

The formation of soft skills by means of the discipline "Foreign language" in a non-linguistic university

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Abstract. A demanded specialist must have a competency matrix and a number of skills that are necessary for successful work, which in modern pedagogy are called “soft skills”. The article discusses the concept of "soft skills", the authors made an attempt to systematize the component composition of soft skills and describe their content. On the basis of pedagogical experience, the most effective forms of organizing foreign language teaching in a non-linguistic university are proposed, which are optimal for the formation of soft skills.

Keywords: soft skills, foreign language for special purposes, communication, specialist, teaching methods

Modern society is constantly changing, which is reflected, firstly, in the labor market, forming a demand for specialists of a new formation, and secondly, in the Federal State Educational Standards. Changes in the educational paradigm from “knowledge-centric” to competence-based can no longer fully reflect the current situation in education: in addition to professional competencies, employees must possess professional or soft skills, since they are the ones that arouse increasing interest from companies and scientists. The purpose of this work is to clarify the concept of "soft skills", to analyze the component composition of the universal skills of a modern specialist, as well as to determine the methods and technologies of teaching a foreign language in order to effectively form the soft skills of students at a non-linguistic university.

According to Margaret Andrews, a lecturer at Harvard University in the United States, «regardless of the country, industry or field in which graduates will work, the desire for leadership, the ability to work well in a team, communication skills are those «soft skills» that can provide significant influence on future career» [4]. This opinion is confirmed in a number of studies, in particular, in the large-scale project of 2013 by Google Project Oxygen. The company-leader has analyzed the career success of its employees since 1998 and has come to the conclusion that among the eight most important qualities of top managers that have determined their success in the company, seven are soft skills. These skills include the ability to communicate, listen, understand others, their values and opinions, show empathy and support colleagues, solve problems, be a good mentor, and have critical and analytical thinking. In 2015, the Organization for Economic Development and Cooperation (OECD) conducted a study "Skills for Social Progress. The Power of Emotional and Social Skills", which confirmed that soft skills are essential for success in careers and in life today.

First of all, let us define the concept of "soft skills". In the domestic scientific and methodological literature, the foreign term «soft skills» has a number of analogues: "flexible", "soft", "human" skills, "skills of the XXI century"; "Key", "basic", "end-to-end" or "universal", "meta competence", etc.

"Soft" skills began to form in the US Army in the 1970s and belonged to work-related skills. The term encompasses the human skills, social skills and personality traits required to build a career. However, in the Russian labor market, "soft" skills have appeared relatively recently, and in domestic pedagogy they have not yet been sufficiently studied. The concept of "soft skills" has been used in the scientific works of foreign scientists since the end of the 60s in the field of business, in the domestic scientific literature it appears in the 90s. XX century. It is customary to consider "soft" skills or soft skills in addition to technical, "hard" skills, i.e. professional skills to ensure the performance of professional actions. Thus, soft skills are mainly associated with communication, creativity and management; they determine the effectiveness of the employee's thinking in a decision-making situation. Research shows that "hard" skills only guarantee 15% of success, while the remaining 85% depend on "soft" skills.

What are the main components of soft skills?

Modern pedagogy combines soft skills into three large groups:

- personality cognitive skills;
- social and communication skills;
- the skills that make up emotional intelligence.

The National Association of Colleges and Employers (USA) conducted a study of 260 organizations, which identified the following five soft skills that are considered the most valuable in employees. They are listed below in order of importance:

- 1) the ability to work in a team;
- 2) make decisions and solve problems;
- 3) communicate with people inside and outside the organization;
- 4) plan, organize and prioritize;
- 5) search and process information

In 2016, in Davos (Switzerland), within the framework of the World Economic Forum, the main soft skills (or "soft skills") were formulated, which are necessary for a modern specialist to carry out successful professional activities. According to the report, soft skills include the characteristic features of cognitive and intellectual activity in general, emotional intelligence, managing one's own activities and ways of constructive interaction with other people.

The soft skills below are compiled from the 2020 Soft Skills Rankings voiced by the World Economic Forum.

1. ***Problem solving*** is associated not only with the usual analytical work of finding the right solution, but also with the ability to correct mistakes.
2. ***Confidence***. This skill refers more to a team leader who demonstrates not only confidence in himself and his decisions, but also confidence in the team and each participant.
3. ***Emotional intelligence and empathy***. The ability to reflect, assess past experience, the behavior of team members, the ability to "understand the reality of another."
4. ***Time management and stress management***. Competent distribution of resources (human, time) is the key to success. Fatigue and emotional burnout affects the efficiency of work, only a clear planning of work, the climate in the team are ways to solve this problem.
5. ***Creativity***. All innovations are born in creative search. Modern researchers note the significant role of creative thinking, the ability to go beyond.
6. ***Courage and enterprise***. In the Russian language there is a catch phrase that cheek brings success. The ability to make a risky decision, try something new, generate bold ideas is soft skills
7. ***Motivation***. A stimulus always provokes a reaction, but at the stage of burnout, fatigue, it is difficult to maintain a high level of motivation. The bearer of such a soft skill sets promising goals "ahead of the curve," in which the achievement of the median result is not final.
8. ***Vision and visualization***. Imaginative thinking, building a plan, including an educational trajectory, is an integral component of the work. Brainstorming, discussions, playing roles in organizing a meeting often become an element of corporate management.

9. **Teamwork.** Individualism and independence are no longer the hallmarks of a leader; modern conditions require collective decisions, the ability to work in a team.

10. **Curiosity** - the implementation of the principle of life-long learning. The modern specialist is forced to learn throughout his life. Awareness of the need for training, the search for educational resources, self-regulation in teaching MOOCs or other forms ensures the demand for a specialist. All of the above terms of soft skills are reduced to the formed communicative competence. Students of non-linguistic specialties study not only a foreign language for general purposes, but also a foreign language for professional purposes. The task of teaching a special language, or professionally oriented teaching of a foreign language, is the formation of intercultural professional communicative competence as the ability to solve professional problems using a foreign language within the framework of a dialogue of cultures, and the indicator of the quality of education is the level of formation of this competence [3]. The discipline "Foreign language" is considered one of the most effective in the formation of soft skills. Let us analyze the methods and technologies of teaching a foreign language, which include the formation of "universal skills" of a specialist.

There are not many foreign studies devoted to role-playing as a means of forming "soft" skills. For example, R. Latif, S. Mumtaz, R. Mumtaz et. al. found that role play is more effective in developing critical thinking and communication skills than discussion. R. Taplin, A. Singh, R. Kerr proved that 10-minute role-playing games teach verbal communicative behavior in a foreign language in the workplace, the vision of conflict situations and their resolution [5]. Role play motivates, builds self-confidence and builds soft skills.

The technology of project activity allows students to show independence in planning and organization, determines the fulfillment of a didactic goal with a detailed development of the problem under consideration and its practical effective design in the form of a presentation, poster, booklet, newspaper, memo, etc. Formation of time planning skills, drawing up a work plan, teamwork and distribution of roles - all tools and organizational forms of project work serve to form soft skills.

Problem solving is best taught by such a form of work as a case study, or a method for solving problem problems. The method of working with a case goes through several stages:

- carefully read the conditions of the case, highlight key points, ignoring deliberately redundant information;
- formulate and analyze the problems in the case;
- search for the necessary information that is absent in the text of the case;

- keep track of the time, return to the terms of the assignment; - distribute functions participants: organizer, expert, generator of ideas, critic, performer (person, who is responsible for formalizing the results of the decision);
- remember that each participant must prove himself; - support and to record in writing any, including non-trivial, ideas received brainstorming;
- to develop a unified position in the group;
- register the results;
- to present them succinctly and fully. [1, p. 59]

Thus, it can be stated that soft skills are a construct of social and psychological skills, which are over professional skills that can lead to success not only in the profession, but also in life. The structure of soft skills varies and a clear classification has not developed, however, the article attempts to describe its main components. The analysis of the pedagogical experience of using various teaching methods made it possible to identify the most effective methods of teaching a foreign language, contributing to the formation of soft skills: project activity, role play, solving problem situations.

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