

## NEW FASHION CONCEPTS AND THEIR TERMINOLOGY FOR THE LSP LEARNERS

Valentina Kudashina<sup>1</sup>, Nonna Smirnova<sup>2\*</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Ph.D. in Philology, Associate Professor, Don State Technical University, Technological Institute of Service, RUSSIA, kudashina\_nev@mail.ru

<sup>2</sup>Ph.D. in Philology, Associate Professor, Don State Technical University, Technological Institute of Service, RUSSIA, sng232@mail.ru

\*Corresponding Author

### Abstract

The successful study of a foreign language in the LSP aspect ("language for specific purposes") implies the acquisition of relevant terminology generally accepted in the professional language. Fashion in its various manifestations is a multifaceted phenomenon of the modern globalized world. The students studying Fashion Design and Technology should be able to track and analyze significant changes in the complex world of their future profession. Several new concepts and trends have arisen within the global fashion industry over the last thirty years (sustainable fashion, conscious fashion, etc.). The authors are interested in the linguistic side of these social phenomena which are relatively new and not well-known to everyone. As the world of fashion and its conceptual sphere are extremely changeable, they constantly generate new ideas and realities. This process is naturally reflected at the lexical level: new language units are emerging to denote the new. Within a comparatively short period of their existence, the new phenomena acquired their glossary and terminology which reflect certain processes, making up the whole phenomenon of conscious/sustainable fashion in general. The new terminology cannot be considered as well-established yet, as evidenced by the expressed reflection of both English and Russian speakers upon their word usage. The article deals with the main terms of the "conscious fashion" thematic group as one of the layers of the English lexis necessary for the Fashion Design and Technology students.

**Keywords:** Language for specific purposes, Fashion Design and Technology students, new concepts and trends in fashion, terminology, misunderstanding, sustainable fashion, the terms of the "conscious fashion" thematic group.

## 1 INTRODUCTION

For the students of Fashion Design and Technology, it is extremely important to keep abreast of everything that is happening in the world of modern fashion. The professional level of future designers and technologists is determined by many objective and subjective factors. Those who want to succeed in the chosen field should have inborn taste, a sense of shape and texture, good eye for color, design and technological skills, an understanding of the utilitarian and aesthetic properties of clothing, awareness of its great role as a social universal. For future designers, it is necessary to be able to track and analyze the landmark changes taking place in the world of fashion. Trend watching ability, understanding of what is happening in the fashion world and what is going to happen is of vital importance for those who are in this sophisticated industry.

Learning English is an important constituent in preparing a future professional, especially when taking into

account the fact that fashion in its various forms is a multifaceted phenomenon of the modern globalized world. Successful study of a foreign language in the LSP aspect (“language for special purposes”, a foreign language in the field of professional communication) requires the acquisition of terminology generally accepted in the professional language context.

Terms designate objects, phenomena, and relations forming the specific professional activity space. Consequently, terminology provides a link between theoretical professional knowledge and practical professional activity. Both English fashion design and apparel industry terminology as a whole, and the stock of commonly used lexical units providing understanding between communicants in this field, have developed over the centuries. But the world of fashion, the conceptual sphere of fashion itself is changeable by its nature, and constantly generates new ideas and realities, which naturally find their reflection at the language lexical level.

## 2 NEW FASHION CONCEPTS AND THEIR TERMINOLOGY AS A RESULT OF SOCIAL CHANGES

### 2.1 Terminological Discrepancies

Fashion is known to reflect social, political and economic changes in society. In its turn, language is a mirror reflecting all these changes. Recent decades have witnessed the emerging of new fashion concepts. Environmental concerns gave rise to “conscious consumers in terms of fair trade, the greenmarket, and organic clothing” (Bhardwaj, Fairhurst, 2010, pp. 165-173). So, a new language is needed to express new concepts and trends. The new fashion era has introduced such terms as “*ethical fashion*”, “*eco-friendly fashion*”, “*slow fashion*”, “*fast fashion*”, “*conscious fashion*”, “*biodegradable*”, “*fair trade*”, “*organic*”, “*green*”, “*clean*”, “*recycling*”, “*upcycling*”, “*vintage*”, “*vegan*”, “*cruelty-free*”, “*circular fashion*”, “*compassionate (empathic) fashion*”. And of course, we highlight the term “*sustainable fashion*” because of its special role in the given above terminological series.

The so-called “sustainable fashion” is a relatively new phenomenon of modern fashion but it has already declared itself loudly. The objectives of the given paper are not to analyze new concepts and philosophy of fashion as such: we are interested in the linguistic side of this social phenomenon. It should be emphasized that we are talking about the phenomenon, which is not well-known to everyone; this terminology cannot yet be considered established even in the English-speaking environment. It is evidenced by significant terminological discrepancies and a lack of exhaustive definitions. It is evidenced by the desire of the professional discourse participants to understand the meanings of new words, by their explicit linguistic reflection on the vocabulary they use. Native English speakers are not unanimous in their interpretations of the “sustainable fashion” concept, as well as other new trends. Therefore, in many English-speaking sources, one can find numerous metalanguage commentaries on this term and the concepts behind it, which together make up the “sustainable fashion” phenomenon.

Here are some points of view that generally reflect the situation with the understanding of the new terminology and, in particular, the term “*sustainable fashion*”:

“these terms and others are becoming increasingly common and are often used interchangeably, but their meanings can either closely align or widely differ depending on the perspectives of the person saying them, and the person hearing them.... There’s no universally agreed definition for any of these terms...” (Warman, 2018).

“search Google for the meaning of “sustainable fashion” and you’ll quickly discover there’s no standard for it in a qualified way, let alone a quantifiable one. Some of the definitions are so sweeping they could in fact refer to nearly anything loosely associated” (Arthur, 2019).

We can observe a lot of opposed opinions regarding the same terms. For example, some authors define the terms “*sustainable fashion*”, “*conscious fashion*”, and “*ethic fashion*” as synonymous while others insist that these are different concepts. There are differentiations and controversy over the terms looking similar, as with “*ethical fashion*” and “*vegan fashion*”, etc. We believe that the LSP students should know that there are different interpretations of the same terms, and understand the reasons for the discrepancies because metalinguistic knowledge is useful for the acquisition of a foreign language.

New trends and experiences always require new words, and so entail changes in the language. This idea is simple for us teachers but it has to be across to the students. We find it necessary for the students to know the essence of linguistic reflection on terminology and the very existence of such a reflection so that future fashion industry practitioners would be able to fully communicate with colleagues and be aware of

the existence of discrepancies. This is the right way to avoid communicative failure situations. It is obvious that correct terminology usage facilitates unambiguous communication. Linguistic reflection on terminology may have beneficial effects on students' language usage.

## 2.2 Sustainable Fashion as an Umbrella Concept

From our point of view, the following opinion is true, which we consider it necessary to agree with: "there are several terms that are being used by brands, practitioners, and academics to explain the different notions lying beneath the concept of sustainable fashion, such as eco-fashion, ethical-fashion, organic-fashion, green-fashion, vegan-fashion and so on" (Amiriara, 2018). Based on this interpretation, we can conclude that "*sustainable fashion*" actually acts as an umbrella concept, which makes up a complex construct and embraces various manifestations of the new approach to fashion.

At the same time, the above-mentioned discrepancies lead some authors to consider "*ethical fashion*" or "*eco-fashion*" as an umbrella term embracing "*sustainable fashion*" also: "distinct eco-concepts have been collected in the overall umbrella term of eco-fashion. There seems to be a foggy understanding of what is "eco-fashion" as a variety of terms have been used such as ethical, organic, green, fairtrade, sustainable, recycled, reused, etc. (Kabukcu, Ensari, 2016, p.11).

It seems interesting that in Russian the term "*осознанная (сознательная) мода*" is used as a synonym to "*sustainable fashion*". The Russian term corresponds to the English "*conscious fashion*" literally, but in fact, the Russian term incorporates the meanings of two phrases: "conscious fashion" and "sustainable fashion". "Sustainable" is understood in the Russian language as "stable, long-term, inexhaustible, environmentally friendly." Derived from "*sustainable*", the "*sustainability*" lexeme objectifies the modern concept of sustainable development, social, and environmental responsibility. Moreover, it is noted in linguistic studies, that the English terms "*sustainable*" and "*sustainability*" are quite capacious in content while the Russian-language equivalents "*устойчивый*" and "*устойчивость*" do not convey all the semantic nuances (SHCHekotikhina, 2016). According to the above-mentioned, the students need to realize that proper designations may not be found in one of the languages. In cases like this, the teacher's role is to describe the gaps and propose designations to fill them.

### 2.3 The Important Terms of the Sustainable Fashion Paradigm.

In the Russian-language discourse, the term "*ethical fashion*" is often used, which students identify with "*eco-fashion*". As we have seen, in the English-speaking environment these terms can be used interchangeably although some authors point on distinctive shades of meanings. Communication with the students shows that they are familiar with the eco-fashion concept, but they look at it through a very narrow lens. Many students are not aware of the multifaceted sustainable fashion phenomenon, which covers not only the environmental component.

While explaining the new terms, we strive to expand the students' background knowledge. This occurs, for example, when the terms "*slow / fast fashion*" are learned. The term "*slow fashion*" appeared in 2007 as an opposition to the "*fast fashion*" (Fletcher, 2007). Earlier in 2003, in the article under the title "One size fits all in McFashion" the author resorted to a language game and called the modern fashion "McFashion", that is, the same fast food, but concerning clothes and fashion. The author wrote that we are all consumers of McFashion as it is – fast, disposable, easy, unintimidating and homogenous. This fashion allows us fitting into certain social groups, but sometimes to the point where our personality disappears. McFashion depletes our wallets, and spinning like hamsters in this ever-accelerating giant fashion wheel we get tired of new trends much faster than before: "the giant hamster wheel of style continues to accelerate, so we grow weary of trends much faster than we used to" (Lee, 2003).

Proposed by Kate Fletcher, the antonym to the "*fast fashion*" emerged because there was a need to verbalize new ideas; the term entered the fashion industry basic vocabulary, and became one of the most popular and demanded terms of the sustainable fashion glossary.

"*Circular fashion*" is an important term in the modern fashion industry and economics. And again, when working with this term, students receive a lot of background knowledge, culture-oriented, and occupational information. The term is also among the words, which are not well known to our students. It began to be used since 2014, and is directly related to the well-known idea of a circular economy which is understood as an economy where resources are used "more efficiently by using them over and over, not only once" (UNIDO, 2017, p.1). The circular fashion as an element of the economy based on the continual use of products.

The circular fashion glossary includes very important terminological verbs *reduce*, *reuse*, *recycle*, *redesign*,

*remanufacture*. The term *upcycling* is also among urgent terms now. One can find it in the Russian sources quite often, and it is used as phonetic transcription, in Cyrillic, without translation. The original verb *to upcycle* has the following interpretation in the explanatory dictionary of the English language: to process something so that the resulting product has more value than the original (Merriam-Webster). In other words, this is a recycling and reuse of things and materials as well, but the upcycling technique often involves the creative use of some stuff without trying to recycle it, and the final product created is more valuable than the discarded material.

Circular fashion is a part of the “closed loop” paradigm, where the appeal “Close the Loop” means the desire to replace the vicious “resources – production – consumption – garbage” circle with a complete cycle based on systemic thinking and assuming product longevity with the possibility of its reuse. Created by Belgian experts in the field of fashion economics, the *Close the Loop* platform proposes considering obsolescence, the end of a product’s life as a new beginning, a new life. The opportunity for this life is given by recycling, redesign, etc.

“Compassionate fashion” is a merciful, empathic, ethical fashion. The students should know this term, which is widely used in the English discourse of fashion and, along with ethical fashion, means something more than an ecological fashion, understood as a concern for the naturalness of fabrics or dyes only. Compassionate fashion is based primarily on the principles of respect for the workers’ rights, as well as respect for society, flora, and fauna, the ecosystem as a whole. The main appeal of compassionate fashion supporters to designers and manufacturers is to be guided not only by the mind but also by the heart, “to become heart-led and not only mind-led”. “Compassionate fashion” followers hope that more and more companies will appear in the world of fashion, whose business model is based not only on bare rationalism but is driven by compassion for others. It is a dream of companies that make decisions and act at the behest of the heart, in the highest sense of this metaphor.

Speaking about the fashion industry consumers, the followers of the sustainable fashion divide buyers into *conscious* and *fashion-compulsive*. It is clear that the “conscious” and “compulsive” labels speak of different consumer behavior models, and the so-called “compulsive shopping” is unthinkable in the field of sustainable fashion.

### 3 CONCLUSION

Having examined some nuclear lexemes of the sustainable fashion terminology, we would like to note once again that the sustainable fashion concept itself is relatively new for the linguistic consciousness of both Russian and English speakers. At present, one cannot describe this terminology as quite established. However, some discrepancies are not fundamental, and native speakers themselves recognize that the variety of terms and in some cases inconsistency of definitions originate from the novelty of the topic and are open to interpretation (Amiriara, 2018). The above-mentioned should be taken into account in LSP research and teaching for the fashion design and technology students.

### REFERENCE LIST

- Amiriara, R. (2018). What Is Sustainable Fashion And Why Is It Important? <https://wtvox.com/fashion/sustainable-fashion/>
- Arthur, R. (2019). Sustainable fashion: the rising need for quantifiable standardization. <https://thecurrentdaily.com/2019/06/28/sustainable-fashion-the-rising-need-for-quantifiable-standardization/>
- Bhardwaj, V., Fairhurst, A. (2010). Fast fashion: response to changes in the fashion industry. *The International Review of Retail, Distribution and Consumer Research*. Vol. 20, No. 1, February 2010, 165-173.
- UNIDO (2017). Circular Economy. [https://www.unido.org/sites/default/files/2017-07/Circular\\_Economy\\_UNIDO\\_0.pdf](https://www.unido.org/sites/default/files/2017-07/Circular_Economy_UNIDO_0.pdf)
- Fletcher, K. (2007). “Slow Fashion.” *The Ecologist*, June 1, 2007. <https://theecologist.org/2007/jun/01/slow-fashion>
- Kabukcu, E. & Ensari, M.Şebnem. (2016). Eco-concepts & Ethical Issues in Sustainable Fashion Industry: Bematex-Kids Fashion Group. *International Journal of Research In Social Sciences (IJRSS)*. March

2016. Vol. 6, No.5.

Lee, M. (2003) .One size fits all in McFashion.

<https://www.theguardian.com/books/2003/may/04/fashion.shopping>

Merriam-Webster.com –“Upcycle”. <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/upcycle>

SHCHekotikhina I.N., Rudakova L.S., Aksyukhin N.A., Sorokina A.O. Kontsept “sustainability” v russkoyazychnoy kul’ture: opyt issledovaniya [The “sustainability” concept in the Russian-language culture: research experience]. *Obshchiye i chastnyye voprosy filologii. Sbornik nauchnykh statey po materialam XIII Mezhdunarodnoy nauchno-prakticheskoy konferentsii*. Otvetstvennyye redaktory N.V. Kormilina, N.YU. SHugayeva [General and particular questions of philology. Collection of scientific articles based on the materials of the XIII International Scientific and Practical Conference. Editors: N.V. Kormilina, N.YU. SHugayeva], 2016. pp. 132-140. (In Russian).

Warman, A. (2018). Demystifying “Sustainable” Fashion. <https://amywarman.com/2018/05/27/demystifying-sustainable-fashion/>