

THE CONCEPT OF “SOFT SKILLS” IN FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHING

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As a result of the new economic order characterized by the information revolution, the study of the skills and competencies that professionals need to possess has become one of the most pressing issues. Skills that are distinct from a person's profession and have cross-sectoral applicability are called generic competencies/skills, social competencies/skills, non-academic skills, non-cognitive skills, core competencies/skills, life skills, key competencies/skills, transversal competencies/skills, transferable skills, XXI century skills, people skills, employability skills, soft skills, and in Russian-language scientific sources, soft skills (*мягкие навыки*), flexible skills (*гибкие навыки*), high professional skills (*надпрофессиональные навыки*), key competencies (*ключевые компетенции*), universal skills (*универсальные навыки*) have been widely studied as an object of foreign scientific research since the 90s of the 20th century.

Nevertheless, in recent years, the term “soft skills” has become relatively widespread among its alternatives, has emerged as the main term denoting this type of skills and has begun to be used to express personal characteristics that are equally necessary for all areas of a person's activity, contributing to the effective manifestation of “hard skills” (professional skills), which are opposite in meaning. Today, even in Russian-language sources, one can observe the use of the term in the form of soft skills. From this point of view, we also found it permissible to use the term “soft skills” from the above-listed alternatives in our scientific work.

Table 1.1

Definitions and explanations of the term "soft skills" given by foreign and CIS scientists and international organizations

Author and organizations	Definition and explanations provided
Collins English Dictionary	Intelligence, interpersonal skills, and a positive, flexible attitude are desirable qualities for certain types of work that are not dependent on acquired knowledge. [15]102]
World Health Organization	The ability to adapt and behave positively, enabling people to cope with the challenges and demands of everyday life [16]142 ]
World Bank	A set of social and behavioral skills that enable one to effectively meet the demands of daily life [17]145]
UNICEF	The interconnected and intersecting application of contextual and universally applicable knowledge, values, attitudes, and skills [18]140]
P. Moss and S. Tilly	Skills, abilities, and traits that relate to a person's personality, attitude, and behavior, as distinct from formal and technical knowledge [19]130]

<sup>15</sup>Collins English Dictionary. "Definition of Soft Skills'." Soft Skills Definition and Meaning, HarperCollins Publishers, 1979, [www.collinsdictionary.com/us/dictionary/english/softskills](http://www.collinsdictionary.com/us/dictionary/english/softskills).

<sup>16</sup>WHO. (1999) Partners in Life Skills Education. [http://www.who.int/mental\\_health/media/en/30.pdf](http://www.who.int/mental_health/media/en/30.pdf)

<sup>17</sup>World Bank (2013) – Adolescent Girls Initiative (Learning from practice series - June 2013) [http://www.worldbank.org/content/dam/Worldbank/document/Gender/1323447\\_AGI\\_LearningFromPracticeSeries.pdf](http://www.worldbank.org/content/dam/Worldbank/document/Gender/1323447_AGI_LearningFromPracticeSeries.pdf)

<sup>18</sup> UNICEF; Global Evaluation of Life Skills Education Programs- pdf (2012)

<sup>19</sup>Moss, P. I., & Tilly, C. (2001). Stories employers tell: Race, skill, and hiring in America. New York: Russell Sage Foundation.

J. Heckman and T. Kautz	Personality traits, goals, incentives, and preferences that are valued in the labor market, education, and many other areas are a mix of judgments, concepts, characteristics, and practices. [ 2037;452]
E. Listiani	Non-academic competencies, personal capital for career and social success [ 2148 ]
US Department of Labor	A set of behaviors that represent a person's natural characteristics, such as social skills and character
C. Grisi	that are distinct from the individual's role and operate in a direction that deviates from the strict requirements of the profession [ 2227 ]
UNESCO	The personal, interpersonal, cognitive, and psychosocial skills that enable <sup>23</sup> a person to interact appropriately with others, to manage their emotions, and to make decisions and choices for an active, safe, and productive life [ 139 ]
D. Tataur sh ikova	Joint skills and personal qualities that help improve work performance and relationships with other people [ 24184]
V. Shipilov	Social and psychological skills that are useful in many life situations [ 25191]

There are a number of conceptual theories related to the emergence of the concept of "soft skills" and describing it, the main ones being J. Dewey's "Progressive Learning Theory", Minser's "Human Capital Theory", D. Goleman's "Emotional Cognition Theory", and Ahmed, Karpets, Buktieff and Campbell's "Personality-Based Performance Theory".

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<sup>20</sup>J. Heckman and Tim Kautz, "Hard Evidence on Soft Skills," *Labour Economics* 19, n° 4 (2013): 452.

<sup>21</sup>Lystiani, Endang. (2011). Development Soft skills Student Prospective Teachers Through Lectures in the Department Education Mathematics. Proceedings of the National Seminar on Research, Education And Application of Mathematics and Natural Sciences, Faculty of Mathematics and Natural Sciences, University Yogyakarta State, May 14, 2011.

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<sup>24</sup>Tataurshchikova D. Soft skills. URL: <https://4brain.ru/blog/soft-skills/>

<sup>25</sup>Shipilov V. List of soft skills and ways of their development. URL: [https://www.cfin.ru/management/people/dev\\_val/soft-skills.shtml](https://www.cfin.ru/management/people/dev_val/soft-skills.shtml)

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