, and the headmasters of educational institutions and their deputies have the right and obligation to their permanent professional development and training, as prescribed by the law. Regardless of the complex educational policy in Bosnia and Herzegovina, all applicable laws on primary, secondary and higher education at the state, entity and cantonal level require mandatory continuous professional training of teachers. Thus, in Article 90, the Law on Primary Education of the Herzegovina-Neretva Canton states that "Teachers and associates and other employees have the right and obligation to continuous professional and pedagogical training" (Law on Primary Education of HNK, *Official Gazette of HNK*, No. 5/00, 4/04, 5/04), and in the Law on Secondary Education of the Herzegovina-Neretva Canton, Article 100 states the same (Law on Secondary Education of HNK, *Official Gazette of HNK*, No. 8/00, 4/04, 5/04 I 8/06).

In Croatia, Serbia and Slovenia there is a certification and scoring of teachers and they are obliged to complete a certain number of educational trainings during the school year in order to collect scores for promotion and increase of salaries. Although in Bosnia and Herzegovina such practice does not exist, everything is going in that direction, and all teachers are involved in different types of activities which support their professional competences.

Professional development and training

Professional development is a complex process characterized by permanence in adopting, enriching and monitoring new knowledge, and acquiring and strengthening the skills and attitudes necessary for a wide range of teaching roles. Because of the key role teachers play in students' achievements, the advancement of professional training of teachers is of high importance in all changes within the whole education system.

Governments, educational institutions and international organizations manage the process of continuing professional training of teachers. In education, the term *professional development* may be used in reference to a wide variety of specialized training, formal education, or advanced professional learning intended to help administrators, teachers and other educators improve their professional knowledge, competence, skill, and effectiveness (www.edglossary.org/professional-development/).

Professional development is defined as “the process of improving staff skills and competencies needed to produce outstanding educational results for students” (Hassel 1999) and educating teachers is usually accomplished in the form of continuous professional training that begins on the first day and ends on the last day of their professional practice (Craft 2000: 47).

Many types of research, therefore, emphasize the importance of the continuous professional development of teachers of all profiles. In his research, Burcar (2005) identified the needs for professional teacher training for elementary school teachers, from which it can be concluded that the need for professional training exists and that teachers want professional training to exchange experiences from practice; they think that the organization of work should be in small groups by the method of workshops; the content should be determined according to the actual needs of the teacher; the lack of resources should not be an obstacle to professional improvement, especially outside the place of residence; any form of organized education is welcome; they do not have special remarks on the quality of the lecturers; they want written training materials; reporting on improvement is good at all levels; and there seems to be insufficient training with the topic of evaluation.

Many authors have dealt with the topic of professional development of foreign language teachers who are more than ever faced with the constant need for professional training. Thus, Thornbury (2006) states that professional development of teachers can be of a formal nature (during a teacher’s work experience, and is characterized by attendance at shorter or longer courses, or professional conferences). However, it is more connected to informal, school and apprenticeship programs that incorporate cycles of teaching practice and reflection (i.e. reflection on their own teaching).

In addition to setting new standards for teaching and learning foreign languages, new methods, approaches and techniques, the main objective of foreign language learning is also set up - the acquisition of students’ communicative competences (Kitić 2007). Richards and Farrell (2009) explain the reasons for constant professional development of foreign language teachers, pointing out that they are expected to keep up with new developments in the profession and reconsider their skills regularly. In addition to the definition of better ways to prepare teachers for the challenges of their profession, there is also the explicit agreement that college preparation is not enough. When we

talk about improving the quality of education of educators, teachers, associates and headmasters, we not only focus on their initial higher education, but their professional training and permanent professional development are also very important. Both forms of education aim at lifelong training and renewal of the knowledge and skills of educators, naturally in the function of encouraging lifelong learning for students. In addition to the definition of better ways to prepare teachers for the challenges of the profession, there is also the explicit agreement that college preparation is not enough. Holdsworth (Holdsworth, in Scheerens 2010: 12) argues that even though we go from the assumption that the initial [undergraduate] education of teachers is at the highest level and is of high quality, it cannot provide the teachers with the knowledge and skills they need throughout their lifetime.

The professional development of teachers begins with the acquisition of higher education knowledge for practice, continues during the teaching work by acquiring knowledge in practice, and it is upgraded by acquiring knowledge about practice based on personal reflection of one's own experience. Because of the importance of the professional development of teachers to raise the level of quality in schools, it is necessary to continuously improve the teacher's competences acquired during the initial [undergraduate] education and internships (Kostović Vranješ 2014: 111). Ivanek (2016: 5) claims that previous research papers, related to professional teacher training, are mostly based on teacher assessment frequency, need, content, forms, organization, motivation factors and difficulties of professional development.

In their study *Effective Teacher Professional Development*, Darling-Hammond, Hyler and Gardner (2017) claim that sophisticated forms of teaching are needed to develop student competencies such as deep mastery of challenging content, critical thinking, complex problem solving, effective communication and collaboration, and self-direction. In turn, effective *professional development* (PD) is needed to help teachers learn and refine the instructional strategies required to teach these skills. They also claim that the research has noted that many professional development initiatives appear ineffective in supporting changes in teachers' practices and student learning. They established seven widely shared features of effective professional development. According to them, there are seven elements of effective professional development:

1. They are content focused.
2. They incorporate active learning strategies.
3. They engage teachers in collaboration.
4. They use models and/or modelling.
5. They provide coaching and expert support.
6. They include opportunities for feedback and reflection.
7. They are of sustained duration.

They define effective professional development as structured professional learning that results in changes to teacher knowledge and practices, and improvements in student learning outcomes. This paper offers rich descriptions of the combined characteristics of professional development that research has found to positively relate to student outcomes. The authors state that even the best-designed professional development may fail to produce desired outcomes if it is poorly implemented. At the same time, a growing number of rigorous studies establish that well-designed PD can, when effectively implemented, lead to desirable changes in teacher practice and student outcomes.

A well-designed and implemented PD should be considered an essential component of a comprehensive system of teaching and learning that supports students in developing the knowledge, skills, and competencies they need to thrive in the 21st century. So, the continuous professional development of teachers in the education system implies attending a certain number of seminars as well as various forms of organized and planned transfers of knowledge or exchanges of professional experiences within or between educational institutions.

Professional competencies

Competence and teacher competence have become the central theme of pedagogy because it is trying to explore, perceive and reach to the fullest competency the profile of a contemporary teacher to maximize his/her role in the upbringing and education of children and young people. The literature mentions three dimensions of teachers' competencies: professional, pedagogical-didactic-methodical and work competence. Professional competencies include:

- the level of general knowledge
- planning capability
- ability to perform tasks
- participation in projects
- self-evaluation and evaluation
- professional development.

Jurčić (2012) considers that the pedagogical competencies of a modern teacher are personal, subject, communicative, didactic-methodical, reflexive, social, emotional, intercultural, and civic competencies. In the document *Tuning Educational Structures in Europe: Summary of Outcomes – Education*, the following specific competencies for teachers are listed: dedication to promoting achievement and students' progress, competencies in the development and promotion of learning strategies, competencies in student and parent counselling, knowledge of subjects and areas of teaching, ability to apply learning,

ability to manage time effectively, ability to analyse and self-evaluate one's own work, awareness of the need for continuous professional development, ability to assess learning outcomes and learner achievements, competences for collaborative problem solving, ability to respond to different students' needs, ability to improve the learning environment, and ability to adapt the curriculum to the specific context of education (Lončarić Pejić, Papak 2009).

Professional competences, development, and training have become an area of interest in scientific research and educational policy interventions everywhere in the world and interest in it is growing. Education is the basis of progress, and numerous studies, monographs and documents, particularly the EU, seek to further the goals of education policy in the future. The European and national standards, guidelines and forecasts of the competencies needed for the student and European citizen of the 21st century have been recorded in many documents³ which are later used to design a competency profile of teachers and educators. In Croatia also, in an attempt to define the most relevant set of foreign language teacher competences, the document *Competencies of Primary School Foreign language Teacher in the Republic of Croatia* was drawn up. According to that document, there are two basic areas of competencies: subject-specific and educational competencies. Subject-specific competencies include competencies related to language and culture, whereas educational competencies relate to foreign language teaching (Drakulić 2013: 161). It is a very important document, which systematically defines areas of competencies within which foreign language teachers should professionally evolve. In Bosnia and Herzegovina, there isn't yet such a valuable document in the field of foreign language learning, but the Centre for Policy and Governance (CPU) made an analysis of the Bosnian educational system and published the document called *Initial Teacher Competencies* (2015), which implies complex knowledge and skills originated from initial [undergraduate] teacher education. So, the professional development of teachers and foreign language teachers is a constant issue in the research agenda of the profession.

³ Common European Principles for Teacher Competences and Qualifications (European Commission 2005)

Improving the Quality of Teacher Education (Commission of the European Communities 2007)

Tuning educational structures in Europe: Summary of Outcomes – Education (2005)

Teacher Education in Europe: An ETUCE Policy Paper (European Trade Union Committee For Education 2008)

Key Competences for Lifelong Learning — A European Reference Framework (The European Parliament and the Council of The European Union 2006)

Improving competences for the 21st Century: An Agenda for European Cooperation on Schools (Commission of the European Communities 2008).

Research methodology

The problem of the research is related to the theme of professional development of foreign language teachers and its influence on their professional competences. Therefore, we have defined the aim of the research, which is to examine attitudes and appraisals of foreign language teachers related to professional development and training, as well as the impact of continuous education and training on their professional competencies. The main objective of the research, as seen from its subject, was to gain insight into the attitudes of foreign language teachers towards the importance of continuous professional training, and its impact on their daily work and the improvement of their professional competencies. Based on the determined objectives, the following tasks were set:

1. To examine the attitudes of the respondents related to the importance of professional trainings for their further professional development.
2. To examine the attitudes of the respondents related to motivation for professional development and training and continuous advancement in the profession.
3. To identify which aspects of professional education teachers think are the most or the least useful.
4. To examine whether there is a statistically significant difference in the attitudes of the respondents with regard to the independent variable defined as *the foreign language they teach*.

Based on these tasks, we put forward the following hypothesis:

1. Foreign language teachers have a positive attitude related to professional development and training because it contributes to the development of their professional competences.
2. Teachers are motivated for the continuous professional development.
3. Foreign language teachers believe that a study stay abroad is the most useful for their professional development.
4. There is no statistically significant difference in the attitudes of the respondents related to professional development with regard to the independent variable defined as *years of service*.

In the research, we used the descriptive method, survey method, and the scaling technique. For the purpose of this research, as an instrument a self-made questionnaire for foreign language teachers was used. The questionnaire was composed of 21 statements that respondents had to answer by rounding one number on a Likert five-degree scale and so expressing their degree of agreement or disagreement with the proposed statements. The second part consisted of twelve terms which should be ranked on a scale from 1 to 5. A

suitable sample was selected for the purposes of this research – foreign language teachers (English, German, Turkish and French) who are teaching in elementary and secondary schools in Herzegovina-Neretva Canton, the area of Mostar municipality (N = 91).

Table 1: Population and sample of respondents

<i>Type of school</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>
Elementary school	52	57.1
Secondary school	39	42.9
Total	91	100.0

<i>Foreign language</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>
English	63	69.2
German	19	20.9
Turkish	8	8.8
French	1	1.1
Total	91	100.0

The research was conducted in late March and early April 2019. The respondents filled out the questionnaire by a paper-pencil method, completely anonymous and voluntary, and could at any time give up on completing the survey questionnaire. After conducting the survey, the obtained data are operationalized in the form of variables and inserted into a statistical program Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS 22.0).

Interpretation and research results

Attitudes of foreign language teachers related to professional development

In this section we will show the most significant research results and make a short analysis. The first task of the research was to determine and examine attitudes of respondents about opportunities for professional development and its effects on the development of professional competencies of foreign language teachers. Based on this we put forward the first hypothesis which is worded as follows: *Foreign language teachers have a positive attitude toward professional development and training because it contributes to the development of their professional competencies.*

Figure 1 shows the attitudes of foreign language teachers related to professional development and training and its effects on teachers’ professional competences.

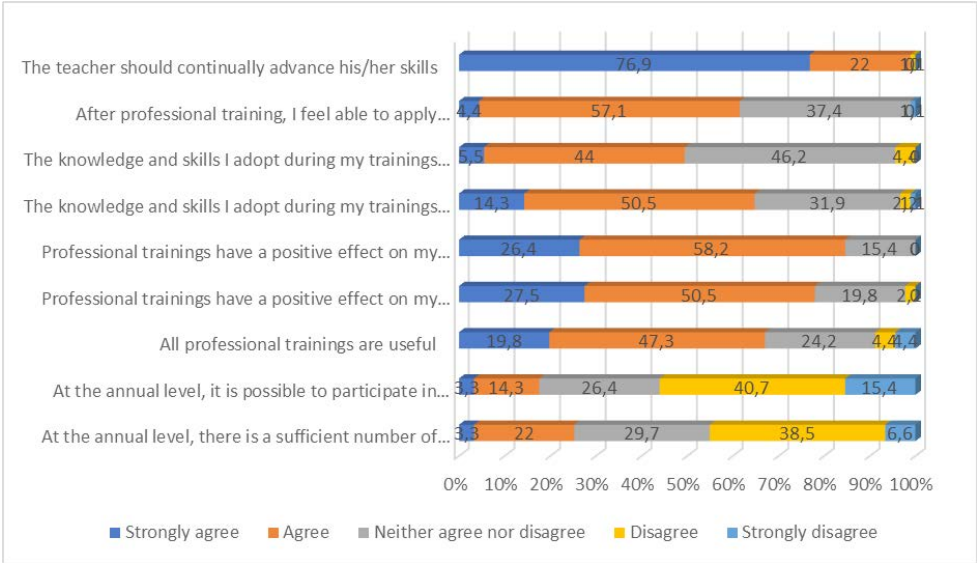


Figure 1. Attitudes of the respondents related to professional development and its effects on professional competences

The descriptive indicators in Figure 1 show that the majority of foreign language teachers had a positive attitude related to professional development, so 47.3% of them agreed with the statement that professional training is useful, while only 4.4% disagreed with the following statement. Most of the respondents, 50.5% of them agreed that the knowledge they’d adopted during their training had made their daily work easier, and only 1.1% of respondents disagreed with this. Even 46.2% of them had a neutral attitude as to whether the knowledge and skills they acquired during professional training could be applied daily to their work, while 44.0% of the respondents agreed with the statement that they applied this knowledge and skills on a daily basis. Most of them, 57.1%, agreed with the statement that after the professional training they felt capable of applying contemporary strategies and methods in their work, and even 76.9% of respondents strongly agreed with the statement that teachers needed to improve their skills continuously. Not one of the respondents chose the answer “strongly disagree” for this statement. As for the opportunities for professional training of foreign language teachers at the annual level, most respondents disagreed with the statement that a sufficient number of professional seminars and workshops are organized annually; actually 38.5% of them,

and 40.7% of respondents disagreed with the statement that they had enough opportunities to participate in various projects related to teaching foreign languages. According to this analysis we can conclude that foreign language teachers want to improve their professional skills continuously.

Based on the analysis of the results and the obtained values, we can confirm our first hypothesis which is worded as follows: *Foreign language teachers have a positive attitude toward professional development and training because it contributes to the development of their professional competencies.*

Motivation of foreign language teachers related to professional development

The second task of the research was to examine teachers' attitudes regarding their motivation for professional development and continuous advancement in the profession. Based on this we put forward the second hypothesis which is worded as follows: *Teachers are motivated for continuous professional development.*

Figure 2 shows attitudes of foreign language teachers regarding their motivation for professional development and continuous advancement in the profession.

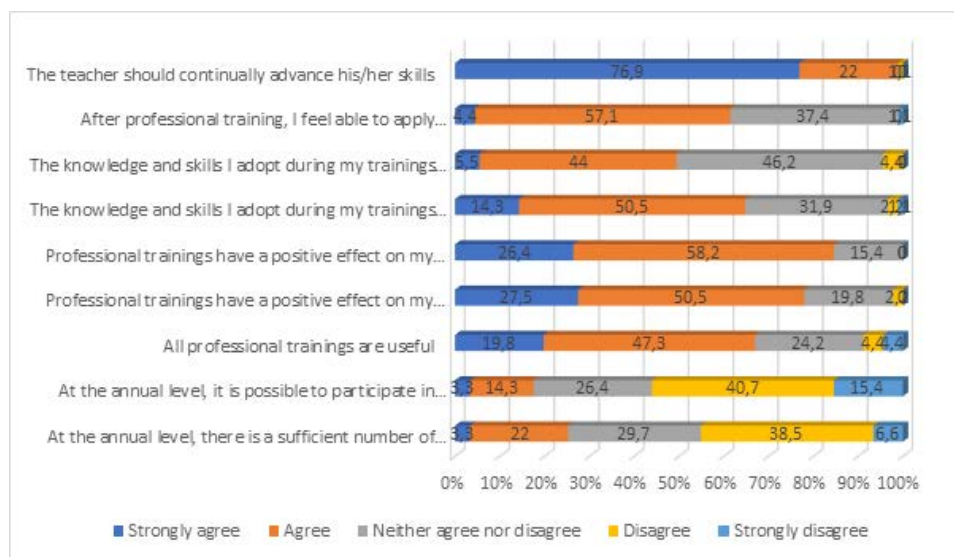


Figure 2: Attitudes of respondents related to the motivation for professional development

As for the motivation of foreign language teachers for continuous professional training, their attitudes are mostly positive. We can see from the above graph that 61.5% of them stated that they had *often* attended workshops and

seminars related to professional development, and for this indicator, *I regularly attend professional development trainings* none of them had chosen the answers *rarely* or *never*. Even 53.8% of teachers think that the topics of professional development are *often* interesting, and for this indicator *The topics of professional training are interesting*, none of the teachers chose the answers *rarely* and *never*. Regarding professional training participation, 47.3% of teachers are *often* motivated to participate in various professional training activities, and only 1.1% of respondents stated that they are *never* motivated for professional development. Teachers stated that school headmasters *often* encourage them to attend professional training sessions, even 50.5% of them, and none of the teachers chose the answer *never* for this statement. Regarding the active involvement of teachers in various aspects of preparation and implementation of professional training, only 6.5% of them stated that they are *often* engaged in this, and 36.3% are *rarely* engaged in such activities. Our research showed that teachers are *rarely* able to choose the topics of professional development sessions, 44.0% of them said that, and only 19.8% of teachers *often* have the opportunity to choose the topic of professional trainings. A positive culture in school also *often* affects the desire of teachers for professional development, and 48.4% of teachers stated this.

Unfortunately, attending professional training does not necessarily mean advancement in the profession in terms of a better workplace or higher salary, and 39.6% of teachers selected the answer *rarely* for this statement. Even 42.9% of teachers said that they are *always* open to the possibility of further education, and for this statement, none of the teachers chose the answer *never*. Even 58.2% of teachers agreed to follow new scientific ideas and achievements in their profession, and for this statement none of the teachers chose the answer *never*. Most of the teachers *often* attend various types of professional training on their own initiative, 49.5% of them, and only 2.2% of teachers said they never do that. Schools are more and more initiators and organizers of various aspects of professional trainings, so 41% of teachers said that their schools *sometimes* organize some aspects of professional trainings.

Based on the analysis of results and obtained values, we can confirm our second hypothesis which was worded as follows: *Teachers are motivated for continuous professional development*.

Attitudes of respondents related to different types of professional development

The third task of the research was to identify the types of professional development teachers think are the most, and the least useful. Based on this we have put forward the third hypothesis which was worded as follows: *Teachers believe that a study stay abroad is the most useful for their professional development*.

Therefore, we tried to identify the most and least useful types of professional development that our foreign language teachers usually attend during their work in school. In literature, there are a wide variety of theories about what kinds of professional development are most effective as well as divergent research findings.

Attitudes of respondents related to the most and least useful types of professional development are shown in Figure 3.

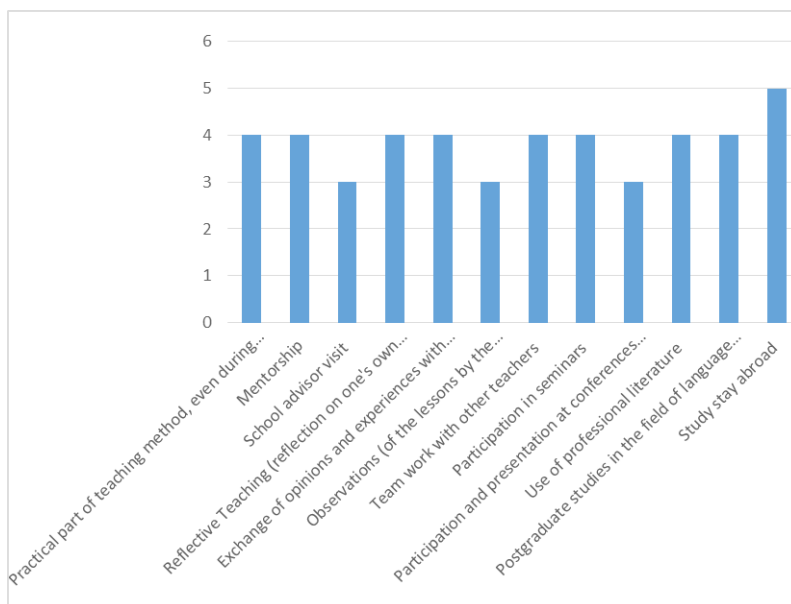


Figure 3 Attitudes related to different types of professional development

The type of professional development most often mentioned was “study stay abroad” (study trip). The respondents chose this as the most useful type of professional development, probably because there are not many opportunities for such useful teacher training, especially for foreign language teachers. Other forms of professional development are also quite well ranked and teachers consider them useful for their professional development. Teachers think that a school advisor visit is the least useful for their professional development.

Based on the analysis of the results and the obtained values, we can confirm our third hypothesis which is worded as follows: *Teachers believe that a study stay abroad is the most useful for their professional development.*

Attitudes of respondents related to professional development and its contribution to the development of professional competences

The fourth task of the research was to examine whether there is a statistically significant difference between the respondents regarding their attitude toward professional development and its contribution to the development of professional competencies with regard to the foreign language they teach. Based on this, we put forwards the fourth hypothesis which is worded as follows: *There is no statistically significant difference between respondents regarding their attitudes related to professional development and its contribution to the development of the professional competencies with respect to the years of service.* The distribution of respondents' answers are shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Attitudes of foreign language teachers related to the professional development

Indicators	Values χ^2	df
At the annual level, there is a good level of vocational training related to the foreign language (seminars, workshops, lectures etc.)	4,68	8
At the annual level, it is possible to participate in various projects related to foreign language teaching	2,62	8
All professional trainings are useful	12,24	8
Professional trainings have a positive effect on my professional competences	4,81	6
Professional trainings have a positive effect on my pedagogical, didactic and methodical competences	1,20	4
The knowledge and skills I adopt during my trainings make my daily work easier	4,80	8
The knowledge and skills I adopt during my trainings are applied daily in my classroom	2,95	6
After professional training, I feel able to apply contemporary teaching strategies and teaching methods	5,27	6
The teacher should continually advance his/her skills	2,27	4

The obtained value χ^2 for each indicator is lower than the boundary values at the significance level of 0.05 and 0.01 for the corresponding *df*, which indicates that there is no statistically significant difference in the teacher's estimates of professional development and its contribution to the development of professional competencies with respect to the years of service.

Based on the obtained values, we can confirm the fourth hypothesis which is worded as follows: *There is no statistically significant difference between respondents regarding their attitudes related to professional development and its contribution to the development of the professional competencies with respect to the years of service.*

Conclusion

In this paper, we addressed the issue of foreign language teachers' professional development, since teacher professional learning and development is of increasing interest as one way to support the highly complex skills students need in order to succeed in the global market of the 21st century. Thus, teachers from all around the world should have constant access to opportunities for quality professional training to enhance their skills and the success of their students. Professional development should actually be the change and upgrading of the teacher's personality and his/her work, all in accordance with his/her own needs, the needs of science, and the profession.

The research has shown that foreign language teachers both in elementary and secondary schools are very much interested and motivated in continuous professional development and thus shows that they want to advance further in their profession. The school climate is mostly friendly and the teachers are also supported by the school they work in and by the headmaster. But they rarely have the opportunity to be actively engaged in the preparation and presentation of professional training topics, and that should be changed as soon as possible. Unfortunately, the research confirms that attending various seminars does not mean that the teachers will make some significant advances in the profession or get a higher salary due to that fact.

Foreign language teachers regarded almost all aspects of professional development as useful and recognized the benefits of continuous professional development. A study stay abroad is a kind of professional development that our foreign language teachers really want/need, mostly in order to improve their communicative skills. Due to this fact, all institutions responsible for organizing and conducting professional teacher training should move toward more effective and more engaging professional development models. It cannot, therefore, be reduced to occasional seminars and professional gatherings.

As we mentioned before, the contemporary understanding of the educational process redefines the traditional role of the teacher: s/he no longer plays the role of a person who not only possesses and transmits knowledge, but also needs to possess and establish positive interpersonal and intrapersonal relationships in the classroom. The quality of the teaching process therefore depends entirely on the teacher's professional competences as well as on his/her personal characteristics (Drakulić 2013: 158).

This paper is only a small contribution to the study of attitudes of foreign language teachers in Herzegovina-Neretva Canton related to their continuous professional development and gained competences, therefore, it should be the starting point for further research and overview of this important issue.

In order for educational staff to be competent to develop the competencies of the students needed in the global labour market of the 21st century, they need to develop their own lifelong professional skills. If a teacher gains basic teaching competence during his/her initial [undergraduate] education, and if s/he expands and improves them during her/his professional training, then s/he is certainly the cornerstone of effective education.

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