

SOFT SKILLS DEVELOPMENT IN FOREIGN LANGUAGE LEARNING

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Abstract. This article reveals and justifies the importance of soft skills development in learning a foreign language. The notion of soft skills is defined; its main features, as well as advantages are given.

Keywords: soft skills, language learning, communicative competencies, communication, creativity, critical mind, coordination.

Nowadays higher education is found in the state of modernization. The development of modern key competencies or skills of the XXI century is becoming more and more relevant. Today it is important to have the skills of intercultural professional communication, to have the abilities of creative and strategic thinking.

For a long time the main attention in the development of higher education was purely paid to the formation of narrow professional skills or hard skills. Foreign universities have been aware of the importance of developing soft skills among students and have supplied subjects with universal competencies. It has led to innovative transformations in the organization of the educational process and the content of education.

The study that was conducted by Harvard University, noted that success in work depends on 85% of well-developed soft skills, and only 15% are on hard skills [4].

To this date, there is no universally recognized concept of soft skills and their definition. V. Shipilov defines soft skills as social and psychological skills

that can be useful in many life situations. He refers to them as communicative, leadership, teamwork skills, "intellectual", etc. [3].

O. Bikkulova considers soft skills as universal competencies that cannot be quantified. These are such intellectual and social competencies as sociability, creativity, ability to work in a team, etc. The author notes that the development of soft skills requires "emotionality" (the right hemisphere of the brain, emotional intelligence, empathy). The process of mastering them is slower than mastering hard skills. These are the competencies of the future [1].

According to D. Tataurshchikova, soft skills are unified skills and personal qualities that contribute to improving work efficiency and interaction with other people. They include the ability to convince, negotiate, time management, personal development, leadership, etc. These unified skills are difficult to follow, they are difficult to verify and demonstrate clearly [2].

Despite the variety of interpretations and classifications of soft skills, the authors agree that soft skills (creativity, critical thinking, emotional intelligence, sociability, self-organization, cooperation, etc.) are the key competencies of the XXI century.

The peculiarities of the formation of soft skills in education are considered in the works of such foreign researchers as B. Trilling B., Ch. Fadel, J. Barshay, etc., who are considered to be a part of the project "Partnership to support Skills of the 21st Century (P21)" [6].

Within the framework of this project in 2002 the "4K" pattern has been developed, which includes such key competencies necessary for learning in the modern world as communication, creativity, critical mind and coordination, which a specialist in any field should possess [5]. These skills are universal and their development is based on the knowledge of basic academic subjects.

Mastering a foreign language involves a wide and diverse use of interdisciplinary connections. It is focused on personal development and its

social adaptation to the conditions of a rapidly changing multicultural and multilingual world.

Development of communicative competence as the main goal of foreign language teaching requires and contributes to the development of other abilities of students, in particular, creative thinking, the ability to explore and critically comprehend the phenomena of reality, organize and carry out various types of communication within different social groups, design their own activities, make decisions. In foreign language classes, the teacher has a wide range of opportunities for the students to form numerous universal competencies related to soft skills.

Foreign language learning, performing its innovative functions, has also been transformed. Traditional (passive) teaching methods (memorization, perception of the teacher's speech, passive vocabulary development) are replaced by active methods, which include active speaking, communication with native speakers, active vocabulary development. All these methods make it possible not only to improve language skills, but also to develop universal soft skills.

In foreign language learning modeling of situations, dialogs and debates, writing letters, applications, documents in a foreign language can be defined as the main form of organizing students' lessons. The formulation of such educational tasks contributes to the formation of critical and analytical thinking, the ability to classify important information, to determine priority areas of work. At the same time, the ability to interpret the acquired knowledge and apply it in practice becomes important.

The improvement of leadership skills contributes to the formation of students' self-confidence and knowledge. As practice shows, during group work each student plays his own role. As a result, the ability to make constructive

decisions, conduct a dialogue, and, consequently, avoid conflicts, will help them both in their professional activities and in everyday life.

Communication with native speakers becomes an integral component of language learning. It can be conducted both directly in the classroom and online. Immersion in the language environment contributes not only to the formation of correct pronunciation, competent construction of speech structures, but also to the development of communication skills, adaptation to non-standard situations.

Thus, the development of key soft skills in foreign language learning determines the future success of graduates of higher educational establishments, satisfies the requirements of employers and meets the expectations of students.

Summarizing the above, it should be noted that improving soft skills through learning a foreign language allows a university graduate to be competitive in the modern world. Acquired communication and professional skills make him a full participant in such international processes as globalization and internationalization.

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