

THE USE OF “SOFT SKILLS” IN LANGUAGE TEACHING

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One of the main goals of the higher education system is undoubtedly to prepare specialists who can effectively serve the labor market in their work activities. The process of globalization, the development of production technologies, information and communication technologies, which are recognized as the fourth industrial revolution, have made a huge contribution to the emergence of new forms of work, the reshaping of work structures, the development of service and manufacturing sectors, which, in turn, has had an impact on the labor market.

A number of Western and Eastern scholars have expressed their views on the importance of developing “soft skills” in students of higher education institutions (G. Morandin, C. Deepa and M. Sez, M. Jones and S. Phillips, N.Eng, W. Kelly and S. Williams, M. Gladwell, Ch. Suan, R. Anatharaman, T. Keen, D. Dabke, J. Klaus, A. Murthy, M. Obshonka and R. Silberisen. By analyzing the essence of the ideas addressed to this issue, we have determined that the need to develop “soft skills” in higher education is based on a number of factors related to various areas of human activity. They can be divided into the following four main groups (Figure 1).

Academic performance factor. Developing “soft skills” in students during the learning process positively contributes to the growth of students’ academic performance. The modern higher education system based on complex tasks shows that today a number of factors, in addition to their intellectual abilities, affect a student’s academic performance. One of them is the level of “soft skills” of students. A. Doyle, a scientist who conducted research on the influence of “soft skills” levels on students’ academic performance, notes that in an academic environment, relatively less talented students with a high level of “soft skills” show better results than talented students with underdeveloped “soft skills”¹.

¹Doyle, A. List of Soft Skills. 2017. Retrieved from <https://www.thebalance.com/list-of-soft-skills-2063770>



Figure 1. Classification of factors indicating the need to improve "soft skills" in the higher education system

Professional activity factor. The level of a specialist's "soft skills" affects his or her work activity in two ways. First, in conditions of limited vacancies and a large number of job candidates, employers have a wide range of options. This, in turn, creates a highly competitive environment among applicants in the process of obtaining a job. In this case, employers try to select the most suitable specialist who can meet the requirements of modern work activities. In recent years, studies of recruitment statistics in the international arena have shown that today, along with technical (i.e. professional) skills, and in some cases even higher, employers highly value the level of "soft skills" of specialists.²

Social activity factor. The higher education system, along with the professional development of future specialists, also aims to prepare them for social relations and family life. In particular, the Decree of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan "On Approval of the Concept for the Development of the Higher Education System of the Republic of Uzbekistan until 2030" also mentions the preparation of students and young people for family life and strengthening propaganda work on strengthening the family as one of the main measures.

Psychological activity factor. The developed level of "soft skills" creates the basis for a person to live a harmonious life. The satisfaction and happiness of each person with his life directly affects the society surrounding him. After all, the level of society is assessed by the number of satisfied members in it. A person's happy and successful life is closely related to his ability to establish a harmonious and balanced life. In conclusion, it can be said that the next aspect of "soft skills" in a person's psychological activity is related to his state of stability to stress. Statistical studies conducted in the field of medicine in recent years have shown that the level of taking

²Azim, Syed & Gale, Andy & Lawlor-Wright, Therese & Kirkham, Richard & Khan, Ali & Alam, Mehmood. (2010). The importance of soft skills in complex projects. *International Journal of Managing Projects in Business*. 3. 387-401.

anti-stress and anti-depressant drugs in developed countries of the world has reached the highest levels³.

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³Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. [Key substance use and mental health indicators in the United States: Results from the 2018 National Survey on Drug Use and Health \(HHS Publication No. PEP19-5068, NSDUH Series H-54\)](#) external icon. Rockville, MD: Center for Behavioral Health Statistics and Quality. 2019.