

Micro-Paper 29: *Fashion as a Literacy Practice*

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Defining the Term

Fashion has become a cultural space in which are emerging messages using second languages. These messages are essentially multimodal, built with different semiotic resources such as: images, colors, texts, and others. Due to this, and also because of the frequent creation and reception of new texts creation, this is now a space where we can evidence literacy practices. Fashion shows us how people are using second languages outside academic environments, as their communicative resource to explore their creativity, reading and writing in a non-traditional way.

Thereby, fashion has allowed people to create different kinds of messages that usually express their thoughts and feelings. This is why the emerging texts refer constantly to states, emotions, social issues, jokes, ironies. Sometimes they use famous quotes from writers and musicians, proverbs, or music lyric. Another particularity of the messages we can see in fashion is their constant integration of designs with the meaning, the seasons, countries, cultures and festivities.

Connecting it to LSLP

At LSLP, we have arrived at the study of fashion as a literacy practice as a consequence of our description of second language literacies in our city. We first approached them in the first phase of our urban literacies research, mainly through our descriptions of advertisements and our exploration of malls. As a consequence of these inquiries, we realized that fashion was a larger issue than first considered.

Therefore, for the second phase of the project, which now describes cultural spaces, fashion as a route for the fieldwork, has helped to recognize, analyze and describe how the literacy practices are in Medellín city. It also has allowed to evidence people are playing with other languages different to Spanish (such as English, Italian, French, German.) and they are starting to draw on other means of expressions for reading and writing.

Expanding Second Language Research

Nowadays people should be aware that second languages are a phenomenon that happens not only in academia, but also in urban and cultural spaces. With fashion we can evidence that languages are currently moving around, favoring the interaction and game with them.

This fact should invite teachers, students and language users to think how they are going to integrate these literacy practices, which go beyond classrooms, and how they are going to use them to favor and promote second languages, as their research as their learning.

References

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