

Section: Philological sciences

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FOREIGN LANGUAGES AS AN ESSENTIAL PART FOR FASHION CAREER

The purpose of the research is to show the importance of using foreign languages in fashion industry and the problem with learning them.

The object of the research is foreign languages in fashion business.

This thesis is based on analysis of language needs on modern fashion market and summary of practical working experience with fashion students.

France has always been the centre of high fashion. Every designer wanted to be a part of a famous fashion house in Paris. But nowadays a lot of fashion companies expend their production and enter markets overseas. That made English one of the most important languages in fashion world. Which brings us to the fact that designers and apparel industry students need good English teaching programmes: both general and ESP. It is necessary that academic hours and curriculum for ESP English in fashion field should be improved but what is more important, students need to understand the vital importance of foreign languages and specifically English for a successful career in fashion.

In her article for The Guardian "Languages Are in Vogue in the Fashion Industry" Katie Forster puts out that "although English is widely spoken in the fashion industry, foreign language skills are becoming increasingly important for those aiming for the top of this highly globalized trade. The UK's second and third favourite high street shops, Zara and H&M, are based overseas, while New Look, currently at number one, recently announced plans to expand its

presence in Europe and enter the Chinese market for the first time. Language study may not be à la mode, yet the British Fashion Council has highlighted the power of languages to extend the worldwide reach of UK-based designers and brands. In its latest report, they want to improve the British fashion industry’s world standing by focusing more on languages” [1].

Nowadays it is not enough to know only English. Other languages skills are gradually becoming a must too. Unfortunately not all students understand that. Approximately thirty percent of fashion students I have been working with stick to the idea that they won’t need any foreign languages at work. They are stuck at workshops or designer studios sewing and tailoring countless hours for the local clients. Taking into consideration the fast pace of global integration, Ukrainian market may have greater number of foreign clients. This brings us to foreign languages knowledge. Being multilingual can help young designers and others make the best of opportunities in the competitive fashion world.

Currently the big three are popular in the fashion world: English, French, and Italian. These countries have one of the best fashion schools and highly developed markets. But the fashion insiders recommend studying other languages to discover and conquer those markets. For example, Spanish and Portuguese give access to a huge territory of perspective markets with unique interesting cosmopolitan cities. Chinese and Korean open possibilities to global economies. Interestingly with the help of global integration of K-Pop culture South Korea may become Asia’s leading fashion country. For those engaged in the mass production of clothes Turkish would be very useful as this country hosts huge amount of cloth-making enterprises. So whether you want to be a designer, a fashion reporter or a manager of luxury brands, second language skills will give you an advantage when it comes to networking. You will open yourself up to professional opportunities in different countries and be able to build your international career by networking with industry professionals. In terms of communication with clients, Japanese and German are definitely wise

choices and would give fashion beginners a major advantage. Arabic could become increasingly useful over time as well.

As we see, fashion world requires knowledge of multiple languages. But what has been done concerning this problem in Ukrainian fashion education? Unfortunately not so much as wished. There are not enough academic hours for ESP English on fashion and design faculties. Students have the options with private courses at an extra cost and self-study with design programmes in English. They can use video lessons on professional internet resources to study vocabulary in their field. Fashion students may lose a lot of possibilities without knowledge of English. What advantages may it give? Firstly, it helps to create an English speaking website to promote fashion. Secondly, it helps to register on international freelance platforms for designers.

Conversely, according to the article by Katie Forster, Nottingham Trent University claims that languages are “definitely beneficial” for all their fashion students, yet among those from the UK, only around one in 10 choose to study a language on top of their course. This suggests that by making an effort to acquire a different vocabulary, students hoping to work in the industry will indeed stand out from the crowd [1].

Furthermore, language skills do not help if a person cannot use them. Successful career in fashion industry depends on proficient usage of these skills. Language is only a tool which may help find new possibilities for a professional growth. As English remains the industry’s current lingua franca, its knowledge can definitely take career in fashion to the top level.

References

1. Forster Katie. Languages Are in Vogue in the Fashion Industry / Katie Forster // The Guardian. Electronic data. URL: <https://www.theguardian.com/education/2014/jan/17/languages-career-fashion-industry> (viewed on 27.12.2019). – Title from the screen.