

## **Say Me which is Your Favorite Style of Clothes and I Can Say Who are You**

This story happened with my husband when he just arrived in the U.S. Some of his relative presented to him a jacket with logotype *Mariners*, and my husband wore it. He even didn't have a guess what does this logotype means. When he rode on buses, most of people saw this logotype, smiled and tapped him on the shoulder. My husband didn't understand English very well so he couldn't ask them what they wanted. One young pretty woman friendly smiled to him, and, when she got off the bus, she said, "See you evening..." She means a baseball competition in evening. My husband was not married in this time and he spent several days in dreams about this woman. After a little while he met his Russian friend who, pointed on the logotype, asked him, "Are you already fan of *Mariners*?" My husband realized how wrong he was... This funny example shows that clothes have specific language and most of people can understand this language correctly and should use this correctly too. In essay "The Language of Clothes" Alison Lurie points out that "when a child puts its pet chameleon down on the earth and it does not turn brown, we can know the creature is seriously ill. In the same way, men or women, who begin to come to work in a conservative office wearing disco hues and a disco mood, are regarded with anxiety and suspicion" (189) The author means that that if you belong particular culture (for instance, office culture) you should speak office language too; differently people around you can't understand you.

In our life we communicate with people every day in different ways. Clothes which we are wearing are the language which we speak with other people in a nonverbal way. Very often the language of clothes can say about us more than we want to present to other people. If we would like to be understandable correctly every day in our life we should study language of clothes as we study our native languages or foreign languages.

Alison Lurie, the author of “The Language of Clothes,” says that between clothes and speech we can draw analogies. Furthermore, she even points out that “if clothing is a language, it must have a vocabulary and grammar like other languages” (185). So, if verbal languages have particular structure, vocabulary, dialects, accent and even tone, the same way language of clothes have it. For instance, if you wear clothes with some clashing colors it means you speak very loudly. Or if you go in your strict office work in Hawaiian style clothes, it is looks like you try to speak foreign language and nobody knows this language.

As a professor of American literature at Cornell University, she has a very strong knowledge about language structure and she uses her knowledge to learn human’s behavior. Her purpose to convince her readers, who are her present or future students, or ordinary people who would like to improve their communicative skills that language of clothes like a verbal language has same structure and people should know about it and use their knowledge in real life situations. To achieve her goal she uses a serious tone to describe her ideas and give us historical examples to support her point of view very academically. As for me as a reader it was very easy to understand and accept point of view this author because she uses clear structure of essay and historical examples which relate with modern time. Alison Lurie divides whole essay by several different parts for better understanding and she uses in each parts of essay theoretical explanation of her point of view and after that she give us historical examples or real-life examples which help us be familiar with this subject. Thus, for instance, she says, “Clothing designed to show the social position of its wearer has a long history” (186). Next, the author give us numerous of historical illustration for support her point of view. I think author did a lot of research to study this them and she believes that her readers share her opinion. She also believes

that her essay could be helpful for people who would like to be understandable correctly in society.

Author says that “Certain sorts of information about other people can be communicated in spite of language barrier” (188). I would like to say more: language of clothes can talk about us more than we want to present. The way how we are wearing can describe us as a person: where we live, where we are from, our age, our profession, our social status, our beliefs, our income level, our education etc. I agree with author because, for example, if in college I met a woman who wears a yashmak, I can guess that she is from Somalia and she is Muslim. I don't think what this woman would like to talk about herself a lot, but her clothes talk with me without her help.

On the other hand, as in verbal language, if we use particular foreign language we will understandable only for people who know this language. For example some magical clothing – many of amulets well-known for most of people (as an English language), but many of it is mysterious (as a uncommon language) and if you speak English most of people can understand you and on the contrary, if you speak uncommon language just several people can understand you. Same way magical clothing – if you are wearing well-known cross on a chain – people know that you are a Christian, but if you are wearing some amulets from your native country, who are you, can know just people from your country.

Many times in my life I encountered situations with people who had knowledge about how to “speak” the language of clothes and were very successful in business or in their ordinary life. Many times I saw when people who “speak” not correctly on language of clothes were misunderstood. However, after I had read this essay I realized that the language of clothes has

very strong structure connection with verbal language and as in verbal language we use particular rules we should use particular rules in language of clothes. To support my point of view I would like to give two examples from my life, where in first case I used language of clothes correctly and was correctly accepted and in second case I used language of clothes not correctly and people understood me wrong.

For instance, when I worked for a big company in Russia, I needed to wear particular uniform, which showed I was part of this company. All people in our office had to wear suits with black-yellow ties or vests in this color (for women in winter time). The black-yellow strips – it was a brand of our company. Consequently, we needed to show our customers that we were very serious with clients problems (it showed our austere suits), but we were able to help people creatively (it showed our funny ties and vests). When we presented our company new product in the new cities, we had to wear some other attributes of our brands, it could be caps, scarves, gloves, and umbrellas. It showed people – we were one team. Our potential or present customers supposed to association us with image bee (this insect has black-yellow color). Bee is very hard worker and it very responsible. So, our team was also very responsible and hard worker. The particular parts of our brand helped us to get good image our company among people. Thus, in this case we would like to get respect among people and we got it because we “speak” correct language of clothes and people understood and accepted us correctly.

In contrast, then I was seventeen years old and started to live without my parents, I could wear as I wanted. I loved disco style which was very popular in those times. I used make-up a lot and my hairstyle was awful (several colors plus a lot of hairspray). Added to everything else I wore a black leather jacket, very short miniskirt, openwork tights, and high-heeled boots. I was

proud of my style, but only short time...One day I was waiting for my bus on main bus-station in our town. I stayed on the street for a long time. Several times I saw a police car which passed by me. Suddenly, the car stopped and police officer, who was a young guy, told me, "You have two options – or you get away from this place, or you will have big problem with law." Firstly, I didn't understand that it means, but his tone was very serious and I left that place. While I was going at home, unfortunately, I realized that he suggested...The police officer recognized me as prostitute, and he just gave me a chance to avoid hardships, maybe because he was young too. I was in shock!!! Since this time I never wear clothes like this. Until now I shame of me and I even didn't place this part of my essay on blackboard for peer response. This case shows that if you try to say something for other people you should use correct language also (I mean language of clothes) if not you will be misunderstand.

In finale, I would like to say what this article was very helpful for me and I think all people can be more successful in their life if they will be use particular rules language of clothes for better understanding. I did for myself two very important conclusions. Firstly, if I will observe people's clothes more carefully I can understand them better which very important for me. Secondly, if I will look after my clothes more cautiously I can present my personality the way which I want.

### **Bibliography**

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