

Problems of intercultural communication in fashion design

The modern world is extremely diverse, and also highly separated. Difficulties of searching and accepting the general trends, the lack of practice in conducting a dialogue between the trendsetters lead sometimes to large conflicts and disagreements. At the same time, the development of universal fashion space leads to increased communications between different cultures.

The aim of this work is to identify the main potential problems at the global level, and to define the role of intercultural communication in the work of fashion designer.

Problems to achieve the goal:

1. Analyze the clothes as a cultural phenomenon: to interpret its creation as a kind of language, sign system which is modified in the process of intercultural communication.
2. Show on real examples the existence of conflicts because of lack of knowledge of specifics different cultures.
3. Detection trends at the development of this theme to solve it.

The relevance of the study related to the semiotics of fashion, namely clothing, in the context of intercultural communication is due to several important factors:

Firstly, clothing(clothes) is a factor of culture, it almost has become a «second skin» of human. Therefore, the fashion and clothing should be investigated from the standpoint of culture.

Secondly, the particular importance, fashion acquires in «East – West» communicative context, which is currently in the process of becoming. A theoretical study of such wide scale transition processes in culture through the prism of its individual phenomena (eg, clothing) [1] can significantly enrich cultural knowledge.

Thus, the study of meanings, signs; study of the socio-cultural and communicative parties sign system formed on the basis of modern clothing, has become an important topic in today's world.

Emphasis in communication has an implicit level of the sign system of clothing, the meaning and role of elements which members of society themselves are not recognized and identified only by means of signs and symbols of analysis, linking fashion with other languages of culture. The study of this level has to be comparatively «intercultural».

Designer when creating any product should be guided not only by their imagination, but at least should know national history and the history of other nations that will allow them to avoid fatal errors, sometimes insulting the values of other cultures.

For example, Nike company and the Council on American-Islamic Relations signed an agreement formally solve the problem, which began in April 1997 when CAIR objected to a shoe design on the heel, similar to the Arabic word for «God» or «Allah» [3]. Whereat, Nike apologized to Muslims for incidental crimes, and agreed to withdraw all products bearing this logo and also undertook an investigation as to how and why it happened.

Designer of clothes for the international market shall consider difference in color coding in different nations [2] and shifts in it through time. For example, in the Western culture white color is considered a color of joy and purity, we see white wedding dresses, the most formal wear for men is so called *white tie* combining white shirt and white tie with black trousers and black tailcoat in contrast to a bit less formal black tie. We even consider wedding dresses of color different from white to be a deviation. On the other hand, in the Eastern countries white is the color of mourning, so traditional Chinese peasant coming to Shanghai and seeing cosmopolitan (i.e. westernized) locals celebrating wedding with the bride in white may look confused. Traditional bride clothing in China is red, which may be seen as a traditional symbol of remarrying widow by the dying breed that is conservative European.

Different cultures also have different norms of what is age-appropriate to wear, so a grown-up Thai man will never wear shorts in the city, while his counterpart from the Hawaii, USA sees nothing special about it.

Thus, we see that the clothes as the language of culture in different countries have different dynamics. In one culture, one symbol will be perceived good, as the other, it can cause a storm of discontent. Therefore, the designer's work is to pay respect to local tradition, and to know and respect other national traditions. Only then, we can talk about the really high-quality design, demanded in the worldwide. And most importantly, meet the needs of all cultures. From the above we can make a conclusion that intercultural communication is very important in today's world. Only this can help to avoid the disorders and succeed. Especially, the most desirable in the fashion industry are the processes of integration, creating a multicultural fashion, which leads to mutual enrichment involved sides in this process through the feedbacks. On the other hand, creativity may be strictly limited by imposed cultural barriers.

References

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Scientific supervisor: D.V. Shepetovsky, senior teacher of TPU, Tomsk, Russia