

Content Language Integrated Learning (Clil) Applications in English –Medium Fashion Education

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Abstract

The article gives an insight into the innovative teaching method called CLIL (Content Language Integrated Learning) and its possibilities in teaching the English language in the sphere of fashion. Today fashion is a rapidly developing industry; therefore, there is a growing demand for fashion specialists both in Russia and internationally. Research shows one needs to master English at an advanced level in order to work successfully in the fashion industry worldwide. The authors introduce a well-structured content-oriented innovative course Fashion and Clothes: Language and Beauty, applying a variety of integrated CLIL methods of teaching English, as the main language of the fashion industry. The authors come to the conclusion that the English course devoted to teaching fashion is important and relevant nowadays, especially, because students in Russia and many other developing countries lack opportunity to receive a fashion degree. The materials of the research may be applied by university staff and ESP teachers worldwide to provide for the successful development of students' professional, linguistic and personal competencies.

Keywords: Student; Linguistics; English; Education; Teaching; Vocabulary.



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1. Introduction

Currently the international language of fashion industry is English, which is at the same time the language of global communication. Though originally fashion appeared in Europe, and France is still considered to be its capital, today the USA is the leader of production, retail and fashion mass media. In order to receive an education in the different spheres of industry and make a career at the international level, one needs an advanced level of the English language and an extensive knowledge of ethnocultural peculiarities. In fashion industry one has to possess the specific terminology that includes the names of wardrobe items, styles, epochs, trends, names of designers, models, photographers, brand names as well as cross-cultural and interpersonal communication competencies, etc. As a specific phenomenon of human culture, fashion reflects the evolution and development of modern society of the XXI century. The concept of fashion is complicated; this term can be interpreted in different ways, as it includes a large number of various aspects. In the (Bobyreva and Latypov, 2015) dictionary fashion is defined as the complex of tastes and views dominating in a certain social environment within a certain, usually short time. In other words, this definition of fashion includes not only clothing, but also manners, behavior, trends in art, life style, etc. The researcher (Bobyreva and Latypov, 2015) in her book *Luxury Fashion Branding: Trends, Tactics, Techniques* defines fashion as a symbol of society and has continuously been influenced by historical, social, traditional, religious, political, economic, psychological and more recently technological changes. It seems that there is no sphere of life, which is not influenced by fashion. Regarding this, we can state that fashion is one of the most important spheres of persons' daily life.

2. Methodology

2.1. Background

In international linguistics interest to fashion appeared only in the second part of the XX century. The major work is definitely *The Fashion System* by Barthes (2006), where the author considers fashion as a sign system. He divides fashion into three subsystems: image-clothing (photographs and drawings), written clothing (texts commenting the images) and real clothing. Barthes (2006) mainly pays his attention to the second system: This dress, photographed on the right, becomes on the left: a leather belt, with a rose stuck in it, worn above the waist, on a soft Shetland dress... These two garments refer to the same reality ... and yet they do not have the same structure: in one the substances are forms, lines, surfaces, colors, and the relation is spatial; in the other, the substance is words and the relation is, if not logical, at least syntactic. Today fashion industry is growing very fast, which is reflected in the annual increase of sales result, retail area, international activity, a growing number of designers and brands, both Russian and international. The interest to fashion in Russia is increasing, the market is being formed, the range of specializations within the industry is expanding and new professions are emerging demanding a large number of professionals. Research shows, that students in Russia lack an opportunity to receive a fashion degree, especially in

the English language. There are only a few educational institutions (Higher School of Economics, Russian State University for the Humanities and British Higher School of Design) that offer fashion education programs

2.2. The Status of the Problem

Hence there is a need for various educational programs or courses for specialization training in the sphere of fashion, so that graduates could work internationally. This determined our goal: to introduce Fashion and Clothes: Language and Beauty course. To accomplish the goal, we apply a variety of integrated methods of teaching English as the agent of the fashion industry. In these terms the CLIL method seems to be the most appropriate and satisfying. The term CLIL (Content and Language Integrated Learning) was firstly mentioned by D. Marsh in Finland in 1994. According to the Cambridge Dictionary, CLIL is a teaching method that involves teaching students about a subject in a foreign language. So CLIL considers the study of a foreign language as a tool for studying other subjects and spheres of life, thus, students gain a great learning motivation. The researcher (Bobyreva and Latypov, 2015) in his book Learning Teaching. The Essential Guide to English Language Teaching claims, the essential point of CLIL is that the language teaching is not separate and disconnected. It is integrated: it supports and is directly relevant to the subject teaching. The most important feature of CLIL is that attention is paid not only to the study of the subject, but also to the study of necessary terminology and provision for the relevant background knowledge on the issue. At the same time, the foreign language is integrated into the training program, and the need to discuss the subject content significantly increases the motivation of students for using the language in the context of the topic being studied. This CLIL method is widely applied in Finland, Sweden, Spain and some other countries. Different disciplines such as History, Biology, and Geography are taught using CLIL. However, studying fashion using this method seems relevant and innovative, because fashion is a very interesting phenomenon, which combines science, art, business and production. It has its own specific terminology and it is of great importance in our life.

3. Materials

3.1. Research Objectives and Methods

The methodology of research approaches has provided an opportunity to study various theoretical approaches, as well as to assess and summarize innovative teaching experience in professional language training. Theoretically and methodologically, this research is based mostly on the works of Russian and international methodologists, linguists and fashion researchers as well as foreign language researchers and teachers engaged in studying the issues of teaching ESP. To provide well-grounded conclusions on the status of the problem both methodologically and linguistically, the following theoretical and practical methods were applied: descriptive method for observation and classification of the investigated material; system oriented analysis of literature on the problem; observation, analyzing and synthesizing data. The structural and interdisciplinary approach made it possible to thoroughly study the CLIL system applied in teaching ESP and to determine the goals, contents, materials, forms, methods and particular techniques of teaching the course introduced by the authors (Scrivener, 2011; Villalobos, 2009).

3.2. Target audience

The target audience of the introduced course Fashion and Clothes: Language and Beauty can be divided into three groups: workers of the fashion industry (designers, stylists, shoppers, buyers, editors, journalists, photographers, marketing experts, merchandisers); people interested in fashion; and specialists in English language (translators, teachers, philologists, linguists, specialists in cross-cultural communication) (Sabirova, 2015). This course can be used both in the curriculum of universities as one of the optional disciplines, and as a separate course for amateurs and workers of the fashion industry. All that allows us to conclude that fashion education with the method of content language integrated learning is quite relevant, because this technique has hardly been used in this sphere before. Such an interdisciplinary approach, firstly, corresponds to the trends of the modern society, secondly, it provides for students' motivation, making the learning process more engaging, and thirdly, it improves students' background knowledge, as well as their command of the English language. Moreover, this course is an attempt to study fashion from a linguo-didactic point of view and it contributes to the enrichment of theoretical data on this issue. As a result, students are given an opportunity to study the sphere they are interested in, and the number of professionals will increase, which corresponds to the economic needs of a rapidly developing industry (Mukanbetkaliyev *et al.*, 2018; Rossi, 2018).

4. Results and Discussion

Having analyzed the current information in fashion industry, we distinguished the main units to be covered during the course: What Is Fashion?, History Of Fashion Industry, Clothes' Description, Fashion as Business, Fashion Retail, Fashion Magazines, Fashion and Art, Fashion of Different Countries, Last Season Trends, Fashion Icons. Within each unit there is a certain content, terminology, relevant vocabulary and grammar structures and types of speaking activities to be discussed and practiced with students thus to improve valuable communication skills many ESP students lack. In our opinion, this outline fully reveals the various aspects of fashion industry, which should be included in the course Fashion and Clothes: Language and Beauty. The texts are taken exclusively from authentic and relevant sources, such as Vogue, Harper's Bazaar, The New York Times, style.com, businessoffashion.com and others. The communicative approach makes it possible to develop speech skills, expand the vocabulary, master grammar and be aware of the language environment. Discussions of articles and video materials motivate students to continue the conversation with interest (Okonkwo, 2012) Within this article we will

focus only on the plans of two units. The first one is called what is fashion? It seems quite logical to begin with this topic, because at the very beginning of the course we should define what fashion is, to study this phenomenon from different points of view, and to determine the attitude of students to it. The lesson is supposed to begin with the question what is fashion for you? (Ozhegov and Shvedova, 2018) Students need to think about this issue and give an answer in 2-3 minutes. Because these people came to study the sphere of fashion, they are supposed to have their own opinion on the issue. After answering, students are given a list of questions, which they have to discuss in pairs or small groups (3-4 people). Then they need to share the answers with the teacher and the class. Here are the examples of questions: How important is fashion for you? Do you follow the trends? Would you like to work in fashion? Describe your favorite piece of clothing. Who is your fashion icon? Such group work will help students to know each other better, they will begin to express their opinions and share ideas. Moreover, the answers to the questions will contribute to a further understanding of fashion as a complex phenomenon. Next, the lesson is continued with reading and translating an article called Is Fashion Art? Addressing the Ongoing Debate. The author Blechman (2018) expresses interesting ideas regarding fashion as a sphere of fine arts. Her well-formulated thoughts will help students to form their point of view, and also there is a large number of proper names in the article – the names of designers, museums and exhibitions (Miuccia Prada, Yves Saint Laurent, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, Alexander McQueen et al). It will help to improve relevant background knowledge, so crucial for comprehensive communication in the fashion industry (Mohammaddadi and Balaghat, 2018).

Moreover, the article contains a considerable amount of useful vocabulary. After reading and translating the article, the students are offered exercises to practice the new lexical material. In the first exercise, you need to match the word and its definition (e.g., retrospective – showing the development of an artist's work over a period of time) and in the second, to fill the gaps in the sentences (In the music studio, teachers work to develop ... (self-expression) through musical performance). Then students watch a 6-minute video created by The New York Time's journalists in 2016. The video is called Fashion VS Art, it was timed to the annual Met gala 2016, as well as to the exhibition in the Metropolitan Museum of Fashion in Art, dedicated to costumes on paintings and sculptures of different epochs. The authors of the video show that fashion is definitely a part of art and it cannot be considered just as decorative art (Lyster and Zarobe, 2018).

At the end of the lesson, after reading the article and watching the video, the students are asked to compare their opinion about the fashion now with the one they expressed at the beginning of the lesson. They will have to answer questions has your opinion about fashion changed? What do you think about fashion now? and then present their ideas to everyone. To continue with the courses, Unit Three, for example, is dedicated to the wardrobe items, styles, fabrics; it is called Clothes' Description. In this unit there is a large number of new vocabulary, therefore, it is necessary to present this vocabulary using various methods and exercises. At first students are shown an image of a particular item on the screen, and they are to name it (culottes, straw bag, knee-high boots, shirt dress, jumpsuit). Much of the vocabulary may already be familiar, the meaning of others can be guessed with the help of the context. The teacher shows fashion looks and asks students to describe them, answering the question what are they wearing? Also, students can describe the clothes of their group mates. To study words for the description of clothes people wear, we chose some proper parts from fashion magazine articles and blogs, which contain quite relevant and authentic vocabulary. Students are to translate the sentences and highlight unfamiliar words and expressions there, for example: For today's festival-created look, I paired it with my Chloé boots and Dior bag, but it works just as well paired with strappy gladiator sandals !... Here the students need to distinguish and remember such words as look, to pair with, boots, strappy sandals, etc. To practice phrasal verbs, given in the list, students are offered the following exercise and to join parts of the sentence (e.g. When it comes to festivals, usually I opt for denim and crop tops). Thus, they remember the prepositions of phrasal verbs.

It is also possible to practice new material using some creative tasks. Students are divided into groups (5 people in each one), and given one glossy magazine to each group (Vogue, Elle, Harper's Bazaar, L'officiele). Each group has to make a mood board. To do this, they need to choose in the magazines the things they like, cut and stick them to a large sheet of paper, adding, if they feel like, various headings, drawings and inscriptions. They are free to choose any concept they want (certain color combinations, style, epoch, etc.) for the mood board. After creating this mood board, the group will need to present their projects to the class: tell about its purpose and concept, name and describe the things they have chosen, explain the reasons. This creative and emotional task helps students to add these new words to their active vocabulary, and also practice public speaking and project presentation. Students are also shown the images of bloggers and street stylers and asked to describe them in great detail, talking about styles, colors, prints, trends and accessories. As a homework assignment, an individual project is given, students will have to choose their own fashion image or of a well-known person, and describe it in the style of a post from a blog using the previously learned vocabulary. As an option either students can create a collage of clothes, shoes and accessories dedicated to any occasion (a first date, a job interview, a prom night, a wedding), and also present it to the group, describing the idea, the items and the place where they can go to in these clothes.

5. Conclusion

In conclusion the authors can say that the work has both theoretical and practical results. The scientific novelty of the research is that fashion is considered from the linguo-didactic point of view, which increases the amount of theoretical information on this issue. Moreover, our work corresponds to modern interdisciplinary approach, connecting fashion and foreign language teaching. These results can be used to in the English language, crosscultural communication or fashion journalism courses. The practical implications of the research lie in the fact that this work is an attempt to create a course dedicated to fashion education applying innovative context language integrated

learning method. The authors have studied a lot of authentic sources in detail, found interesting, useful and relevant texts and videos for learning and discussion, produced exercises, made a glossary of terms. Thus, the course Fashion and Clothes: Language and Beauty fully covers the various aspects of the fashion industry. It helps students to successfully integrate into this industry worldwide.

6. Acknowledgements

The work is performed according to the Russian Government Program of Competitive Growth of Kazan Federal University.

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