

Гуманитарные исследования. 2022. № 2 (82). С. 74–80.
Humanitarian Researches. 2022;2(82):74–80.
Научная статья
УДК 811.111

Aphorisms as the means of presentation of the concept "fashion" in the English language

Olga V. Chursina¹, Yulia V. Ocheredko²

^{1,2}Astrakhan State University, Astrakhan, Russia

¹olga2209@bk.ru

²y-ocheredko@yandex.ru

Abstract. The aim of the article under consideration is to review the ways of objectification of the linguistic and cultural concept of "fashion" by means of aphorisms on the example of the English language. The research material includes sayings of English-speaking authors and other representatives of cultural and art figures of the past and modern times. A list of value judgments was compiled by the continuous sampling method, including 395 units, the sources of which were the sites of aphorisms and statements of outstanding people.

Keywords: Aphorisms, the English language, concept, fashion, culture

For citation: Chursina O.V., Ocheredko Y.V. Aphorisms as the means of presentation of the concept "fashion" in the English language. *Gumanitarnyye issledovaniya = Humanitarian Researches*. 2022;2(82):74–80.

Original article

Афоризмы как способ презентации концепта «мода» в английском языке

Ольга Владимировна Чурсина¹, Юлия Владимировна Очередько²

^{1,2}Астраханский государственный университет, Астрахань, Россия

¹olga2209@bk.ru

²y-ocheredko@yandex.ru

Аннотация. Целью рассматриваемой статьи является исследование способов объективации лингвокультурного концепта «мода» посредством афоризмов на примере английского языка. Материал исследования включает высказывания англоязычных авторов и других представителей культуры и искусства прошлого и современности. Методом непрерывной выборки был составлен список оценочных суждений, включающий 395 единиц, источниками которых послужили сайты афоризмов и высказываний выдающихся людей.

Ключевые слова: афоризмы, английский язык, концепт, мода, культура

Для цитирования: Чурсина О.В., Очередько Ю.В. Афоризмы как способ презентации концепта «мода» в английском языке // Гуманитарные исследования. 2022. № 22 (82). С. 74–80.

According to its dictionary definition an aphorism is "a short witty sentence which expresses a general truth or comment" [3], "a short clever saying that is intended to express a general truth" [2]. The Encyclopedia Britannica defines the term as a concise expression of doctrine or principle of any generally accepted truth conveyed in a pithy, memorable statement [1]. Aphorisms have been especially used in dealing with subjects that were late in developing their own principles or methodology—for example, art, agriculture, medicine, jurisprudence, and politics (the same source). Aphorisms are rather expressive as they allow people to convey an idea or even a worldview using just a few words. Due to this, they are frequently used in everyday speech, as well as in all types of literature can also serve as a source of aphorisms. Some aphorisms are regional colloquialisms that originated as folk sayings, but even aphorisms that originate in literature are often quoted and repeated frequently enough that they become common in everyday speech [4].

It's quite important to remember that aphorisms do not have to express ideas that all people believe are true, or ideas that are true in every situation (if that were the case, aphorisms would

be incredibly rare). Rather, an aphorism expresses an idea that someone (and usually the speaker) holds to be universally or generally true, though aphorisms can also be used to satirize (make fun of) ideas that others believe to be correct.

The aphorism, in the course of history, can be taken as the epitome of the rational or the epitome of the irrational. It can be compressed and self-contained wisdom, or it can be a broken fragment designed to show that ours is an already shattered world. But, according to A. Gopnik, whatever it is, it's always an epitome, and seeks an essence. The ability to elide the extraneous is what makes the aphorism bite, but the possibility of inferring backward to a missing text is what makes the aphorism poetic [5].

An aphorism, being a "short pithy saying expressing a general truth", is drawn from experience, and so the attribution is important: it matters who said it as well as what was said. But aphorisms evolve in oral transmission: they don't live on the page, they live in speech. They were particularly important in pre-literate societies where learning was transmitted orally rather than by text, and when writing arrived they were codified and written down as "wisdom-literature". As they are copied and translated and spoken they mutate to remain fresh and sharp (note the inversion of 'The art' and "life" in the two quoted versions above). The best aphorisms have a memorable, poetic quality. Some analysts even consider them to be a branch of poetry in their own right [6].

The continuous sampling method was used to compile a list of value judgments, including 395 units. The sites of aphorisms and statements of prominent people served as a source for gaining information. The selection criterion was the presence of definitions associated with the concept "fashion", which were identified as a result of the analysis of lexical and phraseological units of the notion mentioned.

The first and foremost idea that comes to mind is that fashion is synonymous with runways, designers and splendor. Designers do not only create clothes; they dictate fashion and style. They create their own philosophy, which becomes eternal, overcoming the trials of time. Fashion, being an integral part of the life of society, has a direct impact on it. This kind of influence is confirmed by the following aphorisms and quotations:

- *Fashion – A despot whom the wise ridicule and obey* (Ambrose Bierce)
- *Dress has a moral effect upon the conduct of mankind* (Sir John Barrington)
- *The most striking effect of riches is the splendour of dress, which every man has observed to enforce respect, and facilitate reception* (Samuel Johnson)
- *The canvas is the script and the designer is the painter* (Dorothy Jeakins)
- *I thought long and earnestly, but never for a moment about music, poetry or pictures. The whole world of beauty and romance was summed up for me in clothes* (Sir Thomas Beecham)
- *I firmly believe that with the right footwear one can rule the world* (Bette Midler)
- *Playing dress-up begins at age five and never truly ends* (Kate Spade)
- *I like fashion to go down to the street, but I can't accept that it should originate there.* In her statement the great designer Coco Chanel stresses the one-way influence of fashion onto masses but it must not generate among masses to remain unique and high.

The thing is that fashionable ideas and dependence on it can be noted not only in clothes but in different spheres of people's life.

- *Fashion is not something that exists in dresses only; fashion is something in the air. It's the wind that blows in the new fashion; you feel it coming, you smell it ... in the sky, in the street; fashion has to do with ideas, the way we live, what is happening* (Coco Chanel)

- *In olden days a glimpse of stocking
Was looked on as something shocking*

- *But now, God knows,
Anything goes* (Cole Porter).

- *Fashion is only the attempt to realize art in living forms and social intercourse* (Francis Bacon)

Fashion as a paradoxical phenomenon with the effect of "gregariousness" and recklessness, sometimes accompanied by unnecessary victims, is reflected in the following aphorisms:

- *Fashion is for imitators, personalities are free from it.* - Risto Nivari, Finnish clergyman
- *Fashions have done more harm than revolutions.* - Victor Hugo
- *Any girl can be glamorous. All you have to do is stand still and look stupid* (Hedy Lamarr).

In this example the author somehow undervalues the work of fashion models and shows that following fashion is nothing but keeping with the trend without showing one's mental abilities.

It should be noted that clothes serve as a main indicator of fashionable and modern people. We cannot deny that we usually judge people around by what they're wearing as clothes are the first thing we pay attention to, be it voluntary or not.

- *Clothing is a means of self-expression* (Hunter Tylo as Taylor Hayes Forrester in *The Bold and The Beautiful*)

- *I've always been in love with clothes, it is how I have expressed myself* (Rod Stewart)

- *Whosoever hath a good presence and a good fashion, carries continual letters of recommendation* (Isabella I)

- *For me, elegance is not to pass unnoticed but to get to the very soul of what one is* (Christian Lacroix)

- *How anybody dresses is indicative of his self-concept. If students are dirty and ragged, it indicates they are not interested in tidying up their intellects either* (S.I. Hayakawa, as president of San Francisco State College)

- *I have heard with admiring submission the experience of the lady who declared that the sense of being well-dressed gives a feeling of inward tranquility, which religion is powerless to bestow* (Ralph Waldo Emerson)

- *Clothes and manners do not make the man; but, when he is made, they greatly improve his appearance* (Henry Ward Beecher)

- *There is one other reason for dressing well, namely that dogs respect it, and will not attack you in good clothes* (Ralph Waldo Emerson)

- *In clothes as well as speech, the man of sense*

- *Will shun all these extremes that give offense,*

Dress unaffectedly, and, without haste,

Follow the changes in the current taste (Molière)

- *Clothes make the man. Naked people have little or no influence on society* (Mark Twain)

- *The well-dressed man is he whose clothes you never notice* (W. Somerset Maugham).

In this case the author meant not the all-consuming influence of fashion but the style as an important part of a person's image.

- *Be careless in your dress if you must, but keep a tidy soul* (Mark Twain)

- *Clean and tidy is always in fashion and always pleases other people* (Uma Aaltonen, Finnish writer). No matter how fashionable and stylish you are, one must never forget about simple rules of attractiveness – personal hygiene.

- *A cheap coat makes a cheap man* (Thorstein Veblen)

Sometimes authors tell about the mass influence of fashion, more often beyond the control of people's choice. Under the influence of the majority, people are ready to change their habits and tastes. No matter how people try to convince themselves and others that not everyone is influenced by fashion, this is not so. In fact, even on a subconscious level, we follow when, how and what we wear or how we behave.

- *Fine clothes are good only as they supply the want of other means of procuring respect.*

This statement by Samuel Johnson shows that clothes are not the only means of being a respectable person. One needs other ways to be accepted and respected.

- *A man is pleased that his wife is dressed as well as other people, and the wife is pleased that she is so dressed* (Samuel Johnson).

- *Eat to please thyself, but dress to please others* (Benjamin Franklin). This statement stresses people's dependence on the opinion of the society, the need to be seen and noticed.

Great couturiers and fashion creators are united by the opinion that fashion should not be all-consuming and exciting for a person and a personality entirely. It is necessary to observe the measure, adhere to the style, have good taste, so that you will be remembered and appreciated. Fashion is not at all reduced to what hangs in the size range on hangers and store shelves. Fashion is what a person feels, it is his individual worldview, and it is the style that is inherent only to him and no one else.

- *Being perfectly well-dressed gives a feeling of tranquility that religion is powerless to bestow* (Ralph Waldo Emerson)

- *Don't be into trends. Don't make fashion own you, but you decide what you are, what you want to express by the way you dress and the way to live* (Gianni Versace)

- *Style is a way to say who you are without having to speak* (Rachel Zoe)

- *Fashion is about dressing according to what's fashionable. Style is more about being yourself* (Oscar de la Renta)

- *I have no desire to dress elite. It's all a game. I work as if I were still in my grandmother's attic, dressing up* (B. Agnes, French fashion designer)

- *Fabric clothes not only the body but the spirit. Clothes are the proud emblem that connects us to God ...* (Junich Arai). In this case the author touches upon the sacred connection of clothing, body and spirit.

- *I have lived in this body all my life and know it better than any fashion designer; I am only willing to purchase the item which becomes me and to wear that which enhances my image of myself to myself* (Maya Angelou)

- *Do not conceive that fine clothes make fine men, any more than fine feathers make fine birds. A plain, genteel dress is more admired, obtains more credit in the eyes of the judicious and sensible* (George Washington)

- *Fashions fade, style is eternal* (Yves Saint Laurent)

- *Style is the only thing you can't buy. It's not in a shopping bag, a label, or a price tag. It's something reflected from our soul to the outside world—an emotion* (Alber Elbaz)

We cannot but agree with the words of Oscar de la Renta that in order not to lose your personal self, one should not behave and dress haphazardly, "*Being well dressed hasn't much to do with having good clothes. It's a question of good balance and good common sense*".

Being a significant phenomenon of the modern life of any society, fashion draws analogies with the past, functions in the present and appeals to the future, representing an ever-changing, endless and intriguing mechanism. The cyclical nature of fashion can be traced in the following statements:

- *There's never a new fashion but it's old* (J. Chaucer)

- *Fashion is a form of ugliness so intolerable that we have to alter it every six months* (Oscar Wilde). In this case the famous writer not only speaks of fashion as an ever-changing process but mocks at its inconstancy and unattractiveness.

- *I move with the times, every time. My fashion changes for the today and does not remain stagnant* (Pierre Cardin)

- *In order to be irreplaceable one must always be different* (Coco Chanel)

- *What you wear is how you present yourself to the world, especially today, when human contacts are so quick. Fashion is instant language* (Miuccia Prada)

- *Fashion is part of the daily air and it changes all the time, with all the events. You can even see the approaching of a revolution in clothes. You can see and feel everything in clothes* (Diana Vreeland)

- *Fashion is what you're offered four times a year by designers. And style is what you choose.*

In this statement Lauren Hutton does not only speak of a non-stopping phenomenon of fashion but stresses the importance of style for a person.

At the same time, speaking about the influence of fashion on society, there is clearly a negative attitude of speakers in matters of fashion as such, and mass imitation of fashion in particular. Blind imitation of fashion trends does not win admiration and can be traced in the following statements:

- *Hint in a women's magazine: ladies, do not wear clothes that scare your cat* (W. van Broeckhoven)

- *Clothing is nudity in a more subtle degree* (Schepens)

- *Buying clothes is always tricky. But when there's loud music playing, it really throws your judgement. You look at stuff like, "Hey, if there was a cool party and I was a cool guy, this might be a cool shirt." You get it home there's no music, there's no party, and you're not a cool guy. You're the same chump, 75 bucks lighter* (Jerry Seinfeld)

- *Never in the history of fashion has so little material been raised so high to reveal so much that needs to be covered so badly.* In his statement Sir Cecil Beaton dwells upon the changing trends in fashion industry on mini-skirts when with every other season women's outfit became shorter and shorter.

- *Sometimes the eye gets so accustomed that if you don't have a change, you're bored ... and that, I suppose, is what style is about* (Bill Blass). In his statement the author tells about the influence of fashion on masses and the uniqueness and necessity of not losing oneself in the crowd, of the importance of being noticed in case you follow your own style.

Quite often fashion is seen as something distant and inaccessible, created only for people from definite circles, but still with strange rules to keep: "*Fashion is gentility running away from*

vulgarity, and afraid of being overtaken by it. It is a sign the two things are not far asunder" (William Hazlitt)

- *Fashion is a religion in one sense. Once upon a time, our brand was considered the sanctum sanctorum of fashion. I want to produce things that people really want to buy* (Alessandro Michele)

Reflections on fashion as a short-term and fleeting phenomenon can be traced in the following aphorisms:

- *I cannot and will not cut my conscience to fit this year's fashion* (Lillian Hellman)

- *Fashion is something that goes in one year and out the other* (author unknown)

Fashion can be quite a tricky thing combining much controversy and disagreement:

- *You cannot be both fashionable and first rate* (Logan Pearsall Smith)

- *Fashion is what you adopt when you don't know who you are* (Quentin Crisp)

- *Yet men will always look at clothes. - It is one law you have to adjust to, no matter how much you would like to revolt against it* (Mika Waltari, Finnish writer)

- *It is fancy rather than taste which produces so many news fashions* (Voltaire)

- *Dress is a very foolish thing, and yet it is a very foolish thing for a man not to be well dressed* (Lord Chesterfield)

- *I always dress to match the colour of the food* (Willie Rushton)

- *First, I want a woman guest to be beautiful. Second, I want her to be beautifully dressed.*

Third, I demand animation and vivacity. Fourth, not too many brains. Brains are always awkward at a gay and festive party (Elsa Maxwell). Once again it is stressed that being brainy and smart is not a must in a fashionable circle.

- *It is almost as stupid to let your clothes betray that you know you are ugly as to have them proclaim that you think you are beautiful* (Edith Wharton)

- *I think there is beauty in everything. What 'normal' people perceive as ugly, I can usually see something of beauty in it* (Alexander McQueen)

- *I always find beauty in things that are odd and imperfect, they are much more interesting* (Marc Jacobs)

Fashion can possess qualities and mood of a human (*In difficult times, fashion is always outrageous* (Elsa Schiaparelli)), can be quite influential (*I think fashion can do a lot. Fashion is very popular, so it can help broadcast a message and reach a new generation* (Maria Grazia Chiuri)), can open new opportunities in our daily life (*I think fashion can do a lot. Fashion is very popular, so it can help broadcast a message and reach a new generation* (Maria Grazia Chiuri)) and can easily adjust to current situation (*Fluidity offers an alternate way of being, crossing and merging masculine and feminine* (Harris Reed)), be one's back areas and cover (*Fashion is the armor to survive the reality of everyday life* (Bill Cunningham)).

Most designers are talking about fashion as a continuous phenomenon and only a few speak of it from the point of comfort and adherence to favourite things, "*We all have those go-to pieces in our closet that we keep for years and literally wear out before we retire them. I'm here to make the go-tos, the keepers*" (Jamie Okuma, fashion designer and creator of Jamie Okuma on the La Jolla Indian reservation in California); "*Perseverance and resilience are key. I also try to remain true to my vision. The idea is to create go-to pieces for a woman's wardrobe and her life—beautifully crafted pieces that a woman will love today, in two months, in two years, in five years—and to do that for as many women as possible*" (Narciso Rodriguez).

As a social and cultural phenomenon, fashion is a complex system that promotes and ensures the constant renewal of various aspects of the life activity of both the society as a whole and individuals in particular. Thus, fashion is presented as a great force that can influence different areas of people's lives. Aphorisms, as author's statements, reflect the entire experience of the people accumulated by traditions, on the one hand, and on the other hand, through the verbalization of the concept, they influence the public consciousness and to some extent form stereotypes. Fashion, spreading and influencing various areas of people's lives, can cause both positive and negative emotions. But the fact of the very impact of fashion on society, individual representatives of cultures and nations as a whole is indisputable.

To crown it all, we cannot but agree with the statement of an American businesswoman, interior designer, and fashion icon Iris Apfel that "*Fashion you can buy, but style you possess. The key to style is learning who you are, which takes years. There's no how to road map to style. It's about self-expression and, above all, attitude*" [7].

References

1. Britannica dictionary. URL: www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/29553/aphorism.
2. Cambridge online Dictionary. URL: www.dictionary.cambridge.org.
3. Collins online dictionary, thesaurus and reference materials. URL: www.collinsdictionary.com.
4. Frisella Emily. URL: <https://www.litcharts.com/literary-devices-and-terms/aphorism>.
5. Gopnik Adam. The art of Aphorism. URL: <https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2019/07/22/the-art-of-aphorism>.
6. Quentin Shaw. British Journal of General Practice. 2009;59(569):954–955. URL: <https://bjgp.org/content/59/569/954>.
7. Rebecca Cope. Everything You Need To Know About Iris Apfel. URL: <https://graziadaily.co.uk/celebrity/news/iris-afpel-film-quotes-documentary-husband-age/>.
8. 101 Fashion Quotes So Timeless They're Basically Iconic. URL: <https://stylecaster.com/feature/fashion-quotes-203026/>.
9. 140 Fashion Quotes on Dressing Confidently and With Style. URL: <https://www.quoteambition.com/fashion-quotes/>.
10. 51 Inspirational Fashion Quotes To Live By. URL: <https://www.vogue.co.uk/gallery/best-fashion-quotes>.
11. Aphorism Quotes. URL: <https://www.goodreads.com/quotes/tag/aphorism>.
12. Aphorisms by theme: Fashion. URL: https://www.aphorism4all.com/by_theme.php?th_id=221.
13. Famous People Quotes. URL: <http://new-quotes.net>.
14. Inspiring Challenge Quotes About Life and Tough Times. URL: <https://everydaypower.com>.
15. The 87 Greatest Fashion Quotes of All Time. URL: <https://harpersbazaar.com>.
16. The Web's Largest Resource for Famous Quotes & Sayings. URL: <https://quotes.net>.
17. Top 10 Fashion quotes. URL: <https://brainyquote.com>.
18. Wallpapers with Inspirational Quotes. URL: <https://quotefancy.com>.

СПИСОК ИСТОЧНИКОВ

1. Britannica dictionary. URL: www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/29553/aphorism).
2. Cambridge online Dictionary. URL: www.dictionary.cambridge.org.
3. Collins online dictionary, thesaurus and reference materials. URL: www.collinsdictionary.com.
4. Frisella Emily. Aphorism. URL: <https://www.litcharts.com/literary-devices-and-terms/aphorism>, свободный.
5. Gopnik Adam. The art of Aphorism. URL: <https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2019/07/22/the-art-of-aphorism>.
6. Quentin Shaw. British Journal of General Practice 2009. № 59 (569). P. 954–955. URL: <https://bjgp.org/content/59/569/954>.
7. Rebecca Cope. Everything You Need To Know About Iris Apfel. URL: <https://graziadaily.co.uk/celebrity/news/iris-afpel-film-quotes-documentary-husband-age/>.
8. 101 Fashion Quotes So Timeless They're Basically Iconic. URL: <https://stylecaster.com/feature/fashion-quotes-203026/>.
9. 140 Fashion Quotes on Dressing Confidently and With Style. URL: <https://www.quoteambition.com/fashion-quotes/>.
10. 51 Inspirational Fashion Quotes To Live By. URL: <https://www.vogue.co.uk/gallery/best-fashion-quotes>.
11. Aphorism Quotes. URL: <https://www.goodreads.com/quotes/tag/aphorism>.
12. Aphorisms by theme: Fashion. URL: https://www.aphorism4all.com/by_theme.php?th_id=221.
13. Famous People Quotes. URL: <http://new-quotes.net>.
14. Inspiring Challenge Quotes About Life and Tough Times. URL: <https://everydaypower.com>, свободный.
15. The 87 Greatest Fashion Quotes of All Time. URL: <https://harpersbazaar.com>.
16. The Web's Largest Resource for Famous Quotes & Sayings. URL: <https://quotes.net>.
17. Top 10 Fashion quotes. URL: <https://brainyquote.com>.
18. Wallpapers with Inspirational Quotes. URL: <https://quotefancy.com>.

Информация об авторах

О.В. Чурсина – кандидат филологических наук.
Ю.В. Очередько – кандидат филологических наук.

Information about the authors

O.V. Chursina – Candidate of Philological Sciences.
Y.V. Ocheredko – Candidate of Philological Sciences.

Вклад авторов: все авторы сделали эквивалентный вклад в подготовку публикации.
Авторы заявляют об отсутствии конфликта интересов.
Contribution of the authors: the authors contributed equally to this article.
The authors declare no conflicts of interests.

Статья поступила в редакцию 11.03.2022; одобрена после рецензирования 20.04.2022;
принята к публикации 26.04.2022.

The article was submitted 11.03.2022; approved after reviewing 20.04.2022; accepted
for publication 26.04.2022.