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Language of Dressing as a Communication System and its Functions – Roman Jakobson’s Linguistic Method

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Abstract

The aim of the study was to show the principles of nonverbal communication achieved with clothing by using Roman Jakobson’s linguistic method. As demonstrated and established here, clothes and their functions can be translated into verbal and written language. The language of fashion, costume and stage design can be analysed in terms of their function and symbolism. Based on the language function scheme, clothing can be interpreted as the language of communication and as a system. Using purely linguistic methods, examples of various clothing analyses demonstrate the clothing function as a visual sign system, which is equal to the linguistic sign system, language and communication. Different kinds of communication can be achieved through garments, as explained by the examples and discussion selected and described.

Key words: clothing, communication, visual language, costume design, film, theatre.

Introduction

When it comes to the language of clothing, many people believe that several types of communication can be performed through garments. It is obvious that fashion and clothing are forms of nonverbal understanding and communication. “With garments for example, we can make a statement about age, gender, social class, school affiliation, or religion. Ultimately the meanings communicated by the objectively discernible types and properties of clothes depend on each person’s subjective interpretations of them. Furthermore meanings that a person attributes to various outward characteristics of dress are based on his/her socialization within a particular cultural context as well as on the improvisations the person exercises when applying learned meanings of dress within specific social situations [1]”. To communicate through clothes, no verbalisms or written words are used. “Even then, when the garments are covered with slogans, and names of brands, the meaning of clothing is not just confined in its slogans, it’s more and above that, and that represents the complex language of clothing [2]”.

Communication in its widest sense is the exchange of information from the sender to the receiver. There are several types of communication that a person can perform, one of them certainly being visual communication. Visual communication involves a spectrum of terms that are not sent verbally, but sensually, i.e. visually.

The visual communication is received simultaneously i.e. “No matter if we are talking about everyday or special clothes; they both, intentionally or accidentally, send various messages about ourselves [3]”.

“In contemporary textile art, appearance is always more important than the quality of material/textile, and thus artists often use some experimental materials just to achieve the desired effect, form, provocation, or message [4]”. According to Lurie, there are more languages of clothing, each of them having its own vocabulary, syntax and grammar [5].

“Today as semiotics, a branch of linguistics concerned with signs and symbols, becomes fashionable, sociologists tell us that fashion, too, is a language of signs, a nonverbal system of communication [6]”. In this study, the following terms describing clothing functions are used: The terms “sign” and “symbol” are defined by Roland Barthes’s in Roland Barthes’s *The Fashion System* [7]; the term “dress” is a general term for a garment, e.g. a black dress; the term “costume” is used for the style of a dress appropriate for some occasion, purpose, period or character, especially as used on the stage, at balls, court or the like, and may apply to men’s garments as well, e.g. an 18th-century costume; other synonyms used for the term “dress” are “raiment”, “attire”, “clothes”, “habit”, “garments”, “vestments” and “habiliments” [8].

The study analyses the language of fashion, costume and stage design in terms

of their function and symbolism. Based on the language function scheme, it is shown that clothing as art signs, symbols or visual language can be interpreted as a language of communication and a system. This way, it can be determined that clothing belongs to visual communication that is established between the sender and receiver with the help of visual signs or codes [9]. These claims are supported with the analysis of everyday clothing examples, designed clothing and costumes. “Communication is defined as a process, because communication is a process in which the message arrives, using some of the medium or channel for sending the message or code [10]”. Clothing of the present time seems more like a costume, while a theatre costume has some resemblance to everyday clothes, due to the meaning and process of communication achieved through the form of dressing or undressing. In particular, various manners of establishing communication via visual inspection are demonstrated in the article by analysing specific examples. The main idea is to explore how visual/nonverbal communication shifts its meaning in relation to the context where it is located.

Roman Jakobson’s method and communication system in clothing

By using Jakobson’s method, some examples of costumes, fashion design and shows where the same communication system and language functions can be defined as in Jakobson’s method are analysed and presented below.

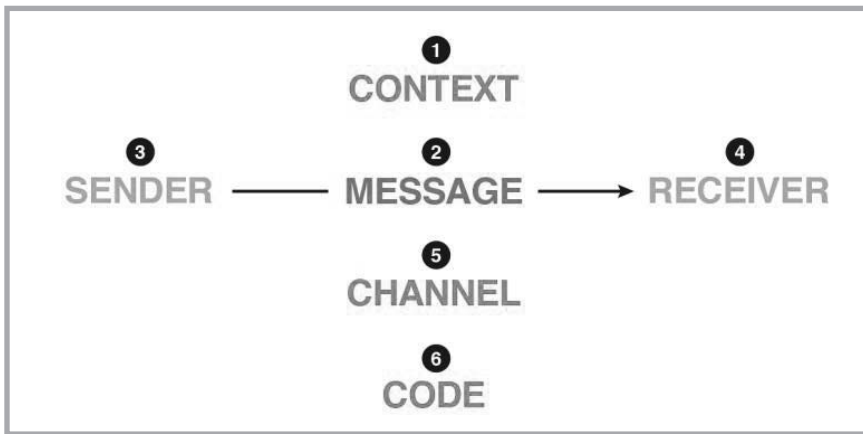


Figure 1. Jakobson's system for a communication scheme of target factors and language functions.

Language is often defined as a system of signs that can be used for articulation. Roman Jakobson, one of the most important linguists of the twentieth century, based his theory upon the communication scheme that he took from the theory of communication. He defined the six language functions by giving a response to each of them.

One or all of these functions may be present in any utterance; they vary in their importance, resulting from which function dominates the rest. "Where a particular function dominates, the message is oriented towards the corresponding factor, as was mentioned by Clarke in Linguistic and Poetics [11]". Examples of all six-language functions are given and explained as follows:

1. The **Referential** function of the language refers to the subject of the message or expressive relation between the message and reference. The referential function is also called the "denotative" and "cognitive" function, and is the leading task of numerous messages.
2. The **Poetic** (aesthetic) function is defined as the focus on the message itself, where the message stops being a means of communication and becomes its goal. This feature is characteristic of the foremost arts in general.

3. The **Emotive** function expresses direction towards the emitter. The emotive function is also called the "expressive" function; it tends to produce an impression of a certain emotion.
4. The **Conative** function is directed towards the recipient of the message. The stress is on the impact of the message upon the addressee.
5. The **Phatic** function focuses on establishing whether given communication channels are open and unimpeded. The phatic function is focused on the contact, i.e. the channel.
6. The **Metalinguistic** function indicates the orientation of the messages towards the code; it is always represented in the statements of an event.

"Jakobson points out that his study of linguistics is not limited to literature [12]". When the functions of language are analysed for a given unit such as a word, text or an image, it can be specified which functions are present or absent, which class or type this unit belongs to and what characteristics these functions have regarding the hierarchical and other relations among them. Jakobson's communication model of factors can be complemented with a corresponding scheme of functions (Table 1).

Table 1. Roman Jakobson's scheme of six communication process elements.

Target factor and function number	Target factor	Source factor	Language function
1.	context	message	referential
2.	addresser	message	emotive
3.	addressee	message	conative
4.	contact	message	phatic
5.	code	message	multilingual
6.	message	message	poetic

Research objectives and Jakobson's scheme application

Roman Jakobson defined six language functions (or communication functions), according to which an effective act of verbal communication can be described. Each of these functions has an associated factor. Although the rule may be determined from the dominant function of each message, it is not the only function of these messages; it comes with other, more or less distinct functions. In our case, the sender is each one of us who wants to show something with either clothing or attitude, and the recipient every human being from our surroundings to whom our inner messages should come through the visual channel. The message must be expressed in a code that is common to the sender (who encodes the message) and the recipient (who decodes the message), otherwise the communication is impossible or a mediator is introduced. Each message ranges through a specified channel. Therefore our code system is common to all of us and clothing represents the need for various symbols.

Jakobson's system of communication is demonstrated in the following scheme (Figure 1) [12].

Jakobson's work was influenced by the Organon Model defined by Karl Bühler. Each of Jakobson's communication functions is associated with a dimension or factor of the communication process. Elements from Bühler's theory appear in Figure 1 in green and orange colour, whereas Jakobson's elaborations are presented in blue colour:

1. referential (contextual information),
2. poetic/aesthetic (auto-reflection),
3. emotive (self-expression),
4. conative (vocative or imperative addressing of receiver),
5. phatic (checking channel working),
6. metalinguistic (checking code working) [13].

Several discussions and critiques of Roman Jakobson's communication method can be found. The most recent one is presented in Genesco's book: "Baudrillard and Signs", where it is documented with Baudrillard's tempestuous encounters with semiology and structuralism. The book shows Baudrillard's criticism of Jakobson's communication functions, and claims "that it is the code which speaks since it dictates the unidirection-

al passage of information and guarantees the legibility and univocality of the message [14]". Baudrillard hypothesises that "agency has passed into the code which terrorizes communication by positioning the sender and receiver in an 'abstract separateness' and privileging the sender [14]". Thus that leads to the conclusion that Baudrillard understands Roman Jakobson's model as more ideological than scientific and objective. Baudrillard's critique of Jakobson's model of communication is based on the idea that the code has an "agency and is an intermedium" which determines the controlled circulation of semantic contents [15]. For Baudrillard, like Genesco, understands that "the code terrorizes the process of communication by fixing the two poles of the sender and receiver and by privileging the sender. The code lines up the sign-vehicle and cultural unit, the sender and receiver, and the signifier and signified [14]".

Thus we can conclude from Baudrillard's theory that the code (defined by Jakobson) represents in the most general sense a system of rules for the combination of stable sets of terms into messages; the logic of the code is disjunctive. Baudrillard also reduces Jakobson's model to the simulation of communication by discovering its unidirectionality, as well as the assumptions of legibility and unequivocality of the message and agency of the code. If we look closely at the schema, the code does entail a kind of instrumental influence, but in our case that also can be a key for successful nonverbal communication thought clothing. Also from Jakobson's system of code, contact and context, Baudrillard seizes upon the power and irreducibility, meaning that if there is signification, then there is a code "of the first, and elevates it to the status of an overwhelming context (the code becomes modernité [14]) whose extras flee the stage (all of Jakobson's functions) when (and if) its dictatorship crumbles [14]". In our case this Baudrillard critiques also works especially if we are analysing stage or contemporary costume- clothes. Based on this theory and critique, we can find Jakobson's communication model as a fundamental basis for understanding nonverbal language and its functions.

The communication scheme is substantiated in the following chapters by using examples from everyday clothing, stage costumes, theatre and film costumes, as

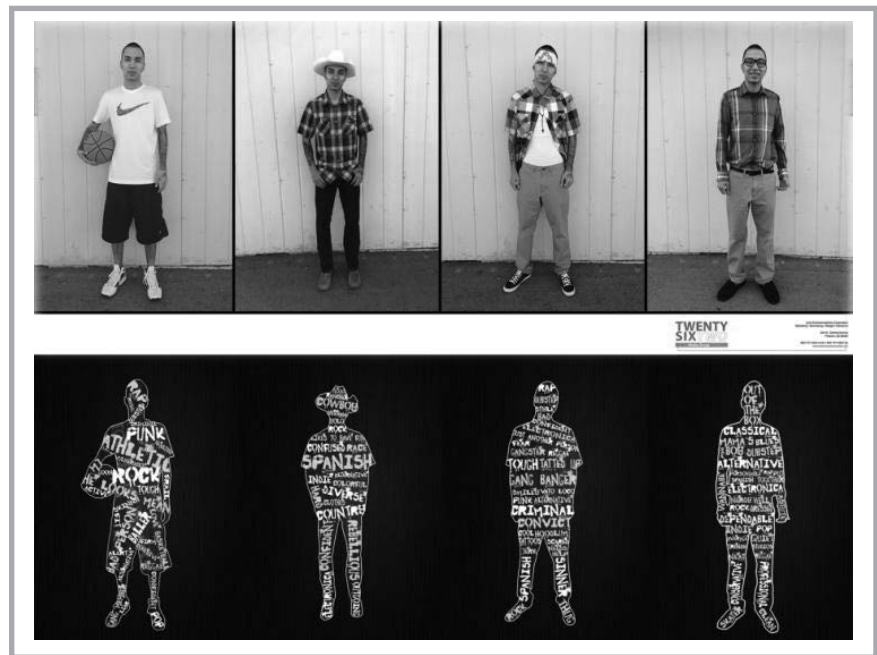


Figure 2. Results of Royal Group Design research: "I am what I wear". Photos by: Royal Design Group, <http://theroyaldesigngroup.com/identity/identity-project/>, May 2015.

well as classifying and comparing them according to the rules of Jakobson's six language functions.

Language function in everyday clothing

An interesting study performed by the Royal Design Group is presented below as an example. The Design Group showed interviewees some photos of the same person – who was intentionally differently thematically dressed, e.g. as a cowboy, a hip hopper etc. [16]. The interviewees were asked to fill in a questionnaire based on the visual expressions evoked by the photos presented in Figure 2. Later results showing stereotypical associations acquired from the questionnaire were phrased in a graphically shaped silhouette, constructed from the words defined during the research. The looks and results of the research are presented in the picture and graphic scheme below (Figure 2).

The project "I am what I wear" explores the world of stereotyping and identity. The concept behind the project was to analyse how people perceive a stereotype of individuals based on the way they look. In 97% of respondents, their opinion was based on their clothes, which supported the statement "I am what I wear". This way of perceiving information or misinformation corresponds to Jakobson's system of the communication scheme.

Language of costumes and its functions

We can describe costumes as a dramaturgy of visuals. To create a costume for a theatre or a film costume, a designer creates clothes focusing on the character. The designer builds his visual identity, garments, accessories, hair and mask by impressions or imputes about a character in a book, play or screenplay. "Costume signs and its properties have a duality: the sign is a tool in the service of some claims that it goes beyond, but if the sign is too lean or too rich, or too ugly or too beautiful, then it would not allow reading and would miss its original function [17]". Costume before each word highlights the time, space, place of event, gender, age, character and function of the role. Costumes could be defined as clothing that functions as a sign and message in a specified area in order to bring us closer to a character or event, not necessarily linked to our personality or life.

"Rituals and meanings of dress, as well as the intrinsic role that clothes play in the creation of a character are telling a story that is both believable and meaningful [18]". We must emphasise that a modern costume implies a more sophisticated understanding of the costume function. Not only does the costume transmit images of an era, it also represents a set of symbols, meanings and a whole language insert-

Table 2. Expressing personality with costume features (subject to period).

Feature	Extrovert person	Introvert person
silhouette	dramatic or complex	simple, conventional
line	exaggerated curves, zigzags, diagonals, with details	straight lines, without much detail
cut	luxurious, more open cut (neckline, back), shorter skirt, layered, asymmetric, bare arms, overflowing	modest, buttoned or high neckline, long sleeves
fit	body revealing	body concealing
colour	high intensity, warm colours	cool colours with lower intensities
texture	hard, shiny, detailed	fine, matte
hair and makeup	unconventional, untied, coloured, asymmetric cut	tight, close to the head, more classical

Table 3. Expressing character traits with costume features.

Feature	Loving	Sensuous	Boring	Evil
Line	wide curves, soft edged	undulating lines	gently curved lines	hard, straight or zigzag lines
Cut	open, flowing, modest	full cut, open, lavish	full cut, modest	tight, straight cut
Fit	body revealing	body revealing	body concealing	body revealing
Colour	warm, medium intensity, high or low values	warm, medium intensity, high or low values	cool, medium intensity, high value	warm, high or low intensity, low value
Texture	soft, fuzzy	soft, shiny, smooth	soft, line	harsh, rough hard, shiny
Hair and makeup	soft, generous volume	elegant, generous, volume or severe sexy	soft, loose	severe or frazzled

Table 4. Expressing social status with costume features (subject to period and personality).

Feature	Rich	Middle class	Poor
Silhouette	fashion, trendy, modern silhouette	modern, suitable, maybe not latest silhouette	outdated silhouette, out-of-date and trend
Cut	long, layered, complicated	long, classic, less layered	small (shortest) or long-enlarged
Fit	upright, proper fit, custom made, tailored fit	neat, proper fit	poorly fitted
Colour	intense, vibrant, higher intensity	lower intensity, lower value	low intensity, low value
Texture	smooth, shiny, embroidery	medium textures, low shine	rough, bold textures
Condition	new, ironed, clean	worn, clean, tight	worn, ragged, dirty

ed in the form of clothing. In that way, costumes convey one of the key elements that are needed for successful communication between an actor and an audience. “In today’s theatre, everything is a sign, and these have several meanings at the same time, depending on the usage of an element, concept of the show or changes inside of the character [19]”. For example, the original purpose of wearing a hat is covering the head. However, on stage, it leads to the association that an actor is or soon will be in departure, attending a ceremony, or they are preparing for a special event. We must know that the type of hat is determined by the context. The hat worn by a male is not the same when a female wears it. In addition, we will not get the same message from a cylinder or baseball cap. The cylinder as well as cap remind us of specific times

and occasions, e.g. a 19th century gentleman or sportsman from the 20th century. Considering this generalised function of clothing as an art sign, code or language, we can connect it with the space and action. Each element on the costume has its meaning and its own philosophy.

Therefore a costume in a theatre or film is not only limited by clothing, but it also represents characteristics of the time, position and other character attributes. Details of the costume are not random; neither are the colour, fabric or any other supplement. Every detail has its place and function in order to complete the picture – story and to send the right message to the audience.

To substantiate our arguments, a few examples are given below. They are based on the Cunningham analysis, presenting

how features are composed to represent a specific type of person, or person’s characteristics [19]. The first is an example of how to express a personality with a costume feature. The following examples are not the rules of the theatre, but general associations (**Table 2**).

In continuation, more ways to express character traits in costume features are presented. **Table 3** shows how images of different types of peoples’ characteristics can be created with various features.

According to Cunningham, an expressed rank or social status (**Table 4**) can also be shown with costume features. **Table 4** presents a few examples of how to achieve the perfect look of social statuses [19].

A carefully designed costume can also show someone’s age. The impact of colours on the appearance of the silhouette and status, or the psychological impact of colours on the audience can be demonstrated. Costume elements categorised in this way represent a system of signs, a visual alphabet, which helps to put together visual words and sentences.

In this chapter, the basic elements of the language of costumes, their functions on the stage as well as their language functions are discussed. The elements and language structure presented define the selection of costumes analysed in the next chapter as examples of costume design to demonstrate better the linguistic operation they belong to and represent.

■ Examples and discussion

In order to prove our claims, we selected the paradigms of the nonverbal, i.e. visual, language of clothes or costumes, respectively, from films, theatre and other stage performances. Moreover we included examples of clothing with slogans that send direct and indirect messages. By using these examples and comparing them with the language functions, we can actually display the principles of nonverbal language and communication through clothing.

Language of film costumes

First example: The Colour of Pomegranates

For the first analysis, a costume from the film “The Colour of Pomegranates” (Sayat Nova, 1969) by Sergei Parajanov was selected. This film is like a poetic representation that compounds through

pictures. The film is not language-based as there are no dialogues; the conversation is based on visual signs and pictures. Without a word spoken, the picture (*Figure 3*) itself includes very symbolic costumes and scenery in order to discern the story of the poem.

In *Table 5*, previous examples from *Tables 2–4* are used to express the costume type of a person by applying features (subject to period and personality) to analyse the language function of the costume exhibited in *Figure 3*.

From *Table 5*, it can be seen that the character is wealthy, rich, probably royalty, and Armenian. The story is set in the 16th century. The colour that the character wears symbolises power, love, sexuality, tradition and balance. From the cut and silhouette, it can be concluded that the character is a very important or crucial person in making serious decisions. “Red in the form of dye, pomegranate juice and blood appears throughout the film, bearing the weight of metaphoric meanings, from love to the martyrdom of the Armenian people” [20].

Due to the observations indicated above, it can be stated that we are talking about the poetic/aesthetic language function. The target and source factor is the message itself. The stress is on the form of the message, from which aesthetic purpose is predominant. The set towards the message, as such, focuses on the message for its own sake. This function deepens the fundamental dichotomy of signs and objects by promoting the palpability of signs.

Second example: Schindler’s list

The following example, i.e. “Schindler’s list”, a film by Stephen Spielberg, represents a completely different theme and film genre, and is perhaps not so closely connected to the theatre as a genre. However, it has one main common point with the theatre, i.e. a young girl in a costume. Therefore it can serve as an example of the language expressed through clothing (*Figure 4*).

From the costume features (*Table 6*), it can be seen that the costume represents the time of drama, i.e. World War II. Furthermore it can be concluded that the coat, modern for that period, presents a high middle class cut. However, the main point of the language of the costume is its colour and appearance.



Figure 3. Photos of costumes from film “The Colour of Pomegranates”, 1969. Photo by: Unknown, <http://www.jamesmsteffen.net/2014/09/the-color-of-pomegranates-restored/>; <https://www.flickr.com/photos/angeliska/10920594816/>, September 2015.



Figure 4. Photograph of red coat from Spielberg’s Schindler’s List, costume designer – Anna B. Sheppard, 1993. The girl in a red coat, whose tragic fate provided one of the most memorable episodes in the film. Photo by: PA, <http://www.thejc.com/arts/arts-features/103882/is-schindler-s-list-fatally-flawed>, September 2015.

Table 5. “The Colour of Pomegranates” costume analysis of costume features.

Feature	Costume analysis
style/skirt length	combination of modern look (makeup from 1960s) and traditional Armenian and Persian style, ong, rich – traditional
silhouette	dramatic, fashion: traditional, high styled
cut	longest, lavish, luxurious, traditional cut
fit	proper fit
colour	green: balance, good judgement, resurrection, regeneration, colour of Venus and Aphrodite, fertility red: warm and positive, pioneering spirit, leadership, ambition, sexuality, love, magic, religious
texture	shiny, smooth, embroidery
condition	new, clean,
hair and makeup	covered with a rich crown of herbs, white strong makeup

Table 6. Schindler’s list costume analysis of costume features.

Feature	Costume analysis
style	1940s style
silhouette	simple children’s coat
cut	child, short basic cut
fit	proper fit
colour	red: warm, positive, pioneering spirit, promoting ambition, magical, religious
texture	dusty, poor
condition	worn



Figure 5. Photo from film: “Outsider” by Andrej Košak, costume designer: Karin Košak, 1997. Photo by: Sven Pepeonik, <http://www.rockomotiva.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/AUTSAJDER.jpg>, January 2016.



Figure 6. Photo from theatre performance: “The Life and Death of Marina Abramović”, by Robert Wilson, costume designer Jacques Reynaud, premiered at Manchester International Festival, The Lowry, Manchester, United Kingdom. Performed in English, 2011. Photo by: Lucie Jansch, <http://www.watermillcenter.org/events/ladomabenefit/>, December 2015.

Table 7. “Outsider” costume analysis by costume features.

Feature	Costume analysis
Style	punk, rock anarchist style
Silhouette	late 1970s, early 1980s
Cut	loose, deconstructed cut
Fit	loose, casual fit
Colour	black, white, green with details – colour of punk, military, anti-system
Condition	worn, already used, deconstructed
hair and makeup	untidy, messy hair

Table 8. “The life and death of Marina Abramović” costume analysis of costume features.

Feature	Costume analysis
style	different styles: military, cabaret, lavish, 1940–2010s
silhouette	different silhouettes from different periods of time
cut	different styles of cuts, from classic to extreme
fit	proper fit, different for each character
colour	clear, strong, almost magical colours with strong symbolism (power, royal, peace, war etc.)
texture	clean, rich, sparkly
condition	new

The coat was placed as if the true impact of the Holocaust depended on the costume. The film was made in black and white, the only coloured thing being the girl’s red coat. The aim is to draw attention to the significance of the actions and the story. Therefore the target factor is the addressee and the source factor is the message that leads to the emotive function. When a message is in an emotive function, it is designed to stress the addressee’s response to a given situation arising from the context.

Third example: Outsider

For the third example, we selected the Slovenian film “Outsider”, which was directed by Andrej Košak (Figure 5). “Outsider” is an example of combining two visual (dressing) languages. One is the language of street wear, functioning as a symbol of time, subculture and the music of the young population. The other visual language is the language of costume design. This example shows how everyday clothing can be put into different media and can be presented as a costume sign. As mentioned earlier, today it is more likely to see how costumes inspire street wear and how everyday clothes become costumes – visual signs and language of theatre and cinema.

The example above was selected to show the link between the language function of everyday clothing and its visual perception, as well as the use of everyday visual language to create a costume. The costume features (Table 7) show that the plot takes place at the end of the 1970s and the beginning of the 1980s. From the table it can also be seen that these young people represent the punk rock subculture, their clothes express rebellion, and the cleverly placed details of the costumes place the story in the territory of Yugoslavia. This indicates that the orientation of the messages is focused on the code, which can lead to the metalinguistic language function. In addition, the function is defined as the focus on the message itself, where the message stops being the means of communication and becomes its goal. We can conclude that in the case of “Outsider”, the visual language function is a combination of the poetic/aesthetic and the metalinguistic language function.

Language of theatre costumes

First example: The Life and Death of Marina Abramović

The images of the theatre performance: “The Life and Death of Marina Abram-



Figure 7. Photos from theatre performance: “Barocco”, produced by Teatro Fernan Gomez, Centro Cultural de la Villa, Madrid, 2007. Photo by: Aljoša Rebolj, <http://www.pandurtheaters.com/> – [!repertoire/11/barocco/gallery](http://www.pandurtheaters.com/!repertoire/11/barocco/gallery), December 2015.

ović” (Figure 6), which was directed by Robert Wilson, evoke a range of associations. From the pictures, a few associations can be seen, e.g. a battlefield, Abramović’s performances for Biennale Venice (1997), a cemetery, visual associations with Orthodox icons, traditional costumes etc. The performance is a mixture of different pictures, associations, mixed media and cultures. All this information can be obtained from the costume and other visual elements of the show.

Table 8 expresses the costume type by using the features (subject to period and personality) to analyse the language function of the pictures in Figure 6.

From the costume features (Table 8), it can be concluded that the costumes represent different periods in the drama, namely from World War II to the present day. However, there is also a timeless space with no present and no future. The latter can also be referred to as the timeless theme of the performance title – “The life and death.....”. There is much symbolism in pictures, from the colours, to the cut and style of costumes. The target factor is the addressee and the source factor is the message, which leads to the emotive function. Nevertheless it is also a combination of the conative function, which is directed towards the recipient of the message, the phatic function, as the given channels of communication are



Figure 8. Scenes from theatre performance: “Baptism under Triglav” by the Theatre of Sisters Scipion, Neue Slowenische Kunst, Cankarjev dom, Ljubljana, 1986. Photo by: NSK, <http://nsk.mg-lj.si/si/artist/gledalisce-sester-scipion-nasice/>, February 2016.

Table 9. “Barocco” costume analysis of costume features.

Feature	Costume analysis
style/skirt length	historical, baroque style – long, rich with French pannier shape, detailed with ribbons, ruffles, robes etc.
silhouette	dramatic, high styled, 18 th century
cut	long, luxurious, historical
fit	proper fit
colour	neutral colours (white, grey, bluish), meaning: mysterious, sophisticated, glamorous, rich, purity, innocence, softness, timeless, dreamy
texture	shiny, smooth, detailed
condition	new, clean
hair and makeup	18 th century style

Table 10. “Baptism under Triglav” costume analysis of costume features.

Feature	Costume analysis
style	clean, timeless, military look, avant-garde
silhouette	straight, high styled
cut	clean, straight
fit	proper fit
colour	dark (black, green) and neutral colours (white, grey, bluish), meaning: mysterious, sophisticated, timeless; dark colours: rage, anger, rigid, stiff
texture	smooth
condition	new, clean

open and unimpeded, and of the metalin-guistic and poetic functions of the language.

Second example: Barocco

The creators of the theatre performance “Barocco” (Figure 7), i.e. the Slovenian theatre director Tomaž Pandur and his artistic team, defined this show as a continuously intertwined combination of theatre and dance which depicts the time of drastic changes incurring during the French Revolution. The show draws material for its story from the world of literature.

From Table 9, it can be established that the nonverbal language of costumes represents a historical costume from the Baroque period. The colours of the costumes (Figure 7) express an extra sense

of time distance, giving the observer the impression of a dream, luxury and mystery. In this case, the costumes created by Angelina Atlagić determine precisely the period of the drama. Considering the directness of the message given by the costumes, the combination of referential and poetic language functions can be stated.

Third example: Baptism under Triglav

A similar example of poetic and emotional visual-nonverbal language of costume and set design in the theatre can also be found in the performance: “Baptism under Triglav”, written by the retro avant-garde Slovenian artistic collective Neue Slowenische Kunst and directed by Dragan Živadinov (Figure 8).

One of the main expressions in the performance was represented using the



Figure 9. a) On the left: Lady Gaga's meat dress, 2010. The dress, designed by Franc Fernandez, was condemned by animal rights groups and named by Time as the top fashion statement of 2010. Photo by: MTV, <http://glee.wikia.com/wiki/File:Lady-gaga-meat-dress.jpg>, September 2014; b) On the right: Madonna's Jean Paul Gaultier stage costume, "Blonde Ambition" 1990. Photo by: REX, <https://s-media-cache-ak0.pinimg.com/736x/61/f7/44/61f744d54a1767c5888b8be8761a1cf9.jpg>, April 2016.



Figure 10. Katharine Hamnett in T-shirt with slogan: "58% People Don't Want Pershing" in 1984. Photo by: Unknown, <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/femail/article-2082616/Margaret-Thatchers-shock-Katherine-Hamnetts-Downing-Street-T-shirt-protest.html>, September 2014.

avant-garde style and its visual symbols. The visual language of the performance challenged the religious, historical and military achievements of the country – nation (**Table 10**). Through visual semiotics shown in the costume and set design, the performance told a story about history, heritage, beliefs and politics. By using these symbols, the performance prefigured the future of the social and po-

litical situation of the time. We can define the visual language as Jakobson's poetic and emotive language functions due to the self-expression and auto-reflection of the messages.

Language of stage costumes

Clothes can also serve to provoke the masses. For example, Lady Gaga's meat dress was designed in order to send a message against animal abuse (**Figure 9.a**). An example of a famous Madonna stage costume made by the designer Jean Paul Gaultier from the 1980s (**Figure 9.b**) can be mentioned in this context as well. It translates from the visual language to the verbal language: "I am a woman." – represented by a corset with an enlarged bra, "but I also have control" – symbolised by the panties dressed as outwear, i.e. dressed over men's "gangster" trousers, which symbolise power. It can also symbolise women's power, equality and place in society, as well as much more. Both cases can be considered as examples of the phatic language function, also defined as "object language" [12]. The emphasis is on establishing that the given communication channels are open and unimpeded. In this case, the target factor is the contact and the source factor – the message. This clothing can also be defined as the emotive or poetic function due to the aim of wearing it in public.

Language of slogans

As mentioned at the beginning of the paper, even when the garments are cov-

ered with slogans, the meanings of the clothing are not just those of mere slogans – garments can be much more than that: They represent the complex expression of the (non) verbal language through clothing and its style.

As an example of perusing a direct message through clothing, that of the fashion designer and activist Katharine Hamnett can be selected. Hamnett invented the T-shirt slogan: "58% People Don't Want Pershing" (**Figure 10**), referring to the fact that basing pershing missiles in England was an unpopular policy with the public. The stress is on the denotative or cognitive purpose of the message (what the message is about). The target factor is the code and the source factor is the message. This example of the nonverbal language of clothes can be defined as Jakobson's referential language function.

Conclusions

In the study, it was shown and proven by examples that clothes can represent a very important aspect in communication. Communication meets all the functions of language and communicative forms, as seen when comparing clothes with the famous Roman Jakobson scheme. As seen from the examples discussed, the main representations of linguistic functions are based on the sign model, which functions through its relations with the sender (addresser), receiver (addressee) and referent (context). As Jakobson points out, the context is somewhat ambiguous, in other words, it can be interpreted in more than one way, which is particularly the case when applying the scheme to costumes and clothes.

Through a review of cultural and social clothing functions, and placing them in Jakobson's linguistic model, we tried to gradually explain the verbal language and compare it to the language of clothes, fashion, theatre etc. Through the examples presented, it was proven that communication is also possible and powerful through clothing, and that communication has its own social and cultural involvement and significance. Examples of the meanings of certain visual symbols were given as well, e.g. a hat and coat in the theatre, or famous photographs. The clothes as well as their concept and appearance were analysed in order to obtain and explain their nonverbal messages.

Nowadays the fact that dress is not merely an item in a wardrobe is increasingly

acknowledged. It separates from its function to protect and cover the body, and also conveys a message sent through clothing, proving to be more than that – it expresses our personality, attitude, background, heritage etc.

The best indicator that clothing is a sign, a word or language is theatre/cinema-costume design. Through the development of this form of communication, we develop their expressiveness, as an addition to the shifting the boundaries of their own social and cultural development.

By given examples, it was proven that the visual, nonverbal language of clothes exists; pictures send deeper messages. Furthermore these visual messages can be interpreted as either comments or prediction of the future by using well-known symbols of the past. Nonverbal messages comment on society and events, and they point out the consequences of these developments. Through clothing or costumes, respectively, we are not talking only about our own style and ourselves, we are also accentuating the problems, changing people's styles and appearances, periods in the history, subcultures etc.

It was also noticed that the same clothing can produce different messages, enabling a different way of communication. The meaning of a message depends on different colours, textures, cuts, styles or contexts. For example, the material used for textiles and shapes gives them both quality and appearance. In the theatre and fashion industry, these two aspects are closely connected to each other [5]. With the combination of visual elements from the past and present, we are able to open new questions and send new messages to a wider audience. For these reasons, costumes are more and more frequently seen in fashion and in the streets, while the clothes of "ordinary" people can be frequently found in the theatre or cinema. In this way, clothing sharpens our vision and perception in relation to a current problem, events or dramatic text.

To summarise, clothes are not only visual signs of a language or nonverbal methods of communication among people, They also exist as witnesses and commentators of social activities, problems, history, people and human habits. Clothing is thus a medium for establishing communication at several levels, from everyday life to artistic expression.

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