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**CORPUS ANALYSIS OF THE LANGUAGE AROUND SUSTAINABLE  
FASHION**

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## CONTENTS

<b>INTRODUCTION.....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>CHAPTER 1. SUSTAINABLE FASHION AND ITS LANGUAGE AS A FIELD FOR INTERDISCIPLINARY RESEARCH.....</b>	<b>9</b>
1.1. Modern studies into Sustainable Fashion .....	9
1.2. Linguistic research methodologies used in the study .....	12
1.3. Main methodological frameworks .....	14
1.3.1. Corpus Linguistics .....	14
1.3.2. Critical Discourse Analysis .....	16
1.3.3. Additional methods of research .....	17
1.4. Theories explored in the in-depth analysis of the language around sustainable fashion .....	19
1.4.1. Ecolinguistics .....	19
1.4.2. Framing Theory .....	20
1.4.3. Uses and Gratification Theory .....	21
1.4.4. Cognitive Linguistics: Language and Thought and Conceptual Metaphor Theory .....	22
1.4.5. Semiotics and Saussure’s theory of the sign.....	23
<b>CHAPTER 1. CONCLUSIONS.....</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>CHAPTER 2. CORPUS ANALYSIS OF TWEETS AROUND SUSTAINABLE FASHION AND LINGUISTIC MANIPULATIONS USED BY UK-BASED BRANDS .....</b>	<b>25</b>
2.1. Hashtag as a means to promote sustainable fashion .....	25
2.1.1. Abbreviations and Short Forms .....	28
2.1.2. Use of prefixes in formation of words related to thrifting.....	31
2.1.3. Preference for V+Adj to V+Adverb word-formation patterns in the language around sustainable fashion .....	35
2.1.4. The crucial role of metaphorical interpretations of the colour “green” in representation of sustainable fashion online.....	37

2.2. Linguistic patterns discovered in the further analysis .....	39
2.2.2. Loan words and slang used to talk about sustainable fashion .....	41
2.2.3. Suffix –able in words related to sustainable fashion production and traceability of the supply chains .....	44
2.2.4. V-ing words to describe processes in sustainable fashion.....	45
2.3. MEANS OF VERBAL MANIPULATION IN ADVERTISING OF SUSTAINABLE UK-BASED BRANDS.....	47
2.3.1. Vague language.....	48
2.3.2. Baseless claims wrapped in buzzwords.....	49
2.3.3. Positive language and frames for manipulation.....	50
2.3.4. Recognising "greenwash" .....	53
CHAPTER 2. CONCLUSIONS .....	54
<b>Chapter 3. CORPUS-ASSISTED ANALYSIS OF THE LANGUAGE AROUND UKRAINIAN SUSTAINABLE FASHION.....</b>	<b>55</b>
3.1. Differences in the language around sustainable fashion of Ukrainian brands compared to English ones .....	56
3.2. The idea of limitations in Ukrainian sustainable fashion and its relation to the Ukraine-Russia war.....	59
3.3. Verbal means to express social issues driving Ukrainian sustainable fashion .	62
3.3.1. Advocating for natural resources’ preservation.....	64
3.3.2. The Ukraine-Russia war .....	66
3.3.3. The linguistic sign in the language of sustainable Ukrainian brands .....	67
3.3.4. Promoting road safety: #safefashion .....	70
3.3.5. Sex education and LGBTQ+ rights .....	74
3.4. Going back to one’s roots as the primary vision for sustainable fashion in Ukraine.....	78
CHAPTER 3. CONCLUSIONS .....	84
<b>GENERAL CONCLUSIONS.....</b>	<b>86</b>
<b>SUMMARY.....</b>	<b>93</b>
<b>REFERENCES .....</b>	<b>96</b>
<b>LIST OF ILLUSTRATIVE MATERIAL.....</b>	<b>105</b>
<b>APPENDICES .....</b>	<b>107</b>

## INTRODUCTION

Sustainable fashion is an approach to clothing and accessories that aims to reduce environmental impact and promote ethical and fair practices throughout the manufacturing process. It considers the entire lifecycle of a garment, including the materials used, production methods, and end-of-life disposal options.

Exploring the language used by sustainable brands through research can help consumers make more informed decisions about the clothes they buy. By looking at the linguistic analysis of the authentic, raw language used to talk about sustainable fashion on social media, one can better understand the practices and values that underlie sustainable fashion, choose brands that align with their beliefs and priorities, and stay up to date on the latest language trends and developments in this field.

**Relevance of the chosen topic.** Research on the topic of sustainable fashion is a vast field and there have been notable publications within it over the years. Some include *Fast Fashion, Sustainability, and the Ethical Appeal of Luxury Brands* by Annamma Joy (2012), *The Consumption of (sustainable) Fashion: Patterns, drivers and barriers* by Mariangela Lavanga<sup>o</sup> & Monica Codina & Silvia Riesgo (2021), *Consumer Perception of the Visual Identity of Sustainable Fashion Brands* by Beatriz Gomes & Inês Amaral (2022). Nevertheless, there is little research on the language of the sustainable fashion industry which is analyzed linguistically with attention to social aspects. One of the few studies that got close to performing a linguistic analysis on sustainably oriented brands was *The Nuances of Brand Personality: A Corpus-assisted Linguistic Analysis of Web-based Communications of Fashion Brands* by Belinda Crawford Camiciottoli (2018). And while it is a valuable resource for linguists on similar exploratory missions of sustainable fashion, it is by far not enough to fill the gap in linguistic research of this type of fashion. Moreover, the authors appear to have only focused on identifying various semantic domains in which sustainable fashion operates, while the present study aims at exhausting all possible linguistic tools and theories applicable to the matter as well as addressing social, historical, and marketing aspect that contributed to the development of the language analyzed. Based on the

arguments listed above, this study has exceptional novelty and relevance to current trends in language and society.

**The aim of the present study** is to examine the language utilized within the semantic field of sustainable fashion in order to explore 1. New developments in language on social media, 2. Use of manipulative linguistic techniques, and 3. Effective language practices to elevate one's brand, using the inventory of Sociolinguistics.

**Objectives of this research** include:

- Identify linguistic theories that can be used to analyze language on the topic of sustainable fashion.
- Single out any similar word-formation patterns in the creation of new and fixed words and phrases in sustainable fashion.
- Pinpoint the most common language manipulation strategies used in online advertisements of sustainable fashion.
- Explore imagery and linguistic signs in online communication of sustainable fashion brands.
- Identify stylistic devices used to promote sustainable fashion.
- Compare the language around sustainable fashion between Ukrainian and UK-based brands.
- Identify the main semantic domains used in the language around sustainable fashion.
- Analyse syntactic and lexical complexity of the language used to talk about sustainable fashion.
- Detect the main themes in Ukrainian sustainable fashion and analyze the language used to express them with the help of linguistic and media communication theories.
- Study the Morphology, Syntax, Semantics, and Pragmatics of the language related to sustainable fashion.
- Examine how speakers use language around sustainable fashion in context to convey intended meaning, including social and cultural factors that influence communication.

**The subject of this study** is the language employed in relation to sustainable fashion used by brands as well as consumers.

**The object of this research** is lexical, stylistic, morphological, semantic, syntactical, pragmatic features and manipulative strategies used in the discourse around sustainable fashion.

**The data for this research** are 10000 Twitter posts mentioning sustainable fashion collected over the time period of 2 months, official website information on sustainability claims and product descriptions of such UK-based brands as Burberry, H&M, Zara compiling 2000 words, and the website information as well as Instagram posts (a collective text of 7000 words) of distinguished Ukrainian sustainable brands.

**Methodology.** Corpus linguistics and discourse analysis were the primary forms of analysis with additional methods supporting conclusions. Discourse analysis was most helpful because it revealed more details about factors like word formation, cohesion, syntax, new coinages, morphology, stylistic devices, complexity of the terminology, and other things. Critical discourse analysis was the predominant type of discourse analysis used. It allowed to examine the language in relation to its social setting. Other research methods included the triangulation methodology and the Interview.

**The novelty of the topic** lies in the intersection of two different fields - sustainability and language analysis. In recent years, there has been a growing interest in sustainable fashion, leading to the emergence of a new discourse around the topic. By combining these two fields, the study provides a new lens through which to explore the language used in the discourse around sustainable fashion. This can shed light on how the language is used to frame the discourse, what kind of narratives are being constructed, and how they shape our understanding of sustainable fashion. Such an analysis can help us better understand the complexities involved in promoting sustainable fashion practices, and can potentially lead to more effective communication strategies in this area.

**Scientific and practical value of the study.** The study offers insights into how fashion brands utilize web-based communication to convey brand personality, to

manipulate customers with the help of verbal and non-verbal means or to generate more interest in the brand. It also provides a helpful methodology that fashion businesses can adopt to make sure they are effectively communicating the intended brand personality, their sustainability goals and accomplishments, and they are aware of how to leverage them through language. Additionally, the study is a well of knowledge for novice linguists and non-native speakers of English who are looking to expand their grasp of the English language by exposing themselves to more authentic vocabulary, native-like collocations and expressions in the field of sustainability, fashion, online communication, and brand identity.

**Personal contribution** consists of unravelling word-formation patterns used for creating the discourse for the sustainable fashion movement, detecting deceptive language used by alleged sustainable brands as well as identifying how brands effectively apply language's stylistic, syntactical, and semantic features to boost brand awareness.

**Approbation of the present study** was done through the presentation of its findings at two seminars on Sustainability and the Language of the Fashion Industry at Birmingham City University's School of Design, Art, and Media which was followed by the publication of a monograph (Rozhin 2023). Additionally, a portion of the present research was published as part of the II International Student Conference "Interdisciplinary Scientific Research and Prospects for Their Development" with the NGO Youth Scientific League in Chernihiv, Ukraine (Romanchuk 2023).

**Structure.** The paper consists of an **introduction** that highlights the relevance, object, subject, aim and objectives, actual material of the study, reveals its scientific novelty and relevance, theoretical and practical significance.

It is broken down into three chapters. The **first chapter** reveals the entire theoretical and methodological foundation for this research.

**The second** is a corpus-based analysis of the language around sustainable fashion in online communication as well as the language used by alleged sustainable UK brands.

Finally, **the third chapter** is the linguistic analysis of Ukrainian sustainable fashion. Each chapter has separate conclusions followed by general conclusions.

The **conclusions** set out the main theoretical and practical results proposed in the paper and determine the prospects for further scientific research.

There is also a list of references, list of illustrative material, appendices, and a summary at the end.

## CHAPTER 1. SUSTAINABLE FASHION AND ITS LANGUAGE AS A FIELD FOR INTERDISCIPLINARY RESEARCH

Sustainable fashion, also known as ethical fashion, has become a hot topic among fashion designers, academics, linguists, marketing specialists, and consumers alike. As the industry grows, so too does the language around it. In this chapter, we will look at the industry and its current trends, explore the relevant studies on the language around sustainable fashion by conducting a literature review of scientific papers in this field, as well as map out a set of methods appropriate for the present study, which aims to fill gaps in linguistic research in the sustainable fashion sphere.

Additionally, sustainable fashion is the area that requires interdisciplinary research as fashion intersects with ecology, sociolinguistics, human rights, marketing, and communication studies. This fact is taken into consideration while justifying the methodology used to conduct this research.

### **1.1. Modern studies into Sustainable Fashion**

*Fast Fashion, Sustainability, and the Ethical Appeal of Luxury Brands* by Annamma Joy (2012) gives a deeper understanding of terms such as 'fast fashion.' Fast fashion is a term used to describe inexpensive clothing lines that imitate popular luxury fashion trends. Fast fashion, which embodies unsustainable consumption, aids in satisfying young consumers' deep-seated desires for luxury clothing in industrialized nations. The newest styles of today quickly surpass yesterday's, which have already been relegated to the trash, as trends progress at a breakneck pace. Furthermore, the inherent conflict among buyers, who frequently express concern for environmental issues while engaging in consumer behaviors inimical to best ecological practices, is addressed in this article. The concept of Sustainability is explained as about more than just our relationship with the environment; it also involves our relationship with each other, our communities, and our institutions. Sustainability involves interconnected

ecological, economic, and sociopolitical factors that have an impact on human livelihoods and well-being both globally and locally.

Some essential principles of a sustainable company are listed: Respect for people (at all organizational levels), the community, and its supply chain; respect for the environment, understanding that resources are limited; and generating profits that result from upholding these principles. Organizations are a part of society and reflect the benefits they provide, which raises important questions. *According to Beard (2008, 448)*, "the challenge (in the fashion industry) is to see how all the suppliers of the individual components, together with the labour used to manufacture the garment, its transport from factory to retail outlet, and ultimately the garment's aftercare and disposal, can be ethically secured and accounted for." The fashion industry's supply chain is extremely fragmented and inherently complicated due to its global reach, making fashion manufacturing even more difficult.

Fast fashion, which refers to affordable clothing collections based on high-end luxury fashion trends, is by definition a quick response system that promotes disposability (Fletcher 2008). Companies like H&M and Zara have reduced the previously typical six-month turnaround time from catwalk to consumer to just a few weeks, with correspondingly higher profits (Tokatli 2008). Rapid prototyping, small batches with a wide variety, more effective delivery and transportation methods, and merchandise presented "floor ready" on hangers with price tags already attached are all factors that help fast fashion businesses succeed (Skov 2002).

*Sustainable Fashion In The English Language Mirror by Professor Alla Belova (2022)* provides a review of English words and lexical structures used to verbalise two major aspects of sustainable fashion - ethical fashion and conscious fashion, with a focus on animals in fashion and thrifting. Sustainable fashion is classified into several dimensions, including conscious, green, and circular fashion, eco-friendly fashion, ethical fashion, and vegan fashion. The goal of conscious fashion is similar to that of environmentalism and green marketing. Ethical fashion is concerned with animal and human exploitation in the fashion industry, and it includes animal rights, fair trade of animal-related products, and working conditions in the fashion industry, which are

frequently deplorable. Vegan fashion advocates for non-animal plant-based textiles and synthetic fabrics. Circular fashion focuses on clothing recycling, and terminology includes upcycling, downcycling, and regenerating. Slow fashion and conscious fashion are popularized through thrifting, renting, and sharing.

The article further gives an idea of various word-forming models which dominate in sustainable fashion terminology. Some of the word-formation patterns in Professor Belova's article included numerous V-ing words to describe manufacturing processes and activities; non+N, non+Adj coinages to emphasise denial of traditional practises. In the last decade, certain words (animal, cruelty) and word-forming components (eco-) have become more visible in sustainable fashion.

*The sustainable fashion community of practice: leveraging sustainable fashion in the context of Covid-19 by Forskitt, Rianna (2021)* examines the changes that occurred during the pandemic using the sustainable fashion community of practice on Instagram as an empirical vessel. The ultimate goal of this thesis is to provide novel insights into how a sustainable fashion agenda can be leveraged in the context of the pandemic. This thesis makes two significant contributions. First, it argues for the recognition of the Instagram sustainable fashion community as an online community of practice. Furthermore, it demonstrates how the practices of blogging and community influence can be used to advance a sustainable fashion agenda. At the same time, the study acknowledges that the sustainable fashion community exemplifies these strategies and that connecting with the life, significance, and journeys of our clothing helps leverage sustainability in fashion.

*According to The Consumption of (sustainable) Fashion: Patterns, drivers and barriers by Lavanga<sup>o</sup>, Mariangela & Codina, Mónica & Riesgo, Silvia (2021)*, alternative business models have exploded in recent years with the goal of making the fashion industry more sustainable. Examples include slow fashion and collaborative fashion consumption. However, it appears that consumers are unable to convert their interest in or intention to buy sustainable fashion into actual purchasing behaviour. At the same time, it has been reported that there is an increasing demand for sustainable fashion. Consumer attitudes, values, motivations, and barriers towards sustainable

fashion have received relatively little study up to this point. In order to compare the behaviour of sustainable consumers to that of average consumers, it is important to understand the enabling and inhibiting factors that affect consumer behaviour. The findings of this study demonstrate that consumers of sustainable and non-sustainable fashion have very different perspectives on what constitutes sustainable fashion. Price is still a key motivator for the average consumer when making purchases, so their perception of sustainable fashion as being "expensive" discourages them from participating in SF. On the other hand, consumers who are more environmentally conscious tend to purchase used items or rent more frequently rather than brand-new items. According to the findings, personal norms, or moral values, are what have the biggest impact on SFC's behavioural intention to purchase SF. Contrarily, for NSFC, attitude is the key determinant, while social norms, or perceived social and peer pressure, have little bearing on intended behaviour.

Lastly, there has been a lot of debate about eco fashion, but one in particular is of linguistic nature. The New York Times fashion critic Vanessa Friedman has argued the term "sustainable fashion" is itself an oxymoron: "'Sustainable,' after all, implies 'able to continue over a period of time,' [...] 'Fashion,' on the other hand, implies change over time. To reconcile the two is impossible." Friedman has resolved to use the term "responsible fashion" instead. More and more, retailers and brands are gravitating toward other labels like "conscious fashion" with similar intentions.

## **1.2. Linguistic research methodologies used in the study**

The primary concern with this project was to adhere to Wolfram's 'principle of linguistic gratuity' and Labov's 'principle of debt incurred' (1982) and to make this research as outward-facing as possible. *Principle of Linguistic Gratuity* states that "Investigators who obtained linguistic data from members of a speech community should actively pursue ways in which they can return linguistic favours to the community" (Wolfram 1993, 227). *Principle of Debt Incurred* is summarised in the following: "An investigator who has obtained linguistic data from members of a speech

community has the obligation to use the knowledge based on that data for the benefit of that community, when it has need of it" (Labov 1982, 165-201). Following these principles, the aim was not only to collect data for one's own use and benefit but primarily to produce viable sociolinguistically-informed solutions for the fashion community.

*The Wellington Language in the Workplace Project (LWP) (Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand)*, which was specifically conceived as both academic and applied with an emphasis on collaboration, building relationships and attention to the needs and concerns of the communities being researched (Stubbe 2001), focuses on Collaborative Approach, the concept of which is to avoid researching on, and instead to research with our participants. In order for this project to be successful, interviews with professionals working in the fashion industry as well as students undertaking fashion degrees were conducted. The participants have relation to fashion through Birmingham City University's School of Fashion and Design.

*Creating and Digitising Language Corpora* by Corrigan (2016, 327-328) demonstrates how multiple methods of analysing data (corpus linguistics, discourse analysis, etc.) are used to promote credibility of findings and further enrich the researcher's understanding of the phenomenon under investigation. This is applicable to this study in a way that it uses various methodologies to ensure credibility of findings.

### 1.3. Main methodological frameworks

#### 1.3.1. Corpus Linguistics

Based on the type of data analysed, Corpus Linguistics was used as the main method of research. For the second chapter, the data constituted a large body of data — 10000 tweets that contained the collocation “sustainable fashion” in them over a period of two months. These tweets were collected using *TAGS, a free Twitter Archiving Google Sheet* template that enables you to set up and manage an automatic Twitter search result collection based on the keywords that you’re interested in. Performing a corpus analysis on this data allowed to pinpoint the main issues easily without being overwhelmed by the amount of data. Several “do-it-yourself” corpora over the period of two months were created, using the OurSurveySays tool<sup>1</sup>. Combing through each of them afterwards helped identify relevant linguistic patterns and trends.

A “do-it-yourself” corpus is a specialised corpus which is compiled by the translator/researcher/teacher (de Carvalho et al. 2021).

For the third chapter, a 7000-word collective DIY corpus from websites and social media pages of prominent Ukrainian sustainable fashion brand including KseniaSchneider, O(FourFour), Broq, Biblioteque, Roussin, Fashion House Ivanova, Navro Brand, Gaptuvalnya, Framiore brand was compiled.

In *Corpus Linguistics: Method, Theory and Practice* by McEnery and Hardie (2011), it is stated, “...most studies in corpus linguistics use basic descriptive statistics if nothing else. Descriptive statistics are statistics which do not seek to test for significance. Rather, they simply describe the data in some way...” but “qualitative and quantitative analyses are equally important to corpus linguistics.” This principle is realized in this research by the researcher keeping in mind that corpus linguistics is a tool, while the most important part of any research involves making sense of the findings using any qualitative research methods after the corpus is finished and processed quantitatively.

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<sup>1</sup> Birmingham City University. Research and Development Unit for English Studies, “Our Survey Says,” n.d., <https://www.webcorp.org.uk/oss/corpora>.

*Qualitative Corpus Analysis by Hasko (2012)* reveals how a corpus-based analysis of qualitative data can be used for conducting in-depth study of linguistic phenomena. It is based on authentic, communicative situations that have been digitally archived as language corpora and made accessible for access, retrieval, and analysis using computers. Researchers who employ qualitative corpus analysis as the foundation for their research take an exploratory, inductive approach to the empirical study of how the meanings and functions of linguistic forms found in the corpus interact with various ecological characteristics of language used for communication (e.g. speaker age: in the case of analysis of language in the Internet space, a researcher can make an educated assumption that their participants are in their 20s, 30s based on the topic of conversation and their use of language; place and time of a communicative event; speech modality; etc.). This is important for this study since the first chapter is based on a corpus-assisted analysis of the language around sustainable fashion on Twitter where the majority of users are people who belong to Generation Z. This is evident in the way they communicate, certain emotional speech features, use of slang and emojis.

According to the resource above, all corpus linguists agree that it is crucial to base linguistic research on "real data," or actual instances of oral or written communication, rather than artificial or "made-up" data. The distinctive objectives of qualitative corpus analysis include facilitating computer-aided retrieval of real-world examples of the language phenomena being studied, delving deeply into these empirical data, and applying the resulting insights to a wide range of linguistic intellectual pursuits. Based on this principle, only real examples of language are investigated in the chosen semantic field (tweets on sustainable fashion, language on the websites and social media pages of well-established sustainable brands).

Owing to the fact that the present study is based on the corpus-based analysis of linguistic data, it is of paramount importance to shed light on the computational linguistics tools used to gather data for the analysis. "*WebCorp: An integrated system for web text search*" by Renouf, Kehoe & Banerjee (2006) enriched this study in a way

that it provided a perfect tool for creating DIY corpora from the data that had been gathered. This tool (<http://www.webcorp.org.uk/>) was created by one of the professors at Birmingham City University and allows corpus linguists to retrieve raw and analysed linguistic output from the web as well as create one's own corpora provided one can compile relevant and authentic examples of language in use.

The paper provides with a brief overview of WebCorp, the nature and level of its current functionality, step-by-step instruction of how to leverage this tool for one's own research, the linguistic and procedural issues that still exist in web text search, and the advantages of replacing the commercial search engine with tailored web search architecture. Its full potential and functionality were then discovered by attending seminars and workshops by Professor Kehoe and his colleague Matt Gee at Birmingham City University.

### **1.3.2. Critical Discourse Analysis**

The findings from the corpus-based analysis of the data were then interpreted using Discourse Analysis. The Oxford English Dictionary defines Discourse Analysis as "...a method of analysing the structure of texts or utterances longer than one sentence, taking into account both their linguistic content and their sociolinguistic context." Discourse analysis was most beneficial because it provided more information about sentence structure, cohesion, word formation, new coinages, the complexity of the terminology used, and other factors.

The type of discourse analysis prevailing in this paper is Critical Discourse Analysis. This is a research method for studying written or spoken language in relation to its social context. It seeks to comprehend how language is used in real-life situations. In the case of this study, it is limited to the semantic field of sustainable fashion.

When conducting discourse analysis for this paper, the main points looked at with diligence were the following:

- The functions and effects of the language used around the topic of sustainable fashion online.

- Communication cultural rules and conventions through that language.
- How values, beliefs, and assumptions are communicated.
- The relationship between language use and its social, political, and historical context.

Discourse analysis, as opposed to linguistic approaches that focus solely on the rules of language use, emphasises the contextual meaning of language.

It is concerned with the social aspects of communication and how people use language to achieve specific goals (e.g. to build trust, to rally people together around a single cause, to create doubt, to evoke emotions, or to attract attention).

Discourse analysis is used to study larger chunks of language, such as entire conversations, texts, or collections of texts. The sources that were chosen can be examined on various levels. These levels include:

1. Vocabulary. It is possible to examine the ideological connotations, formality, and metaphorical and euphemistic content of words and phrases.
2. Grammar. Aspects of the intended meaning can be revealed by the way sentences are put together (for example, verb tenses, active or passive construction, and the use of imperatives and questions).
3. Structure. A text's structure can be examined to see how it emphasises points or develops a story.
4. Communication nuances. Aspects of cultural norms and social roles can be revealed through language that individuals use in speech or writing around a particular topic.
5. Non-verbal means of communication. A speaker's intentions, attitudes, and emotions can be inferred from nonverbal aspects of speech.
6. Multimodal communication. Communication using different "modes." Examples of modes include speech, images, video, graphic art, etc (Luo 2022).

### **1.3.3. Additional methods of research**

One of additional methods of research used was the Interview. Interviews are a qualitative research method and typically take the form of a conversation where questions are asked to elicit information.

Advantages of the interviews include flexibility to the interviewers; and the ability to collect data about the non-verbal behaviour and spontaneity of the respondent. Conversely, conducting interview studies can be time-consuming and may provide less anonymity to participants. Care needs to be taken to avoid researcher bias (Dencombe 2010).

Member checking is used to validate, verify, or assess the trustworthiness of qualitative results (Doyle 2007). The aim with this research was to build rapport with the interviewees in order to obtain honest and open responses. Information would be restated or summarized during interviews to determine accuracy. Member checks were completed both during and after each meaningful part of this project. The interviews were used to enrich the present research in any possible way, from asking professors Andrew Kehoe and Matt Gee from BCU's School of English for advice concerning corpus linguistics and the Our Survey Tool to having meetings with Professor Rozhin from the School of Fashion where findings would be discussed and commented on to look at the study from a point of view of a professional working in the field of fashion.

The interviews with BCU's professors at the School of Fashion were used to guide the data and support the findings. As a result, corpus linguistics and discourse analysis were the primary forms of analysis employed, with additional methods and data supporting overall conclusions.

By looking at three perspectives of the same issue (discussing it with people involved in the fashion industry through interviews, looking at it from the standpoint of common folk on the Internet, and performing a linguistic analysis of the language used to describe sustainable fashion by both British and Ukrainian brands), the Triangulation methodology was employed. "Triangulation aligns multiple perspectives and leads to a more comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon of interest" (Salkind 2010).

## **1.4. Theories explored in the in-depth analysis of the language around sustainable fashion**

### **1.4.1. Ecolinguistics**

The analysis of the language around sustainable fashion in this study falls under the umbrella of Ecolinguistics and Eco-critical Linguistics. As a new paradigm for linguistic research, ecolinguistics, also known as ecological linguistics, emerged in the 1990s. It expanded sociolinguistics to consider not only the social context in which language is embedded but also the larger ecological context, which includes other species and the physical environment.

According to the International Ecolinguistics Association, ecolinguistics is: "The study of language's function in sustaining relationships between people, other species, and the natural world is known as ecolinguistics. The first goal is to create linguistic theories that view people as components of both society and the larger ecosystems on which life depends. The second goal is to demonstrate how linguistics can be used to address important ecological issues, such as environmental justice, biodiversity loss, and climate change."

The ecological analysis of language uses a variety of linguistic techniques to reveal underlying worldviews, such as critical discourse analysis, framing theory, cognitive linguistics, identity theory, rhetoric, and systemic functional grammar. The narratives we adhere to are mental models that exist in each person's or a society's minds (social cognition), and they have an impact on people's ecocultural identities (Milstein and Castro-Sotomayor 2020) and how they interact with one another, other animals, plants, trees, rivers, and the natural world.

Numerous environmental issues are brought to light by ecological discourse and green discourse (Yuniawan et al. 2017). The fashion industry is often mentioned as a source of environmental issues by the media, but the language used to promote a more sustainable way of living and as a result the language around this new type of fashion was never studied before.

### **1.4.2. Framing Theory**

As a mass communication theory, framing describes how the media organises and communicates information to the general public. The theory contends that in order to promote or counteract particular interpretations, the media highlights particular events and then places them in specific contexts.

Systems of preconceived notions called frames are used to categorise and interpret new information. They serve as heuristics, or "rules of thumb," which facilitate quick processing of new information on the media.

People start to develop frames at a very young age, and they are typically cultural in origin. Every language practically always has frames. When the word "war" is used in English, for instance, images of death, blood, gunfire, bombs, explosions, planes, tanks, and lines of marching soldiers come to mind. As a result, when someone talks about "war," these images give the speaker and the listener a common point of reference. In this study, the framing theory is used to identify how alleged sustainable brands use language to evoke certain frames in people's minds to persuade them of their sustainable intentions for the brand and encourage customers of their online stores to prefer them over other clothing retailers.

People view the world through their frames and try to make new information fit into them. Information that conflicts with a frame is frequently dismissed as an outlier or distorted to conform to the frame. People are therefore more likely to pay attention to information that fits into their frames and to ignore information that does not.

Therefore, when anyone wants to introduce a new frame to audiences, they must make use of culturally accepted concepts and create creative phrases that connect current frames in a compelling way. For instance, a professor at UC Berkeley notes that the phrase "tax relief" first appeared under George W. Bush. The word "relief" conjures up a number of images, including a crime or accident that caused suffering, the perpetrator of the crime, the victim, the person who relieved the suffering, and the method of relief. When taxes are considered in this frame, they are equated with crime

or the root of all evil. Therefore, those who advocate for "tax relief" are viewed as heroes or those who alleviate suffering. No matter how necessary it may be, those who advocate for higher taxes are stigmatised as criminals (Arowolo 2017).

### **1.4.3. Uses and Gratification Theory**

Uses and gratification theory of communication explains how people use media to fulfil their needs. Gratification of needs is the most important role of media for humans. People get knowledge, interaction, relaxation, awareness, escape and entertainment through media which they use for interpersonal communication as well. The theory is focused on the audience's and users' perspectives. The Maslow Hierarchy of Needs is more closely related to this theory.

The uses and gratification theory is deterministic and emphasises the audience's free will because media can be used in a variety of ways and for a variety of objectives. The theory and human psychology's understanding of needs, motives, and influence are closely related (Shraddha 2018).

Some of the categories listed below that can be used to categorise human needs and desires are pertinent to this study, particularly how brands leverage the idea of sustainability to satisfy people's needs. They are as follows:

- An emotional need. Affective needs discuss the emotional satisfaction and pleasure people experience from engaging with content.
- Cognitive needs. Media is used by people to satisfy their informational and intellectual needs.
- Needs for social integration. Each person has a social integration need, which is the need to interact with others such as family and friends. Through social networking sites like Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, etc., people use media to interact and socialise. By providing them with topics to discuss with their loved ones, media also helps people increase their social interactions. The media also aids in improving people's social interaction skills by giving them topics and ideas for conversations with friends and family.

The uses and gratification theory's goals in the prism of looking at the language sustainable brands use to promote their products are:

- To demonstrate the connection between the content on sustainable fashion and how it is applied to meet people's needs
- To understand the effects of this content on media users, both positive, negative, and manipulative.

#### **1.4.4. Cognitive Linguistics: Language and Thought and Conceptual Metaphor Theory**

The study of language and thought was first approached using a method called cognitive linguistics thanks to the work of George Lakoff, Ron Langacker, and Len Talmy. It places emphasis on language as a tool for organising, handling, and transmitting information (Geeraerts and Cuyckens 2007).

Throughout years, the idea that language and cognition are two distinct but closely related mechanisms has gained ground. Language builds up cultural knowledge, while cognition creates mental models of the environment and applies cultural understanding to real-world situations. Language is picked up from the "ready-made" language of its environment. Experience is what develops cognition (Rao 2021).

Theories and hypotheses of cognitive linguistics are related to this research in a way that it explores the connection between use of 'sustainable' language and human thought. It is especially relevant for the third chapter where use of the language around sustainable fashion is compared between native and non-native speakers of the English language. That is also where the theory of conceptual metaphors comes in. Language expert George Lakoff of the United States claims that metaphors are not merely figures of speech but also modes of thought. According to Lakoff, abstract reasoning that we use to create metaphors is based on image-schemata (Lakoff 1990). This idea is further explored when analysing metaphors used by Ukrainians sustainable brands: how much the images used to create it differ from those of native speakers of English, how

different the thinking process and abstract reasoning are, and what the reasons for that might be.

#### **1.4.5. Semiotics and Saussure's theory of the sign**

During the linguistic analysis for this paper, it has been revealed that semiotics plays a crucial role in brands' use of language in advertising. Brand names, logos, linguistic packaging, and other elements can be broken down using semiotics at two different levels of interpretation: the surface level and the underlying level. The visible portion of signs (words, images, or colours) that point to the deeper level, where the true meaning is found, is referred to as the surface level. At the underlying level, the association is typically connected to consumer's subconscious mind (Beasley & Danesi, 2002). In order to investigate unconscious desires and comprehend how activating and stimulating them increases propensity to purchase as well as overall consumer value, semiotics was used to analyse the language of sustainable brands.

In addition, Saussure's theory of the sign was a contributor in learning about how brands use signs to evoke certain favourable images in relation to the brand. A linguistic sign connects a concept to a sound pattern rather than a thing and a name. A sound pattern is the listener's psychological interpretation of a sound based on the information his senses provide. According to Saussure's theory of linguistics, the thought is the signified and the sound is the signifier. The linguistic symbol is neither phonic nor conceptual, neither sound nor thought. Instead, the entire link is what connects signifier and signified, sound and idea. The sign's characteristics are by definition abstract rather than concrete (de Saussure 1959).

## CHAPTER 1. CONCLUSIONS

In conclusion, sustainable fashion and its language provide a rich field for interdisciplinary research. The modern studies into sustainable fashion analysed in the chapter introduced us to notions such as ‘fast’ and ‘slow’ fashion, provided a review of English words and lexical structures used to verbalise various aspects of sustainable fashion, supplied with the changes that occurred during the pandemic in sustainable fashion, and provided novel insights into how a sustainable fashion agenda can be leveraged in the context of the pandemic through social media.

The main linguistic research methodologies used in this study include corpus linguistics, where ‘real,’ ‘authentic’ data is compiled into a corpus and processed electronically, and critical discourse analysis, which is concerned with the social aspects of communication and how people use language to achieve specific goals.

Other frameworks explored with the aim to enrich this research, including ecolinguistics, framing theory, and Uses and Gratification theory, have provided a strong foundation with which to conduct a deeper analysis of the ways in which sustainability in fashion is constructed and communicated. Furthermore, cognitive linguistics and semiotics offer valuable perspectives on the fundamental concepts and meanings of language. They provide a powerful set of tools for examining the linguistic landscape of sustainable fashion.

Overall, fashion is interconnected with many other disciplines, and its interdisciplinarity had to be taken into account in order to do this research justice. Only by observing the language of the sustainable fashion industry through the lens of other fields will we be able to provide critical insights into the rapidly evolving industry and how language may be employed to interpret emerging trends therein.

## CHAPTER 2. CORPUS ANALYSIS OF TWEETS AROUND SUSTAINABLE FASHION AND LINGUISTIC MANIPULATIONS USED BY UK-BASED BRANDS

Fashion's central tenet is waste. Even before a garment or other product reaches the consumer, more than 35% of all materials in the fashion supply chain are wasted, and the sector is responsible for 8% of the world's carbon emissions (Hudson 2021).

The "slow fashion" movement has gained traction in recent years by emphasising the entire lifecycle of a garment, from the ethical treatment of workers to lowering waste and pollution levels and repurposing what they already have.

Luxury companies are now heeding the advice: "[As] creative people in fashion, [we] have to be responsible..." Miuccia Prada, the founder of Miu Miu says. "You have a duty to your employees in terms of sustainability and inclusivity. In addition to being accountable, you should also help bring about change."

As a result of increased awareness of environmental and social concerns associated to fashion, new terminology has emerged, attracting interest at both the public and scholarly levels. Terminological ambiguity appears to predominate with new coinages scattering the Internet and media worlds every single day. Sustainable fashion is nowadays considered a part of the larger growing trend of creating more sustainable, environmentally friendly, and ethical products implying that "sustainable fashion" is a synonym for 'environmentally friendly,' 'ethical,' and 'sustainable' itself.

We will begin a deep analysis of the tweets where the note word 'sustainable' is paired with its collocate 'fashion' first, attempting to single out new coinages, linguistic phenomena, and word-formation patterns.

### **2.1. Hashtag as a means to promote sustainable fashion**

Sustainable fashion has given rise to a number of hashtags on Twitter, in particular, which encompass the essence of this fashion type. Hashtags make up 38% of text in the 10000 tweets retrieved from Twitter for this thesis. In addition, about 95%

of all tweets contained at least one hashtag. Some of the hashtags that appear in more than 1500 tweets out of a total of 10,000 tweets across the entire corpus include: #Ootd, #al, #af, #savetheplanet, #Vegan, #Gogreen, #Ondemandfashion, #secondhand, #shoplocal, #preloved, #smallbusiness, #vintagefashion, #supportsmallbusiness, #shopsmall, #shopslow, #vintageclothing, #thriftdfashion, #thrift, #thriftstorefinds, #recycle, #zerowaste, #handcrafted, #fairfashion, #consciousfashion, #payup, #MAKESMTHNG, #ecochic, #ecofriendly, #greenwashing, #detoxfashion, #10x10CHALLENGE, #rewear, #LovedClothesLast, #weargreen. According to the Merriam-Webster Dictionary Online, a hashtag is a word or phrase that begins with the number sign (#) and that succinctly describes the subject of a conversation. Though hashtagging is a relatively new phenomenon in today's world, it has already changed how individuals acquire and disseminate information (Boyd and Ellison 2007). According to Navoloka (2018), hashtags are created using their own unique rules and characteristics as new textual forms. According to the theory put forward by V.G. Admoni (1985), hashtag text is a sort of small-format text, which occurs when participants desire to convey a lot of information using a limited number of linguistic units ( Mccarthy 2018; Kharkovskaya, Ponomarenko, Radyuk 2017).

In her scholarly work, Patrusheva (2018) discusses hashtag usage as a novel form of communication. She offers the classification according to functions and subjects and makes assertions regarding the extension of hashtag functionalities. These days, hashtags serve as more than just topical labels. They now carry out more activities than before and have a wider range of functional diversity. Daer, Hoffmann, and Goodman (2014) put forward the following classification of hashtags within the Internet's cognitive structures: emphasising, criticising, identifying, iterating, and rallying.

Below are the hashtags from this study's corpora grouped into the categories according to Daer, Hoffman, and Goodman (Table 1):

Table 1

Category Type	Description	Examples of Hashtags from the DIY corpora
Emphasizing	utilised to emphasise a point or draw attention to something in the post, or something the post refers to or describes; typically presented as a comment or reflection without passing judgement.	#vintagefashion #vintageclothing #thriftdfashion #thrift #thriftstorefinds #zerowaste #handcrafted #ecofriendly #ecochic
Critiquing	used when the purpose of the post is to express judgement or verdict on the topic under discussion (a described experience, an image, etc.).	#payup; #fairfashion; #consciousfashion; #greenwashing
Identifying	used to identify the post's creator; serves to convey a distinguishing quality, feeling, or reflective adjective.	#ootd; #handmade; #thrifter; #vegan; #lovedclotheslast.
Iterating	used to express humour by making reference to a well-known internet meme or internet culture event (or popular culture, depending). It could also be a parody.	#slowfashionmemes; #secondhandatheart;

Rallying	functions to raise awareness or support for a cause; could also be used in marketing campaigns to gain publicity.	#weargreen; #rewear; #MAKESMTHNG; #payup; #recycle; #supportsmallbusiness #shopsmall #shopslow; #savetheplanet; #gogreen; #detoxfashion;
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Some metatagging practises around the topic of sustainable fashion have little impact, deployed for the sake of a single user's identity performance (for example, when a user posts a photo of their #ootd (outfit for the day) or #thrifter to emphasize that they are indeed in favor of the movement). Others, like "#fairfashion" being suddenly paired with "#payup" and "#garmentworkers" have the effect of bringing large numbers of strangers together around a single cause. In the analysis, rallying and critiquing hashtags seem to have a much bigger audience and generate much more traction with the post.

### 2.1.1. Abbreviations and Short Forms

This subsection of the paper will focus more on the linguistic features of the hashtags used to talk about sustainable fashion online, in particular on Twitter. In the hashtags listed above, abbreviations take their prominent place among others:

1) #ootd (appearing in 2565 tweets), #EthicalOOTD (mentioned in 2176 tweets), #FairFashionOOTD (appearing in 2034 tweets): #ootd stands for “outfit of the day” but in the prism of sustainable fashion, this phrase has gained a couple new adjectives describing the type of outfit worn. “Ethical” and “Fair” are the predominant additions. While “ethical” is a fairly understandable choice, implying that buying new clothes has to be a conscious decision, a morally right one, where one takes into account workers’ rights, impact of the production of one’s clothes on the environment and so on. However, “fair fashion” is a relatively new term which

puts more emphasis on the fair treatment of the workers who make clothes. It emerged during Covid. Since the Covid-19 pandemic, business as usual has disintegrated throughout the fashion industry. Due to the global economic downturn that occurred around the time of the pandemic's onset, retail outlets closed and internet sales decreased, putting fashion in peril and garment workers out of jobs. According to Bloomberg, due to the coronavirus epidemic, about 1,089 garment companies in Bangladesh have had orders worth around \$1.5 billion cancelled. According to the AWAJ Foundation, numerous industries in Bangladesh have been closed permanently. As severance pay, some employees received less than a month's income, while others received nothing at all. "These employees now don't know how they will take care of their families - how they will manage expenditures for food, housing, and other needs," adds Nazma Akter, executive director of AWAJ.

Hashtags in the same cloud of words as expressions as #fairfashionootd are #PAYUP (appearing in 2008 Twitter messages) **and** #fairbylaw. The non-profit Remake started the hashtag to call for corporations to #PayUp the billions they owe when they massively cancelled orders in response to the pandemic. This effort has received support from the Clean Clothes Campaign as well as several other organizations. The hashtag #fairbylaw has been used in connection with Lisa Jasper's campaign to make fair and decent production standards a legal requirement.

We can observe one interesting linguistic phenomenon in the hashtag #PAYUP where the particle “up” slightly changes the primary meaning of the word “to pay” to “having to pay money that you owe, especially when you are unwilling to pay“ (Macmillan Dictionary). Similar examples of this usage of the particle “up” include “finish up” and “start up.” Even though the particle does not change the meaning of the main verb completely, it adds an emphasis to the action being talked about. It has to be pointed out that the verbs discussed above are not considered to be phrasal verbs per se, such as “bring up,” meaning “to raise somebody,” since the core meaning of the verb remains the same. This

particular aspect of English is rarely noticed by native speakers of the English language owing to the fact that they tend to use it without realizing they're doing it. It's a rather natural grammatical skill that they acquire through communication on a subconscious level. However, subtle nuances such as this have to be closely studied in classrooms where students use English as an additional language. Therefore, TEFL instructors could use this finding to make students aware of such linguistic subtleties in different contexts including fashion-related topics since English textbooks never elaborate on such grammatical points which contribute to the learner's ability to phrase words more adeptly and their fluency overall. This was one of the reasons for undertaking this study: Not only to enrich the linguistic knowledge of the field of fashion but also to supply non-native learners as well as researchers with rare and new uses of English in this semantic field.

2) **#af or affordable fashion** (frequency: 1503 out 10000 tweets). With the popularity of the idea of sustainability in fashion, more and more fashion experts and bloggers are starting to expand the underlying implications of the word "fashion." Previously its semantic field was associated with words like "luxury," "glamour," "deluxe," "costly," but these days it is taking a serious shift. This shift is interwoven with people's worldview and outlook changing, making them be more conscious about their fashion choices and the planet. We can see how language, social processes, and human thought are interconnected due to examples in language such as: Everyone deserves to dress well (Waikiki's logo). Same can be said for the hashtag #al (affordable luxury). It is also interesting to look at this collocation from a linguistic point of view, since it contains a juxtaposition of two totally incongruous words taken from two drastically different semantic areas: affordability and luxury. It could be assumed that this hashtag gained its popularity due to this contrast which sparks curiosity to find out more about the movement that seems so inherently improbable in real life.

3) **#MAKESMTHNG** (frequency: 2909 tweets) – this hashtag, while not clearly an abbreviation, employs a short form of "something." #MAKESMTHNG is

a call to sew your own clothes instead of constantly buying new ones harming the planet and its habitants. Short forms and acronyms have long conquered the world of Internet communication including the social media platforms and accounts where the fashion industry operates. Technology advancements have an impact on how language is used online, and various linguistic features like acronyms and abbreviations have evolved. Netspeak users often and creatively employ abbreviations and acronyms in their communication to speed up message typing, conserve time, energy, and effort, and serve as economical expressions to keep discussions flowing. They are also used for marketing purposes as a message expressed in fewer words (in the case of abbreviations – in linguistic code almost) can be perceived much faster. Since they are uncommon outside of netspeak, non-standard abbreviations and acronyms are regarded as new conventions. They are not used in offline writing or other formal contexts and are thought to be only utilised in internet slang. According to Nasir and Jassim (2019), acronyms and abbreviations are dealt with morphologically as word-formation processes and conceptually as vocabularies.

There's an ongoing debate about whether netspeak and various short forms used on the Internet are spoiling standard English norms as we know them. One study by Choudhury and Promiti (2018) questions where the language used on social media is affecting textual language vis a vis spoken language and studies the impact of acronyms on language usage. While one might agree that making language so informal to the point of replacing words with numbers (e.g. Go4it) could render itself detrimental for younger generations whose ability to write formally will be hampered due to constant exposure to netspeak; linguists cannot ignore the positive impact it has had on the social aspects. Mostly, abbreviations and shortened forms are used to inspire social change like in the example of the hashtag #MAKESMTHING. It is comparable to slogans used during protests; the only difference is that nowadays protests are carried out online.

### **2.1.2. Use of prefixes in formation of words related to thrifting**

From the historical perspective, hippies were the ones who popularised *thrifted apparel* in the 1970s, but it wasn't until the last decade that the trend took the world by storm. There used to be a negative connotation associated with *thrifted clothes* being *filthy, dirty, and ripped*, which discourages consumers from shopping *second-hand* products. Let us have a look at the changes that took place in language around “*thrifting*” to see how views and perspectives on this type of shopping have been shifting.

The second category of hashtags related to sustainable fashion segment of content on Twitter that could be identified was words with prefixes **re-**, **pre-**, and **-de** (noticed in 30% of all the hashtags indicating a preference for sustainable fashion) which are used to convey the true meaning of sustainable clothing — “*make old clothes suitable to use again.*” The idea of anything being “sustainable” is that it is able to be maintained at a certain level or rate to be used again and again. It is about durability, diversity, and longevity of the thing being talked about, in our case — clothes. Examples of hashtags with such prefixes from the corpora were the following: **#recycle**, **#rewear**, **#rethink**, **#preloved**, **#detoxfashion**.

If to analyse these words more deeply, one could easily see that some of them aim to make concepts such as thrifting and second-hand shopping more appealing with the help of how brands and campaigns phrased them. For example, the hashtag **#preloved** (appearing in 1690 tweets) refers to **pre-owned clothes**. To a naked eye, the choice of the verb helped elevate it focusing on how loved, timeless, vintage these clothes are, rather than on the fact they somebody else has worn them before, probably leaving their odour on them. Even though, as a consumer, one might be outraged at the idea of someone playing tricks on their subconsciousness with the help of these language subtleties, this marketing strategy does have a good mission behind it. Owing to experts in language and the hashtags they create to change the narrative and to advocate for change, we have a chance at a better future. The connotations around words in the hashtags discussed above is gradually but steadily shifting, due in large part to social media, resale apps, and online consignment retailers.

**#detoxfashion** (appearing in 1450 out of 10000 tweets) symbolizes how the industry is rife with toxic substances and how dirty it has become for the environment.

Prefix **de-** is employed to denote privation, removal, and separation, negation, reversal, and derogation. Nowadays, the word “**detox**” is rarely used to refer to a process during which a person abstains from toxic and unhealthy substances like alcohol but rather has gained an additional, much more metaphorical, meaning, which is to rid oneself of anything that has an adverse effect on one’s body and/or mind. It has been prominently used in the collocation “*social media detox.*”

Hashtags **#rewear** and **#recycle** (spotted in >3500 tweets) are almost self-explanatory and are connected with the attempts to create a circular fashion where old clothes would get a new lease of life. The process of buying already-worn clothes is known as **thrifting** (frequency: 2560 tweets). The concept and the word itself date centuries back. Some still believe that it is an activity meant for those who do not have enough money to buy brand new clothing partly due to the derivatives of this word: thrift as a noun (avoiding waste; being economical); thrifty as an adjective (showing a careful use of money); thriftily as an adverb (in a way that is budgetary, economical in terms of resources) (Cambridge Dictionary). As for this word’s etymology, it first appeared in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Some historians often mistake thrift stores for a purely charitable outreach of Christian mission groups in the late nineteenth century. After all, the Salvation Army's "salvage brigade" began collecting donations for its original stores in 1897, allowing the organisation to provide food and shelter for the homeless men who pushed carts through the streets soliciting cast-off goods. As charitable as this mission may have appeared, they were also a reaction to another set of needs that Christian leaders noticed, according to Jennifer Le Zotte's article in *The New England Quarterly's* October 2017 issue.

Jews from Europe in particular who were recent immigrants to America struggled to find employment. They collected and sold used products while pushing carts around the streets of big towns in order to make money. These newcomers earned a good living while being derided for their actions.

As a result, Christian leaders imitated similar approach in order to gain financial gain. They raised this money to support their missionary efforts (TRVSTWorld 2020). Therefore, it is incorrect to assume that second-hand shops serve as a means of outreach

to the underprivileged. These shops first appeared in America as a means of raising funds that could later be utilised to help the poor.

This is evident in the history of the meaning of the term "thrift" itself. Its etymology can be traced back to the Middle English word "**thriven**," which meaning "to **thrive**," according to the Online Etymology Dictionary. It additionally denotes "**prosperity, savings.**"

It's fascinating to observe how many of the social issues that exist today have parallels to the societal issues that led to the emergence of thrift stores around the turn of the 20th century. The world's economies had been transformed by new technology both then and now, and advances in transportation had allowed people to travel farther and faster than ever before. Additionally, international conflicts and shifting borders had led to waves of immigrants, though they weren't always given a warm welcome. The thrift shop has always been a flexible, practical, and environmentally friendly solution to a variety of human needs.

While "**thrifting**" is a well-known word in sustainable fashion, it has given rise to new expressions and processes such as "**thrift-flipping**" (appearing in 1246 tweets). This compound word is made up of two, at first sight, unrelated phenomena with the second part of the word taken from the real estate semantic field. The process of "**flipping**" in real estate refers to the short-term investment of purchasing real estate with the intention of later selling it for a profit. In business, people flip cars, property, and other valuables to then sell them at a higher price. The new coinage "**thrift flipping**" is therefore the practise of conserving money by buying something and then improving it so you can sell it for more money.

Many people still believe that leveraging thrift stores for one's own benefit is "bad," because they are meant for low-income families in need. However, as described above, there are way too many misconceptions and stereotypes surrounding the function of thrift stores in our culture. The media and big organizations are actually trying to change the narrative previously associated with thrifting. You might be astonished to learn that many non-profit organisations really give the same things you donate to support people starting small companies as a way of making money in places of extreme poverty.

Whether by linguistic or marketing means or both, the terms surrounding the sustainable fashion sector are expanding and gaining new connotations due to the economic and social changes happening in the world as well as a strong shift towards a more ethical and sustainable life in people's mindsets.

### **2.1.3. Preference for V+Adj to V+Adverb word-formation patterns in the language around sustainable fashion**

Among all other expressions, one very distinct pattern kept coming up, that is V+Adj pairs: **#shoplocal** (1980 tweets), **#shopsmall** (1780 tweets), **#shopslow** (2055 tweets). Even though, according to standard English grammar, the correct phrasing of this collocations would be with the help of adverbs **“slowly,” “locally,” “in small quantities,”** Internet users seem to give preference to adjectives. The reasons might be the following:

- 1) Use of adjectives means less time spent typing. It is less time-consuming and fits into the frame of a hashtag. Hashtags are not meant to be long-winded. They are intended to provide as much information as possible with as fewer and shorter words as possible. Since this text form encompasses functions that of a text message rather than a full-on thesis where a person is expected to spend time wording their thoughts in as prolific manner as they can, adjectives are becoming a much more efficient way to convey the message.

- 2) Internet speak is often considered to be a version of spoken communication with one or the other affecting one another. This topic has been raised in numerous papers including Galiullina and Wright's article on *The Influence of Internet – Communication on Everyday Speech* (2021). Examples outside the field of fashion are but not limited to: *to feel strange, NOT strangely; hit me different, BUT NOT differently*. These intentional grammar slip-ups often only happen in either spoken or online communication where they are considered necessary evils to make the conversation flow smoothly and easily.

Use of adjectives have been so interwoven in our everyday fabric that barely no one knows which variant is truly the right one and whether there is any difference in case you choose to use the adjective instead of the adverb. In a Forbes article titled “Shopping Local vs. Shopping Locally,” the author does consider these two sentences different types of shopping: “When I say “shop locally,” I’m referring to the practice of buying from stores in your community. But when I say “shop local,” I’m talking about buying from locally owned small businesses.”

Whichever it is, this finding only pinpoints the idea that English grammar is ever fluctuating. The concept of there being a standard is slowly but surely disappearing. Grammar books did not prevent people from using the collocation “shop local” times more often on the Internet than the grammatically correct one “shop locally.” It is evident on the Google search results of this type of shopping and on British Corpora where the collocate “shop local” appears 177 times.

Additionally, let us elaborate in more detail about the hashtag **#shopslow**, since it is not only peculiar in its grammatical properties but also in how it is a relatively new term. Admittendly, slow Fashion is not a particular new concept since it was first coined in 2007. However, there is still very little known about it, especially in fields other than fashion. Professor of Sustainability, Design, and Fashion at the Centre for Sustainable Fashion at the University of the Arts London, Kate Fletcher, is the creator of the phrase "slow fashion." Fletcher, who was influenced by the slow food movement, and several other authors before her identified a need for a slower pace in the fashion industry.

Slow fashion is about choice, information, cultural diversity, and identity, as Fletcher puts it in a piece for The Ecologist. However, crucially, it also involves balance. It necessitates a blend of durability and long-lasting, high-quality items, symbolic (fashion) expression, and rapid inventive change. Slow fashion helps us meet both our physical (to protect from weather) and psychological (to form identity) requirements by allowing us to express ourselves via our clothing and communicate with others.

The term has appeared in contrast to **Fast Fashion**. Fast fashion denotes cheap, mass-produced, machine-made clothing that is swiftly disposed of in landfills. Contrarily, **slow fashion** clothing is handcrafted, takes time to produce, makes use of artistic talent, is of higher quality, and costs more. The use of antonyms in coining these two terms creates a much-needed contrast to draw consumers' attention to the fast-paced, however unhealthy and unfair use of planet resources at disposal.

#### **2.1.4. The crucial role of metaphorical interpretations of the colour “green” in representation of sustainable fashion online**

Green is a color word that occurs frequently in language. The last few decades have seen a metaphorical expansion of its meaning into fields like politics, economics, but especially the environment.

Green has grown in importance in fashion discourse, as evidenced by expressions such as **#weargreen, green fashion, green trend, green policy, and #gogreen**. It appears in >3500 (>35%) in the analyzed data. The word represents not only a color, but also an ideology. Green Fashion's core values of propagating an eco-friendly and peaceful future have been internationally accepted and reflected in language.

According to a study done on Greenspeak by linguistics Li, L., & Ye, M. (2019), titled “Greenspeak: A corpus-based comparative study on the word 'Green' and environmentalism,” around 67.6% (3,166 out of 4,675) metaphorical greens were mapped into environmentalism based on the analysis of the 450-million-word Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA). There are variations in use between languages, though. While in Chinese, for instance, metaphorical expression with the word “green” in them tend to be positive, English “green” can have both positive and negative qualities depending on the situation. This is true within the semantic field of sustainable fashion as well and is clearly seen in this study. Among the hashtags that employ the word “green” (**#weargreen, #Gogreen, #greenwashing**), the color green is both used to promote greenness in fashion and rally people together for this cause

(#weargreen, #Gogreen) and to scorn those company who pretend to be sustainable but are actually doing very little to contribute to the movement (#greenwashing, #greenflation).

The noun "greenwash," derived from the adjective "green" and the noun "wash," is modelled after the noun "whitewash," which dates from the 16th century, according to the Oxford English Dictionary. The verb "greenwash" comes from that noun, and the noun "greenwashing" comes from the verb. Both “whitewashing” and “greenwashing” are regarded as disapproving terms, with “whitewashing” originally meaning an attempt to stop people finding out the true facts about a situation. The term “greenwashing” is narrower. When a company makes assertions about a product's ethics or sustainability that, upon closer examination, prove to be untrue or exaggerated, this practise is known as "greenwashing." A brand might claim that a dress is eco-friendly because it is made of eco wool, but in reality, it only contains 4% eco wool and other less sustainable materials. This is an example of greenwashing. Another illustration would be a company that loudly promotes a line of 20 sustainable pieces while stocking thousands of non-sustainable garments. Unfortunately, the majority of large fast-fashion companies that tout their sustainability credentials are guilty of "greenwashing," as they frequently produce an excessive amount of goods overall (some of which will remain unsold at the end of the season, when it becomes an additional environmental hazard).

The phrase "**greenwashing**" first appeared in a California newspaper, according to the Oxford Dictionary: "The activists will maintain a booth outside the fair and continue to fight what the group calls "greenwashing" by large corporations that deceive the public into believing they are protecting the environment while polluting" (The Orange County Register, April 5, 1990).

Another term that appeared years later and has since taken over the discussions on sustainability that uses the colour green and is rather negative in nature. It is the portmanteau “greenflation” (French for porte (“to carry”) + manteau (“cloak”), describes a suitcase that opens in two halves). A portmanteau is a word created by combining at least two words. This word-formation technique is all about the original

words' sounds and meanings being merged in the new word. The first part of one word, "green," is joined to the last part of another, "inflation," omitting the first letter of the second word to make the portmanteau more phonologically appropriate. The noun "greenflation" is referred to a price increase brought on by the shift to a green economy including the fashion industry. The cost of going green, or "greenflation," according to Vaibhav Chaturvedi, a fellow at the Council on Energy, Environment and Water (CEEW), is the upping of prices in every aspect of our lives (European News 2021). This also applies to the fashion companies and enterprises in a way that clothes that are sustainably produced cost more to make and to buy for consumers.

One broader conclusion that can be made is that colors are used in very different ways in different contexts across English, with various associations across cultures attached to them. For example, "he is green" can mean, depending on the context: 1. He is inexperienced 2. He is envious 3. He is environmentally aware. These three definitions provide insight into what the colour green is associated with in the English language: 1. Immaturity, 2. Jealousy, 3. Eco-friendliness. However, green has other identifications in other languages such as fear (French), anger (Thai, Italian), sexual context (Spanish), and nausea (Mandarin Chinese) ( [Kennedy 2016](#)).

## **2.2. Linguistic patterns discovered in the further analysis**

### **2.2.1. New types of shoppers = New language to identify them**

Throughout this chapter, we have talked about various linguistic patterns noticed during the discourse analysis done on the language surrounding eco fashion trends, yet newly coined terms for people who tend to get involved in practices such as shopping sustainably seem to have been overlooked. At first glance, there appears to be no term for that until you dig deeper. The search led to three terms in total: **cyan-shoppers** (frequency: 455 tweets), **thrifters** (608 tweets), and **greenies** (987 tweets).

To create the first two words, a derivational suffix –er was employed. Because it alters the word class to which the entire expression belongs, -er is considered derivational as in: bake-bakers, run-runner, lecture-lecturer, etc. Both of the words

derive from verbs. However, “cyan-shopper” is also a compound word, the first part of which is a shade of a color (interestingly, this time – not a green color, but a deep greenish-blue color). Consumers are more aware than ever of the environmental problems facing the world, from depleted forests to trash-filled oceans. And 'cyan shoppers' (blue for the ocean and green for trees) broad-based environmental concern will increasingly influence their purchasing choices.

According to The Grocer, "Today's consumer is questioning all aspects of their life, from how much carbon they emit while travelling to whether their money is being invested ethically by the big banks." The fact that consumers are actively looking for environmentally friendly brands and carefully examining the eco-credentials of the products they buy is therefore not surprising.

While ‘cyan-shoppers’ are generally interested in making greener decisions when it comes to shopping, a ‘thrifter’ is a bit more limited by the activity of ‘thrifting.’ According to Urban Dictionary, it is someone that religiously shops at Thrift Stores looking for bargains and often scores amazing deals, one dedicated to recycling and reuse of products to sustain our planet.

The word ‘greenie’ is an even broader term signifying 1) Someone who advocates for environmental protection (environmentalist, tree-hugger); 2) One who enjoys forests or forest scenery; 3) Someone who has green fingers; 4) A novice newspaper reporter. The term is derivational from the word ‘green’ and is formed with the help of the suffix –ie. Said suffix has two functions:

1) Forming diminutive or affectionate forms of nouns or names.

dear → dearie

sweet → sweetie

smile → smilie (also smiley)

Catherine → Cathie (also Cathi, Cathy); Katherine → Kathie (also Kathi, Kathy)

Bill → Billie (also Billi, Billy)

2) Forming colloquial nouns signifying the person associated with suffixed noun or verb.

bike → bikie

road → roadie

surf → surfie

town → townie

“Greenie” seems to be a colloquial form rather than a diminutive. Overall, how broad or narrow the terms discussed above can be summarized in the following circle chart:



*Chart 1. Scope of meaning of the words denoting green shoppers.*

In the chart, “Greenie” is the broadest term encompassing the two others, with “thrifter” having the narrowest meaning limited to ‘thrifting’ only.

It can be discerned that the innovations created to inform consumers about sustainability issues as well as an increased social obligation among people to minimize their CO2 footprint by shopping responsibly have given rise to the new coinages analysed in this subsection.

### **2.2.2. Loan words and slang used to talk about sustainable fashion**

The most common loan word associated with not only sustainable fashion, but fashion in general is ‘**moda**’ (appearing in 450 tweets). It is the word for fashion in many languages, but primarily in Italian. You may recognise the French ‘**mode**’ from

the expression ‘à la mode’ as it is the way it entered the Italian and English language. ‘Modiste’ is one derivative which means ‘a person who makes fashionable clothes for women’ (Cambridge Dictionary). The word is old-fashioned but is crawling its way back into General English Use due to the rise in popularity of such TV shows as Bridgerton where the word appears every time the characters go for fitting.

According to Haugen, there are three types of borrowing words: Loan words, Loan Blend, and Loan Shift. ‘Moda’ is a loan blend since some phonemes in the word were adjusted into the recipient language, and therefore it came to be pronounced not as /moda/ but as / məʊda/ in English.

Other fashion terms which found their way into English that have appeared in the data, though in lower frequency (less than 800 tweets) than some of the other expressions discussed previously are presented in Table 2.

Table 2

<b>Fashion words</b>	<b>Loan Type</b>	<b>Origin</b>
Pumps	Loan blend: Partial phonemic adjustment into the recipient language.	The word pump is derived from the Dutch word "pomp," according to the Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary of English. This word is classified as a loan blend, which means that some phonemes have been adjusted to the recipient language, such as pomp becoming pump by replacing the vocal -o- in the word with -u- in the recipient language. The pronunciation stayed the same.
Jacket		The word "jacket" has its roots in the French word "jaquette." This word has a typical loan blend because of an adjusted phoneme that transforms the word "jaquette" into

		"jacket" by the recipient language while maintaining the pronunciation of the origin word.
Eco-leather, leather	Loan shift: This type of borrowing demonstrates major morphemic substitution and includes all modifications that are phonological and grammatical. Also known as complete phoneme substitution when a word is altered from its original language.	The word leather derives from the German "leder." This is classified as a loan blend because there is a morpheme adjustment which makes the spelling of the word and its pronunciation different.
Stiletto		The word has Latin roots. "Stilus" is a Latin word that means "pole" and "stake." The word stiletto is a loan shift, meaning that it includes all phonological and grammatical changes that are not the same as those in the original word.
Denim		The French phrase "serge de nimes" is where the word "denim" originally came from. "Serge" refers to a particular type of fabric, and "de nimes" is the name of a city in southern French. We can infer that "serge de nimes" refers to the style of fabric produced in the southern French town of Nimes. This word is categorised as a "loan shift" because the morphemic substitution that altered the phonology through grammar changed the meaning from the name of the city to the type of denim.

This portion of the study is significant because it gives the fashion industry a better understanding of how borrowing affected how some terms and especially their pronunciation. This knowledge can then prevent misunderstandings among non-native English speakers who frequently pronounce words in the same way they do in their native tongues without taking into account the phonemic changes that took place to this word. This was also brought up in one of the interviews with Professor Rozhin, who instructs international students in fashion and textiles.

As for slang expressions migrating into the sustainable fashion semantic field, ‘**slay**’ (appearing in 980 tweets out of a total of 10000) is one to remember. Examples taken from one of the DIY corpora compiled for this study are the following:

“.....repeating outfits, **slaying** a sustainable fashion sense.”

“...sustainable fashion **slays**.”

“...**slaying** an eco-friendly look.”

“Kudos to local businesses **slaying** it at the sustainable fashion arena.”

‘Slay,’ originally meaning “kill masterfully” has transitioned into ‘do something and do it well,’ such as wear an outfit (Urban Dictionary).

### **2.2.3. Suffix –able in words related to sustainable fashion production and traceability of the supply chains**

One more conspicuous linguistic pattern is the use of the **suffix –able** to describe how loyal fashion brands that claim to be ‘sustainable’ are to the cause: **traceable**, **verifiable**, **accountable**.

For a business, **traceability** entails being able to track every element of a product back to its source, from the raw material to the clothing tag and everything in between. It includes information about the locations of farms, plants, and milling facilities, among other things. Benefits include improved supply chain and production process transparency, awareness of sustainability initiatives, a decline in child labour, and

health issue avoidance. If the information about the origin of the clothes being sold is **verifiable**, it can be checked. If the checked information has dissimilarities with the marketing statements of the company (such as: the item is made of recycled cotton whilst only the tag is), the culprit has to be held **accountable**.

#### 2.2.4. V-ing words to describe processes in sustainable fashion

A range of V-ing patterns has been identified in relation to the actions of cyan-shoppers and alleged environmentally friendly corporations, including but not limited to: *Recycling, Thrifting, Regenerating, Upcycling, Thrift-flipping, Greenwashing, Carbon offsetting* (Table 3).

Table 3

<b>The actions of cyan-shoppers</b>	<b>The actions of alleged environmentally friendly corporations</b>
Recycling (frequency of use: 3550 tweets)	Recycling
Thrifting (2560 tweets)	Regenerating (409 tweets)
Thrift-flipping (760 tweets)	Upcycling
Upcycling (3105 tweets)	Greenwashing (2360 tweets)
	Carbon offsetting (377 tweets)

Since most of the terms have been explained in previous sections of this paper, let us focus on the most recent ones, starting with ‘*Regenerating*.’ It is strongly tied with the concept of ‘*regenerative agriculture*.’ What does agriculture have to do with fashion? The foundation of regenerative agriculture is the provision of *resourceful, biodegradable, and sustainable materials*. Cotton and fibres from ethical sources can be produced with a little help from soil and photosynthesis. This then makes materials available for use by today's fashion brands. With the supply of organically grown and naturally dyed materials, numerous independently owned fashion companies are promoting the necessity of reversing the effects of climate change. The overall systemic change required to save our planet can be brought about by this small action, by *regenerating* the materials used to make their clothes (Batista 2022).

*Carbon offsetting* is yet another way to slow down the speed of today's fashion. When a business, or even a single person, invests in one or more environmental projects to offset their greenhouse gas emissions and achieve carbon neutrality, this is known as *carbon offsetting*. The use of *regeneration* techniques, such as giving a portion of sales to plant trees, or even the purchase of carbon-neutral shipping, are all part of the idea. However, carbon offsetting is not that easy, and regrettably, it is not a magic cure for climate change since it only patches up some of the holes in the system (Rauturier 2022).

### 2.3. MEANS OF VERBAL MANIPULATION IN ADVERTISING OF SUSTAINABLE UK-BASED BRANDS

Environmentalism and sustainability are at the forefront of many people's minds as one of the most important issues of the day. People are becoming more aware of their impact on the environment as we learn more about how humanity is affecting the planet. Supporting environmentally conscious businesses is a component of this responsibility.

Environmental concerns are currently among the top ones for consumers. In fact, one-third of respondents in a Unilever survey of consumers from five different nations said they favour brands that support sustainability. Similar findings have been made by other studies, and the percentage increases when only millennials and members of generation Z are surveyed. This suggests that the importance of sustainability will increase over time.

The above arguments are reasons why so many clothing brands aspire to adopt a sustainability marketing strategy to promote their products. However, how many of those company are actually sustainable? This is the question we will attempt to answer in this section of the dissertation along with a more detailed explanation of how language is pivotal in manipulating the public that a brand adheres to the sustainability principle throughout the entire production process of its clothing.

As part of this endeavour, we looked at the websites of worldwide known and trusted companies such as **Burberry, H&M, and Zara** to identify the misleading language used by their marketing teams and expose any greenwashing using discourse analysis.

Due to the limitations on the dissertation's scope, we have only concentrated on the communication aspect, specifically Internet communication. The internet is one of

the most important forms of communication in the modern world. There have been an increasing number of studies looking at the Internet as a tool for communicating with stakeholders about a company's social agenda (Esrock and Leichty 1998, 2000; Williams and Pei 1999; Maignan and Ralston 2002; Cooper 2003; Snider et al. 2003; Douglas et al. 2004; Patten and Crampton 2004).

"Unlike traditional mass media channels, a single web site can have multiple sections, each targeted to a different audience," as noted by Esrock and Leichty (2000, p. 328). The internet has proven to be useful and effective in our globalised economy not only for the marketing of services (such as e-consulting, e-finance, and e-education) and the sale of products (such as clothing) but also as a source of information (Hanson and Kalyanam 2006; Weber 2007; Tankosic and Trnavcevic 2008). From this vantage point, the website has developed into a useful tool for identity communication. This is particularly important when promoting a company's "green" identity because the internet provides quick, inexpensive, mass-targeted communication.

### **2.3.1. Vague language**

According to a study on how the media uses language to manipulate us by Emily Jean (2019), most advertisers use language manipulation to create claims that imply something about their product without claiming it to be true. This method attracts audiences because they know good and certain things about the product from what it says on its claim, but those things are not always true in or of the product itself. Many businesses use slogans, taglines, and jingles in their advertisements to increase profits, and the majority of the language used has a significant impact on their customers.

Let us have a look at some examples of such claims. H&M has dedicated a whole section of its website to the topic of sustainability (Appendix 1). In one of their claims, it is stated that "...[they] like [their] clothes toxic-free" (Appendix 2). This is manipulative language that gives you little information about which substances they are removing from their clothes to help *detoxify the fashion industry*. It is a very generic claim without any specifics or proof that they are actually doing it meant to coerce

people into believing that they are buying products are harmless to their health and the environment. Moreover, if you click to find out more details about this statement, it will lead to even more baseless arguments such as: *“By avoiding harmful chemicals, fossil-based energy sources and single-use packaging, we can help protect our water, air and soil.”* Which harmful chemicals? What fossil-based energy sources?

The company further exacerbates the situation with this claim by making bold statements about non-existing policies with vague language: *“We’re also pushing for stronger **policies** to restore and protect rivers and freshwater in countries such as **Turkey and Bangladesh.**”* Does the phrase “in countries such as...” actually refer to these specific countries undergoing the process of implementation of such policies or does the author just provide these countries as examples of countries that struggle with this issue. Where is the link to the mentioned policies? What do they entail? Overall, this statement was included not in order to inform consumers of what exact steps are being taken towards a more sustainable approach but to pull wool over their eyes with empty words that don’t prove anything.

### **2.3.2. Baseless claims wrapped in buzzwords**

Use of trendy expression on the rise like ‘**close the loop,**’ ‘**create a circular fashion**’ with **–ed adjectives** to create a rhyming pattern is seen in the following claim about a new collection of the same company: “The future looks **circular**. A party collection like no other – designed to be **treasured, shared, repaired and recycled**. (Appendix 3). This combination of words strikes right in the consumers’ core. Who wouldn’t want to buy a party outfit that can be completely recycled and is itself made from recycled contents such as polyester or even used plastic bottles? (Appendix 4) Especially seeing as how party clothes are usually just worn once, only serve one purpose and then are thrown away. All this seems like such a great thing. Recycling matters, especially plastic. According to Harding-Rolls, “about 85% of the brands that responded in a study that they did are using downcycled plastic bottles. However, there are significant issues with it. Ideally, we’d establish a circular economy, which calls for

recycling from product to product. In a closed loop, a bottle becomes another bottle and used clothing is recycled into new clothing. Large beverage companies have made significant pledges to reduce their use of plastic packaging and to recycle more. And they're accomplishing that fairly well. However, when one takes the bottles out of that system and uses them to make recycled polyester for clothing—a **material that really can't be recycled into clothing again because we lack the technology**, it indicates that plastic that could have been used sustainably nonetheless and instead ended up in a landfill or an incinerator. According to Harding-Rolls, the practise adds to the global microplastics crisis and adds a competitive element to plastic recycling because the beverage and fashion industries are vying for the same waste plastic bottles. Instead of sorting out their own waste, the fashion industry is adding to it by taking more from other industries.

Thus far, the following conclusions can be made: Companies like H&M claim that customers could recycle clothing made of synthetic fibres even though "no such recycling technology" exists. Asos, for instance, once put forward a claim that a product was made of '*modern material*,' which makes recycling and remaking it simpler. But because it's made of 50% nylon and 50% polyester, recycling it will be difficult, according to Harding-Rolls. The adjective '*modern*' in '*modern material*' however suggests that there have been some advances in the field. Therefore, manipulative language like this serves as a distraction from the facts. In fact, according to the same study, it was discovered that H&M's Conscious line, which was marketed as a line of clothing made from more environmentally friendly materials like organic cotton or recycled polyester, contained a higher proportion of harmful synthetic materials than its main line (72 per cent compared to 61 per cent).

### **2.3.3. Positive language and frames for manipulation**

During the analysis, it was also revealed that H&M's website has words like "less" (Appendices 6-7), "reduce" (Appendices 8-9), "minimize" (Appendix 10) hard-coded into it so that it could only present a green image of its clothing. Positive

language that indicates **reduction of a problem** being talked about promotes a positive attitude to the author of the said words as well as leads to faster decision-making on a psychological level ( Knuppenburg and Fredericks 2021). Therefore, by incorporating positively-colored words as a branding strategy aimed at sustainability, the analysed company nudges people to buy more of the products that are supposedly resolving the problem rather than adding to it. Moreover, multiple *reiteration of the aforementioned words* throughout the website is adding to their effectiveness.

According to linguist George Lakoff: *“The neural circuits that determine the meaning of words are connected to them. A circuit becomes more activated and stronger the more times it is heard, making it easier for it to fire again.”* People become desensitised to such language and start believing those words as a result of *constant repetition*. Consequently, everyone readily accepts the idea that is being imposed on them through language whether it is true or make-believe. People accept what is being fed to them without feeling like they are being forced is the brand’s key goal.

Not to mention the fact that brands that use more positive language to refer to the problem of sustainability use the Framing Theory. According to framing theory, people's decisions regarding how to process information are influenced by how something is presented to the audience (referred to as "the frame"). Abstractions called frames are used to structure or organise the meaning of messages (Arowolo 2017).

So, in the frame evoked by the words ‘reduce,’ ‘minimize’ used in collocation with ‘impact on the environment,’ there exists several ideas: there is a harmful effect on the environment created by a perpetrator (most likely mass market fashion brands), there is a victim (our planet and people living in it) and a reliever or minimizer of the impact and the method of relief. Therefore, those who advocate for "minimization of the environmental impact" are viewed as heroes or those who alleviate our planet’s deterioration.

While on the topic of using positive language, it should be mentioned that the list is not limited to the group of words signifying **‘lowering in degree, intensity, size or amount’ such as ‘reduce.’** The research revealed that some other manipulative words also include those that signal **‘a moral responsibility.’** On Burberry’s website,

these are **‘conscious’** (Appendix 12), **‘ethical,’ ‘drive change’** (e.g. “... UN Fashion Industry Charter for Climate Action has allowed us to accelerate solutions and *drive change.*”) **‘be a force for positive change,’ ‘go beyond’** (e.g. “...as we continue to be *a force for positive change* and *go beyond*, for better.”), **‘support the planet,’ ‘close to our heart’** (e.g. “...*support* the lands and communities that we *hold close to our heart*”), **‘protect,’ ‘take action,’ ‘fight against’** (e.g. “...our plan to *take action to protect*, restore and regenerate nature as part of the *fight against* the climate crisis..”), **‘inclusive’** (e.g. ...it is an *inclusive* space, made for everyone”).

The aforementioned language has a strong effect on its audience since it communicates important values of a healthy society. Exposure to it might create attachment to the brand, even a certain preference over other companies out there that do not seem to be so proactive in tackling the issues of climate change. Some merchandise of the said brand even carries green "Conscious" tags (Appendix 12) to indicate that it is made of "more sustainable materials." Funnily enough, it was this luxury fashion company that was accused of being the exact opposite of ‘conscious’ with their stock. Recently, this high-end runway brand was exposed for destroying more than \$37 million worth of goods to keep "the wrong people" from buying them.

Although audiences and markets vary by brand, it is safe to say that you should never refer to those who are not part of your target audience as "the wrong people." Their claim to be *inclusive, designed for everyone* seem to have vanished in that moment. In fact, burning excess inventory is standard procedure in the fashion and apparel sector, and Burberry has increased their stock of discarded goods by more than three times since 2014. Burning excess product can have negative environmental effects in addition to the wastefulness of producing clothing that will never be purchased or worn.

We sometimes fail to notice the subtle ways in which marketing teams of various brands persuade us through language. Small wording changes can have a big impact on how visitors will read a website and who it will reach.

#### **2.3.4. Recognising "greenwash"**

According to the analysis of the language in this subchapter, the biggest fast fashion brands in the world are deceiving consumers with dubious sustainability claims. Many industry claims about environmentally friendly products are unfounded or deceptive, with H&M being the worst offender (96% claims violate UK Competition and Markets Authority's guidelines). H&M uses the public's concern for the environment, known as "greenwashing," as a marketing gimmick ( Shendruk 2022 , Campbell 2021).

Brand strategist Kat Rosati works with businesses to increase their sustainability through sourcing for production or by connecting with their ideal clientele. Rosati says, "Sustainability can come from so many different aspects. "What matters is how a brand decides to be sustainable, in my opinion. It must be a concept they can define. If they are unable to do that, it is typically a pretty big red flag that the brand is simply using buzzwords and hoping to capitalise on the excitement" (Icarus 2019 ).

These are the brands that people trust. They trust that when brands claim something helps sustainability, that it's actually substantiated. But if you look at a lot of environmental branding in fashion and specific examples presented in this paper (vague language, repetition of positively language, excessive use of buzzwords, rhyming words around the concept of sustainability), you just have to take that with a pinch of salt. They're not giving you any information, but instead try to play tricks on your subconsciousness with the help of language.

## CHAPTER 2. CONCLUSIONS

In Chapter 2, we aimed to analyze the language surrounding sustainable fashion in the online space using a corpus and discourse analysis of 10,000 Twitter messages.

The main findings included:

1) Hashtags appeared in more than 2,000 tweets. The sustainable fashion category saw the most hashtags of rallying and criticism. Abbreviations and short forms stood out among other types of hashtags. A number of frequently used prefixes was identified: re-, pre-, de- (#recycle, #rewear, #rethink, #preloved, and #detoxfashion). They were representative of such concepts as durability, versatility and longevity. Furthermore, it was concluded that there is a definite preference for V+Adj patterns (shop local, shop slow, shop small). The metaphorical interpretations of the word “green” in hashtags revealed that there are both positive and negative connotations present in the semantic field of sustainable fashion.

2) In the further linguistic analysis, a number of loan words were singled out and categorized into loan blends (moda, pumps, jacket) and loan shifts (stilettos, denim). Morphological patterns in words related to sustainable fashion such as V-ing words to describe processes and actions of cyan-shoppers as well as words containing suffix –able were discovered.

3) Lastly, language taken from websites of prominent UK-based brands was investigated for use of manipulation. Vague language, repetition of positive language, excessive use of buzzwords, and rhyming words around the concept of sustainability proved to be a factor in enticing the audience to buy more of their products.

Additionally, use of positive language and frames was concluded to reinforce consumers' preference for the brand and make the sustainability claims more believable for them.

### **CHAPTER 3. CORPUS-ASSISTED ANALYSIS OF THE LANGUAGE AROUND UKRAINIAN SUSTAINABLE FASHION**

Almost a year has passed since Russia invaded Ukraine. Ukraine is fighting for independence and unity, upholding democratic ideals, and thwarting Russian aggression in any way it can. Every Ukrainian adjusted their way of life, place of employment, and line of business to aid the nation and contribute financially to its struggle for freedom.

In the midst of constant bombardment and alarm sirens, business owners are getting out of their way to stay afloat and create jobs in order to contribute as many taxes as they can to the Ukrainian budget. The fashion industry is no exception.

Similarly, to the impact that Covid had on the industry leaving thousands of garment workers without jobs, the war has exacerbated the situation by making it nearly impossible for the fashion industry to keep afloat. Yet, Ukrainian fashion designers persevere and are not only managing to keep the industry functional but also produce clothes that follow the requirements of sustainability abroad with garments made from an abundance of organic materials which Ukraine takes pride in. Their clothes are breathable, chemicals-free, cruelty-free and take you down memory lane of the fashion trends that existed centuries ago. Mass production of clothing in Ukraine is highly unpopular, and instead the unique and custom-made clothes that Ukrainian designers are renowned for are meant to last longer and be more durable with timeless designs that never really go out of fashion.

In this chapter, the task is to reveal the sense of sustainability that permeates throughout Ukrainian fashion through language: to show the linguistic methods with which Ukrainian designers communicate the idea of Eco fashion in their clothing as well as comment on how they use language to promote their product. Moreover, the

main themes and vision of the most prominent Ukrainian sustainable fashion houses and how they successfully take their work beyond Ukraine with the help of the English language are analysed. Additionally, we investigate the idea of going back to one's roots as the primary vision for sustainable fashion in Ukraine and look at language that brands use as a tool to leverage that idea.

The methodology for this part of research remains to be centered around corpus linguistics and discourse analysis. The data mostly consists of the information on the websites and social media accounts of such brands as KSENIASCHNAIDER, O(FourFour), Broq, Bibliotheque, Roussin, Fashion House Ivanova, Navro Brand, Gaptuvalnya, Famiore brand, etc. A separate 7000-word DIY corpus using the Our Survey Says Tool was compiled for this part of research. It is focused solely on the language around sustainable fashion in Ukraine; therefore, it is more specific in geographical terms. It is separate from the corpora using data on sustainable fashion from Twitter analysed in the second chapter of this paper.

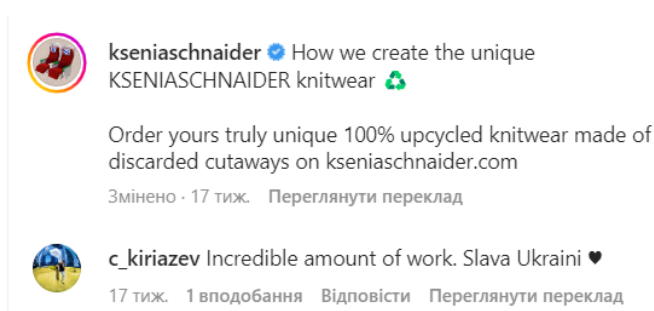
### **3.1. Differences in the language around sustainable fashion of Ukrainian brands compared to English ones**

One would think that language wouldn't differ no matter where a particular fashion brand is based as long as it is trying to communicate the same idea and evoke the same reaction from its customers. However, similarly to how people have different thoughts about one and the same concept, designers in Ukraine have a different way to express the vision behind their creations from their counterparts overseas. It can be accounted for by the fact that Language, Culture, and Thought are intrinsically intertwined. There are differences in the way speakers of different nationalities communicate because language has a direct connection to our cultural background and social identity. According to Kramsch, in a society, language is the fundamental form of communication and in the area of communication, language and culture are mainly related. In both inter- and intra-societal settings, speakers use language to convey their

thoughts, emotions, and facts. Thus, language is an expression of cultural reality and well as a symbol of social identity (Kramsch 2005).

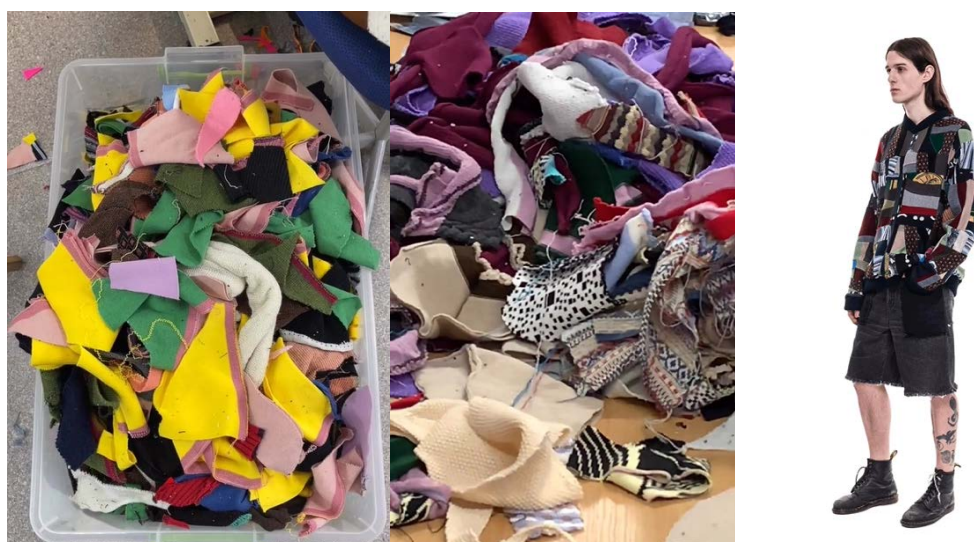
This idea can be strengthened by the statements of Horton and Hunt: “Every society has a common set of social values, beliefs, norms, and folklore that are passed down from generation to generation through socialisation. Culture is thus a socially acquired body of knowledge. From this vantage point, it is evident that socialisation also plays a role in the transmission of language from one generation to the next (Horton and Hunt 2005). Therefore, rather than the language being transmitted from other cultures like the English one or the American one, it is passed over through family and society on the whole. Ukrainian speakers use English the way they think, and the way they think has been formed with the help of the influence from the society they grew up in. So, let us look how the language in the semantic field of sustainable fashion differs in the minds of Ukrainians compared to English people and native speakers of English.

In addition to ‘upcycling’ and ‘recycling’ to express that the collections are produced sustainably and with use of upcycled materials, Ukrainian brands describe their products as ‘**re-worked**’ and ‘**ready-to-wear**’ (“The collections cover women’s and men’s *ready-to-wear, reworked, upcycled* patchwork, denim, and accessories.”), ‘**hand-assembled,**’ ‘**made from leftovers,**’ ‘**made from scraps**’ (“One of a kind patchwork cardigans are *hand-assembled from knitwear leftovers* at our Kyiv’s studio,” “For the production of them, we used *leftover fabrics and scraps* from our own production.”), ‘**made from discarded cutaways**’ (Illustration 1).



*Illustration 1. Ksenia Schnaider’s Instagram post. Use of the analysed language on social media.*

As can be seen, the language is much more precise and includes information about the residual materials that were used to make the clothing. It is also accompanied with visual and aural multimodal communication where the materials are depicted. The process of putting together the scraps is shown on Instagram using video, moving images, and music (Illustration 2). Ukrainian brands, compared to mass-market brands in the UK analysed in the previous chapter, seem to be more open about the origin of the materials used and leverage this transparency on various social media platforms in order to build a trusting relationship with customers.



*Illustration 2. The process of putting together bits of used fabric on Ksenia Schnaider's Instagram account.*

Three of the expressions mentioned above are exceptionally peculiar: '*reworked*,' '*leftovers*,' and '*hand-assembled*.' The preference for these expressions over more common ones in the UK such as '*upcycled*,' '*scraps*,' '*hand-made*' is obvious from the statistical analysis of the data. '*Reworked*' appears in the 80% of all data related to sustainable products on the websites analysed compared to '*upcycled*,' while the ratio between collocations such as '*leftover fabric*,' '*leftover pieces*,' '*leftover knitwear*' in comparison with '*made from scraps*' is 8 to 2.

Although, '*rework*' means to make changes to the original version of (something), to better or make adjustments to something according to Cambridge Dictionary, it is rarely used in the context of fashion in the English world. If to take a look at the examples of this word in context in the British National Corpus, the majority

of times, ‘rework’ is used to mean ‘to change a piece of writing in order to improve it or make it more suitable for a particular purpose.’ However, single examples of this word in the context of talking about clothes can still be found (Illustration 3).

However exciting his paper, his thesis seemed in danger of crumbling if it were **reworked** into a conventional historical discourse. In the book under review early years as an editor of the Oxford English Dictionary: in fact he thriftily **reworked** his philological papers into the texture of his fiction. His mock-learned by bunches of dead sunflowers. Other ingredients in the exhibition include a series of **reworked** pictures decorated with dead flowers, a group of vitrines c outdoors. Sportswear, inspired by tough American work clothes, abounds. Lumberjack checks **reworked** in black and white wool are everywhere. Simple h

*Illustration 3. 'Reworked' in context in the British National Corpus.*

The reason why many Ukrainian-speaking designers prefer it might have to do something with their English learning habits. Some people who use English as an additional language use words by translating them directly from their native language, and since the exact translation of ‘rework’ is ‘переробляти’ (i.e do something over), it seems like a reasonable explanation.

### 3.2. The idea of limitations in Ukrainian sustainable fashion and its relation to the Ukraine-Russia war

One of the most vivid linguistic patterns discovered in doing the present research was use of words symbolizing ‘**exclusivity**’ and ‘**uniqueness**’ of products made using sustainable methods of clothes production such as patchwork. Examples from the data include (Table 4):

Table 4

Word/expression taken from context	Word/expression in context
Limited-edition, exclusively	We have collaborated with one of the leading European online fashion platforms @zalando to develop an eco-friendly <i>limited-edition</i> collection that is available <i>exclusively</i> online in Zalando's 25 markets.  <i>Limited-edition collection.</i> Hoodie with a hand-applied image using special textile paints. In the front is a kangaroo pocket. At the bottom is a pocket made of transparent dense film for condoms.
Creativity in Limitations	Capsule line symbolises <i>creativity in limitations</i> . The creation process faced a

	new reality, as the production took place in Kyiv, Ukraine under air raid sirens, the team's eternal fear for their lives and a temporary power outage.
One-of-a-kind	<i>One-of-a-kind</i> patchwork cardigans are hand-assembled from knitwear leftovers at our Kyiv's studio.
Unique	Each shirt is <i>unique</i> and <i>one of a kind</i> , due to the nature of this project.  However, OFourFour production is always based on the same principles that support our wish to have a positive impact on the planet while providing a <i>unique</i> design solution.
Custom-made	<i>Custom-made</i> T-shirt. Hand-painted with an airbrush and special textile paints. At the bottom is a pocket made of transparent dense film for condoms. When ordering, keep in mind that the painting may differ from the model in the photo.

While brands abroad are spewing out clothes on demand in bulk, Ukrainian sustainably oriented brands are focusing on making their products more desirable by communicating the idea that they are one-of-a-kind.

The idea of limited clothing that is very well-thought-out was partially influenced by the Russian invasion. All production was halted until further notice when the war started but due to a need to provide jobs for people working in the industry as well as a patriotic desire to help the country stand back firmly on its feet, fashion houses are starting to open their doors to customers again. However, seeing how it is virtually impossible to produce the amount of clothes needed to sustain the business, the concept of *limited-edition* clothing made under unbelievable circumstances is a way for these brands to keep operating and a clever way to raise prices on such pieces to make up for the decrease in production.

The war truly puts a strain on the Ukrainian fashion industry. So, to raise awareness of the lengths to which garment workers go to make clothes for their

customers, brands do not only use verbal and written means of communication but also aural multimodal communication. One innovation that has caught our attention was the under sirens tags incorporated by the KS brand (Illustration 4). Each KS item will have a sound graph on their tags. One only needs to scan it to hear the terrifying sound of air raid sirens often heard when there is a danger of a missile attack.



*Illustration 4. Example of aural multimodal communication. Ksenia Schnaider's digital siren tags.*

In addition to promoting items as custom-made, there is a tendency among Ukrainian brands to use more positive language around used items by describing them as 'vintage' instead. In one Instagram post by KSENIASCHNAIDER, a process of making a skirt out of old ties is demonstrated. The caption reads: "Upcycling vintage ties" (Illustration 4). Other examples include: "Denim masterpiece - all-purpose shorts made of vintage jeans."



*Illustration 5. 'Vintage' in context accompanied by visual means.*

### **3.3. Verbal means to express social issues driving Ukrainian sustainable fashion**

Younger consumers are deeply concerned about social and environmental issues, which many consider to be the defining issues of our time. They increasingly back up their beliefs with their purchasing habits, preferring brands that share their values and avoiding those that do not (Amed et.al. 2019).

In response, businesses are incorporating social and environmental concerns into their goods and services. In light of this, the online journal McKinsey and Company examined the rise of "**woke**" consumers in depth as one of the ten trends the fashion industry should pay attention to in 2019 in their State of Fashion report, which was created in collaboration with the Business of Fashion. Being *woke*, as defined by Merriam-Webster, entails being "aware of and actively attentive to important societal facts and issues (especially issues of racial and social justice)"; however, Gen Z also includes environmental justice in the definition.

Nine out of ten Generation Z consumers think businesses should address environmental and social issues. The latter's inclusion represents a shift from the perspectives of the millennial generation before it, which were more concerned with the environment only. The shift can be seen in the increased visibility of social issues

and in movements like *#metoo*, *#blacklivesmatter*, and *#timesup* that have all become common terms over the past few years.

Worldwide, about two-thirds of consumers say they would change brands based on their position on divisive issues, avoid them, or engage in a boycott. Of those, half see themselves as passionate activists. The other half is less dogmatic and bases their choice on the circumstances.

Millennial and Gen Z consumer opinions are crucial. Together, these generations have a combined spending power of about \$350 billion in just the United States (about \$150 billion by Gen Z and about \$200 billion by millennials) (McKinsey and Company 2019)

The numbers' underlying dynamics are astounding. What is even more interesting is that the issues highlighted by fashion brands with the help of their creations differ from culture to culture. To prove this point, let us look at Ukrainian fashion trends that point out various societal injustices.

While racial injustice is not as talked about and is not as persistent an issue in Ukraine, Ukrainian brands still understand the importance of positioning their label as *'woke'* as possible but do it in accordance with country-specific social issues. With the start of a full-scale invasion of the country, consumers in Ukraine have become even more aware of their social duties. More and more brands are trying to satisfy this need by making the brand more environmentally conscious, ethical, safe for its customers, animal-free, corruption-free. They also aim to raise awareness of the many social injustices through their products but also through verbal communication on social media platforms. According to **the Uses and Gratifications theory by Blumler and Katz**, the needs being satisfied in this case are the ones of finding reinforcement for personal values, gaining a sense of belonging, finding out about relevant events in society and enabling the consumer to support important social causes (Katz, Blumler, Gurevitch 1973).

By highlighting and raising awareness of various issues the Ukrainian society is facing at the moment, brands give customers a much-needed sense of belonging to a group,

provide them with relevant information about pervasive issues to share with friends, peers, colleagues.

We will next attempt to reveal what these issues are by looking at how they are introduced and discussed by various Ukrainian sustainable brands.

### 3.3.1. Advocating for natural resources' preservation

One such brand, O(FourFour) draws design ideas from the world around it and the decline of natural resources both due to climate change as well as the Ukraine-Russia war. It makes use of recycled **econyl**, a type of recycled nylon created from trash dumped in landfills and the ocean. **Regeneration**, a process that goes beyond conventional recycling, guarantees that the new fabric has the same properties as virgin raw nylon, giving econyl the ability to be endlessly recycled and upcycled into new products.

For every 10,000 tonnes of ECONYL material produced, it prevents the use of 70,000 barrels of crude oil and 57,100 tonnes of carbon dioxide from being released into the atmosphere (Made Trade 2023). The term itself was formed with the help of **blending**. When two or more words are combined into a single new word, the process is called blending. The meanings of the original words are frequently combined. In the case of 'econyl,' the original fabric nylon is made more environmentally sustainable by the process of regeneration. The prefix **eco-** is common in word-formation patterns of many words related to sustainability in fashion (e.g. eco-friendly, ecochic, eco fashion, eco-conscious). 'Econyl' is a relatively new term which appeared with the rise of slow and circular fashion. However, blending is a known word-formation techniques, examples of which include:

- advertisement + entertainment → advertainment
- biographical + picture → biopic
- breakfast + lunch → brunch.

O (FourFour) newest collection VODODIL, which translates to "the watershed" from the Ukrainian word 'вододіл' was inspired by Ukrainian bodies of water and the

negative impact they are facing, including the Bug, Ingul, Dnipro, Oril, Tisa, Vorskla, Prut, and Synevyr rivers (Illustration 6).



*Illustration 6. O (FourFour)'s VODODIL collection.*

Additionally, each of the swimsuits from the collection features prints that, in the words of the brand, "*combine underground water, rain, snow, ice, wet sand, and river silt from all the sources of the Ukrainian rivers,*" and colours from the collection like *sandy, dark blue, licorice, blue, and khaki* "*clearly associate with the variety of what can be found on the Ukrainian coast.*"

The underlying message of the use of the brand's description of the collection and its colors is that one of a premonition. Ukraine has seen some of the worst flooding over the last few years all due to climate change, excessive gas emissions, but also illegal logging. Illegal logging and deforestation are to blame for the size and speed of the floods, in addition to climate change. Independent experts estimate that up to a third of all logging in Ukraine is illegal, and the Carpathians are one of the worst regions for clear-cutting, or the practise of removing the majority of a region's trees which are then exported to multi-national giants like Ikea. Deforestation makes the floods even more destructive. "More groundwater is retained by forests. They make slopes more gradual for water to descend," experts say (BBC 2020). Consequently, O (Four Four) collection VODODIL'22 could be interpreted as a message to keep the waters of Ukraine intact, to preserve them in their natural beauty and original state by becoming more conscious consumers.

### 3.3.2. The Ukraine-Russia war

River pollution inflicted on the waters by big fashion companies and the Ukraine-Russia war are major contributors to the decline of marine life in the Black Sea. Scientists looking into the strandings are now attributing the unusually high number of dead dolphins and porpoises that have been washing up on the Black Sea shores to increased Russian naval activity as a result of the war with Ukraine. The main cause is acoustic trauma brought on by Russian submarines' increased use of sonar. Ecolocation, a form of biological sonar, is used by dolphins and porpoises to navigate and communicate. There is now significant evidence pointing to a connection between cetacean acoustic trauma and the naval use of sonar by Russians (Kroeger 2023).

O (FourFour)'s “Black Sea” collection is possibly a way to allude to this issue (Illustration 12).



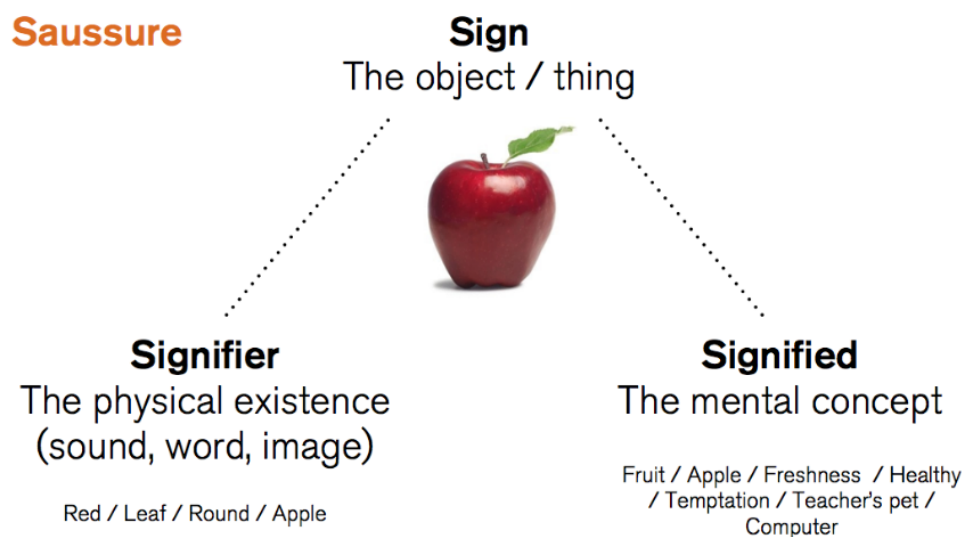
*Illustration 12. O (FourFour)'s “Black Sea” collection*

The phrase “Black Sea” serves as a modifier to differentiate the product from other fashion items. By using it in the product name, it implies that the item is related to the Black Sea. However, linguistically speaking, the name doesn't necessarily carry an immediate negative connotation. It may be connected to the geographic location, history, or culture of the Black Sea region in order to bring awareness about its current state and the adverse sonar effect of Russian submarines on the marine life.

The information about the decline of marine life in the Black Sea due to the Russia-Ukraine war is not directly reflected in the product names themselves. However, a consumer may infer a negative association with the name due to the connotation connected to the degradation of the Black Sea nowadays due to the Ukraine-Russia war.

### 3.3.3. The linguistic sign in the language of sustainable Ukrainian brands

Additionally, the brand O (FourFour) seems to be an expert in fully immersing their customers in the metaphors created specifically for the collection. By taking advantage of metaphorical use of language in their advertising campaign, they accidentally or intentionally employ Saussure's theory about the Signified and Signifier. Since the linguistic sign is the smallest meaningful unit used in human communication, it is crucial when creating the right message in business. Ferdinand Saussure was one of the foremost experts on this linguistic sign. The signifier, which is not the sound, is the acoustic representation of the concept or idea that you wish to convey. In other words, the signifier is our brain's acoustic representation of the succession of sounds we hear when a word is spoken. If it appears written, an image of this kind is also created because when we read something, our brains produce the sound of the word without the need for any acoustic modification (Javed 2022), (Illustration 7).



*Illustration 7. Saussure’s theory of the linguistic sign (taken from <https://cte.univ-setif2.dz/moodle/mod/book/view.php?id=16597&chapterid=4193>)*

We have briefly analysed the linguistic signs from O (Four Four)’s website to show how certain mental images are created in the minds of customers that are intended to match with their needs, desires, personal identity, and values. Consequently, by using the right words (signifiers), the desired mental concept (the signified) appears in the mind of the customer which nudges them to consider buying this product. Here are some of examples of Saussure’s theory in action on the website of one of the analysed brands (Table 5):

Table 5

<b>Signifiers</b>		
<p>Example 1: Words and expressions in relation to <b>movement as signifiers</b> for the idea freedom, multi-purposefulness and confidence which are desirable qualities according to many women: “The design allows you to <i>move confidently on land, in the water, at a party,</i>”</p> <p>Example 2: <b>Words describing water moving or simply capabilities that water represents such as moving quickly and agilely:</b> “<i>Ponds, puddles</i> have inspired us for this print. When you <i>throw a stone and water quickly spreads to the edges and back.</i>”</p>	<p>Example 1: Mentioning of <b>seasons changing, spring, flowers blooming, natural phenomena occurring in springtime, how nature takes its course:</b> “This print was created in <i>early February</i>, in anticipation of the <i>cold, wet March, melting snow, the first flowers</i>. It is a complex of <i>clay, dirty water and primroses.</i>”</p> <p>Example 2: <b>Language representative of images of wild nature, wild plants:</b> “<i>Sound of reed in the wind above the water</i> embodied in colour.”</p> <p>Example 3: For centuries, the natural world stayed intact until people started interfering in it. The following language hints at <b>the devastation brought by natural disasters, climate change, destructive impact humans are imposing on the</b></p>	<p>Example 1: Use of adjectives like ‘<b>sensual,</b>’ ‘<b>tactile,</b>’ ‘<b>voluptuous,</b>’ ‘<b>luscious.</b>’ The mentioned adjectives are marked by the passions of the body, sexually gratifying activities. They pertain to the physical senses and activities that induce pleasurable sensations. Descriptions of items using these words from the data: “Designed to make any activity more <i>sensual.</i>”</p> <p>Example 2: Mentioning of the most feminine body parts, with emphasis on <b>hips,</b></p>

	<p><b>planet:</b> “The print is inspired by <i>natural reliefs, tectonic changes</i>. “<i>Ribbed</i>” is the best word to describe this print.”</p>	<p><b>waste, thighs:</b> “This bodysuit construction is special. Item has stitching on the <i>chest, thighs, waist and hips.</i>”</p>
<b>The signified</b>		
<p>The images, physical representations of mental concepts above evoke certain ideas in the minds of customers, particularly: <b>multi-purposefulness, freedom of movement as if in the water; confidence.</b> Water has always been associated with rhythm and movement as well as freedom. Water that is flowing is constantly moving and it is free to do so. Therefore, any reference to water is using images of freedom. When it comes to clothing, most women want it to follow the shape of their body accentuating its most beautiful parts as well as feel comfortable wearing these clothes. It seems like the imagery of water moving inspire these exact thoughts in the reader who is exposed to the description of these items.</p>	<p>Examples 1 and 2 above are symbolic of such concepts as <b>Nature, beauty, preservation of natural resources, freshness, wildlife, intactness of nature.</b> These images stand for the brand’s respect and gratitude for nature. It reveals how important it is for the brand to preserve balance in nature. It is also a sign of the clothes’ origin, use of natural rather than synthetic material in their production.</p> <p>Example 3 additionally evokes mental concepts for <b>Earth, earth’s preservation, natural disasters, tectonic shifts.</b> This was done to demonstrate the brand’s strong stance against further deterioration of natural resources. It is meant to align with customers’ personal values, those which stand for an environmentally friendly way of living and conscious buying habits meant to prevent our planet from heating up and wildlife dying out as a result of that.</p>	<p>The signifiers listed above are representative of the <b>woman’s body, everything that is feminine about it.</b> It evokes concepts of <b>femininity, gentleness, seductiveness.</b> The description of clothes with such words subconsciously makes the customer believe that the clothes will <b>be body-flattering, pleasurable to wear, and might even make her look sexier.</b></p>

As illustrated above, brands use linguistic images to manipulate our subconsciousness. In this case, they are not very harmful; but there are instances when

fashion marketing teams use these against us: to cover 'greenwashing' or to deceive about the values of a particular brand.

The concept of '*femininity*' plays a huge part in this brand's development since it primarily sells body- and swimsuits for women. The representation of femininity through language have been studied before. However, the subject is not thoroughly researched through the prism of sustainable fashion.

In the study *Representation of Femininity: Grammatical Aspect (Cosmopolitan, Marie Claire and Glamour Magazines)* by Beloedova, the characteristics of the representation of "**female consciousness**" in the English language are explored.

The researchers found that among the abstract vocabulary, the subjectively psychological vocabulary (love, fidelity, happiness, betrayal) stands out clearly from the rational-logical vocabulary (mind, knowledge, career, talent), which they claim is a sign of predominantly **female language consciousness** (Beloedova et.al. 2017).

In this research too, we have found that more emotional vocabulary is used to appeal to the target audience which is women: "Every bodysuit or rashguard has a mission: *to inspire, to help, to add courage trying something new, to feel.*"

#### **3.3.4. Promoting road safety: #safefashion**

Going back to the topic of social issues currently being voiced through fashion in Ukraine, the theme of road safety is discussed by another Ukrainian sustainable brand. ROUSSIN started a hashtag #safefashion. This fashion initiative's primary goal is to improve road safety and decrease the number of pedestrian-related accidents. Additionally, the project has a big influence on education and teaching kids to be aware of their safety. The motto of the brand is: "*We will always promote **safe, responsible fashion** that reflects and reacts to current social problems. Changing the stereotypical view of reflective clothing and the culture of reflector consumption is possible through our project. In fact, clothes with reflective elements become noticeable at a distance of 100-130 meters in the dark or in poor visibility conditions, reducing the risk of an accident involving pedestrians by 6.5 times!*", - says designer Sofiia Rusynovych.

Linguistically, this sentence is a complex statement that showcases various features that make it effective for marketing purposes.

Firstly, the sentence uses persuasive language in promoting the brand's commitment to safe, responsible fashion. The use of the word "always" implies a strong sense of consistency, which is an essential factor in building brand trust.

Secondly, the sentence highlights the brand's ability to address current social issues. This is a critical aspect of marketing as consumers are increasingly conscious of social issues, and they are more likely to support brands that align with their values.

Thirdly, the sentence reveals a unique selling point of the product - its reflective elements. The language used to describe the reflective elements is factual and straightforward, making it easy for consumers to understand the benefits of the product.

Lastly, the sentence uses statistics to reinforce the benefits of the product, which is a persuasive technique used in marketing to build credibility and convince the audience to make a purchase.

The most important part of the campaign is that the brand stays consistent with its conscious agenda. The ROUSSIN team produced 3,000 fashionable backpacks with reflective accents as part of the first project put into action in 2020. This year, their team made 2,500 reflective backpacks and gave them away free of charge for kids in the city of Pavlograd, Dnipro region, who were of secondary school age (Illustration 8). In the project's description, mentioning of the exact number of backpacks given away reinforces the brand's credibility and gives additional proof as to whether the project is legitimate. Furthermore, combined with photos from the scene (schools where the project took place), the statements seem even more convincing.

Children in the city of Smila, Cherkasy region, who were of primary school age, received free backpacks as well. Because the founders of ROUSSIN, spent their formative years in Smila and because, according to them, "*global plans for change can only be realised by beginning with local changes,*" so the choice of the location was not random. The brand's motto, by the way, is "THINK GLOBALLY, ACT LOCALLY!" This motto is the perfect example of antithesis in English. A figure of speech known as an antithesis juxtaposes two opposing or contrasting ideas, typically

within parallel grammatical structures (adverbs in this case). “THINK GLOBALLY, ACT LOCALLY!” is an example of an antithesis because the two parts of the sentence are grammatically identical to one another, but when read as a whole, they highlight the stark contrast between considering global problems the world is faced with and the individual experience of taking action to eliminate them on a local level (Lorenz 2017 ).

In accordance with the brand’s sustainability claim, the backpacks were “made of *plastic bags and film*,” bringing the issue of plastic pollution to the public's attention and highlighting the importance of recycling encouraging the society to reconsider its consumption habits. So, with this project, the brand is not only trying to focus on one issue (road safety), but on various social issues, including plastic pollution. They are creating a number of causes under the umbrella of the phrase “safe society.”

The phrase "made of plastic bags and film" is linguistically significant as it draws attention to the widespread use of non-biodegradable plastic products. The use of the phrase "made of" implies that the material is not only composed of, but entirely comprised of plastic bags and film, emphasizing the extent of the pollution caused by such disposable products. Furthermore, by explicitly stating that the material is made of plastic bags and film, they change the narrative about the use of synthetic materials that have had a negative connotation in fashion for a long time and have been deemed as cheap, inorganic, unfashionable.

Other initiatives that advocate for this problem is the 2021 catwalk this brand did where models came out on stage wearing trash bags (Illustration 9).



*Illustration 8-9. Roussin's #safefashion collection and spring-summer catwalk. Taken from: About us (roussin.ua). catwalk spring-summer 2021 | NOT JUST A LABEL*

The idea of this collection was put in this way: *“When we – people – are born, we look like **a blank sheet of paper**, and all interactions with the world around us fill us with information, change us. We become who we are. And all our acts affect not only the fate of other people, but also the whole world. They can change the world and humanity both for the better and worse.”* Here, the brand cleverly uses the blank sheet metaphor. A blank piece of paper has a deep meaning that is connected to journeys because it serves as the beginning of every new journey. When we set out on a journey of any kind, we essentially begin with a spiritual blank page. We continue on our journey while chronicling its events on that piece of paper, weaving a narrative as we go. It is up to us where the journey will lead us.

The metaphor itself is not immediately apparent from the pictures. So, in this case, the text explains the brand's intended message.

In general, fashion depends highly on visuals. Whenever we analyse fashion and its language, we cannot omit the notion of multimodality when visuals influence us aesthetically, and verbal cues help us interpret symbols (Kress 2001).

Multimodality has become an integral part of fashion communication, particularly in the digital age where multiple channels are used to disseminate

information about fashion products and trends. The use of visual and verbal cues has allowed fashion brands to connect more effectively with their target audience by tapping into their cognitive and emotional responses. People are often drawn to fashion products based on their aesthetic appeal, which is influenced by the cognitive aspect of visuals. When fashion brands use visually appealing images or videos, it can stimulate different areas of the brain and evoke emotions that can positively influence the perception of the products. Verbal cues, such as product descriptions or captions, help people interpret the symbols used in fashion communication which can provide a deeper understanding of the products, leading to more informed purchasing decisions. By combining visual and verbal cues, multimodality offers an effective way for fashion brands to communicate their message, connect with their target audience, and ultimately increase sales.

### **3.3.5. Sex education and LGBTQ+ rights**

In Ukrainian society, the subject of sex was taboo for a very long time. A significant impact on sexual education was caused by the Soviet upbringing's imposition of social and religious frameworks. However, more and more innovative and forward-looking fashion houses are working towards changing that.

One example is ROUSSIN's social project "**under protection**" with the charity organization AHF Ukraine to promote **safe sex and sex education**. This cleverly packaged collection of vividly coloured hoodies, t-shirts, and accessories with clear condom pockets demonstrates peoples' openness to safe sexual activity and willingness to discuss wants and needs.

In the language used by the brand to explain the idea behind the collection, use of one peculiar stylistic device is quite self-evident, namely **alliteration (safe sex and sex education)**. The occurrence of the same letter or sound at the start of words that are close in proximity to one another is known as alliteration. Over the years, alliteration has been used in the fields of branding, marketing, and advertising for everything from brand names (Krispy Kreme, Circuit City, Range Rover, PayPal) to

sports teams (LA Lakers, KKR, Delhi Daredevils, Pittsburgh Pirates) to product lines (Tic-Tac, Grey Goose) (Dev 2017).

However, alliteration cannot only appear in the name of the brand but in the descriptions of projects, its agenda, etc.

Other examples of alliteration from the data include:

*“The brand's Commitment has been evident throughout all the Countless versatile garments perfect for Conscious Consumption and a busy lifestyle over the years,” “Sustainable and Sensational.”*

As successful retargeting campaigns have demonstrated, repetition helps a brand stick in the audience's mind and also makes an advertisement or marketing offer more effective.

In a way, alliteration functions similarly to the rules of repetition. One of the best ways to generate significant, predictable results is through repeated and regular linguistic cues.

They help deepen the receiver's connection to the brand by positively stimulating the brain. The brand-specific terms are simpler to recall and memorise if they use alliteration. The use of alliteration gives a brand fluidity, continuity, and a strong impact (Dev 2017).

The name of the collection **"under protection"** is **polysemantic** from a linguistic point of view which also contributes to the curiosity it evokes in consumers. The phenomenon known as polysemy is defined as when a single word form is connected to two or more related senses (Vincete and Falkum 2017).

The brand's main vision revolves around words **'safety'** and **'protection.'** However, **'protection'** does not only stand for **'safe sex.'** Their mission is to use fashion to solve the social problems of our time. The use of reflective elements for **road safety** and **the development of sustainable fashion for the safety of our planet** are both ingrained in the ROUSSIN DNA. Additionally, by using no-waste technologies to create items for the 'under protection' collection, including transparent pockets for condoms (Illustration 10), they combined their agendas, creating a powerful and all-encompassing message for their audience.



Illustration 10-11. Roussin's collection promoting sex education (taken from <https://roussin.ua/en/pod-zashhitoj-roussin-i-ahf-ukraina-vypustili-kapsulnuyu-kollekcziyu/>)

A sex life that is safe and healthy is what it means to be "**under protection**," according to the brand. Condoms should become an essential accessory in everyone's lifestyle today who is sexually active. A convenient way to always have a condom on hand is by having a special pocket for one on clothing ( [Roussin Online Store](#) ).

The project's visuals reflect a deep semantic load as well. The models played the part of students, the designer Sofia Rusynovych reprised the role of the lecturer, while the photoshoot took place inside university's walls (Illustration 11). The bright collection against the dull background of the old classroom walls symbolises sexual education, which is still influenced by stereotypes and taboos despite gradually gaining popularity in Ukraine.

As for the purpose of the rainbow print, it was employed "*to overcome the stereotypical attitude of society toward the idea of belonging to one color, to one gender, we used the rainbow print as the color of the LGBTQ community in our collection,*" says Sofiia Rusynovych.

An interesting finding was that the brand refers to '*belonging to one color*' as if it was a metaphor for '*belonging to one gender.*' It could be accounted for by a long-

standing belief in the cognitive system of Ukrainian people that certain genders correspond to certain colors (pink – for girls, blue –for boys). There was research done on the topic a couple years ago. As part of the experiment for the study, 206 participants, aged 20 to 26, were asked to divide rectangles into specific colour combinations at Newcastle University. Both men and women preferred the colour blue in one section of the study. These participants were later given a wider range of colours to choose from. Men's preferences were more diverse, but women had a stereotypical preference for reddish hues. The researchers came to the conclusion that gender-specific colour preferences do exist and not only in eastern Europe since the majority of the participants were of Chinese origin (Rapaport 2014) Therefore, in linguistic studies, colors can often be seen as contextual synonyms for gender. However, it is important to recognize their fluidity and variability in different cultural and historical contexts. Additionally, nowadays the rainbow colors have acquired the meaning 'diversity of genders and sexual orientation.'

In summary, fashion initiatives like the ones mentioned throughout this subchapter implemented by the ROUSSIN brand continue to set a good example for other Ukrainian cities in terms of enhancing traffic safety, fight against pollution, and safe sex. It also helps Ukraine form and develop a responsible, socially conscious, and safe fashion industry.

From a linguistic and marketing perspective, implementing language that focuses on important social issues of today has proven to be an effective beacon for new customers, especially those deemed as a younger generation of customers. Being "woke" and socially minded, thinking not only about one's profit but also about how to better our communities, appear to be core values when it comes to successful fashion brands that are bringing in a large following.

Additionally, the linguistic devices analysed in the process of looking at what social issues are driving Ukrainian fashion brands to stardom are meant to give an idea to other, perhaps more newly established, brands how to leverage language in a way that will increase their chances of success. Among those, alliteration, polysemy, antithesis, metaphor, female language consciousness, contextual synonyms,

multimodality, linguistic signs (signified and signifier), word-formation patterns like blending, use of the Uses and Gratification theory were mentioned.

### **3.4. Going back to one's roots as the primary vision for sustainable fashion in Ukraine**

Ukrainian sustainable fashion has many different themes, but returning to one's roots is the one that stands out the most. In this subchapter, we look at the language that brands of Ukrainian origin use as a tool to leverage that idea.

The Ukrainian influence has fully penetrated closets of people from all around the world. Due to the dire circumstances of war, Ukraine has been at the forefront of international thought quite a bit recently (and not for particularly pleasant reasons), but its reach has extended far beyond all the monstrosity inflicted by Russia. Particularly now, when a sense of unity is reverberating through the Ukrainian society. Ukrainians have historically tried to distance themselves from the idea that their nation is just "Little Russia" for centuries. According to one school of thought, the recent popularity of Ukrainian clothing goes beyond mere fashion or drawing the world's attention to the unlawful invasion of the country and serves as a *unifying symbol*. According to Daria Shapovalova, creative director of Mercedes-Benz Kiev Fashion Days, "I think that all type of vyshyvankas are extremely beautiful and I am proud to see people wearing them, but to me fashion in the sense of culture is not about obvious references. I think [traditional dress] is connected to the fact that Ukraine is experiencing a moment of self-realization." (Satenstein 2015).

Indeed, now is the ideal time to unite the country against the aggressor. And, as it turns out, the fashion industry may just be the catalyst for both the unification of the Ukrainian people to finally stand as one and the mobilisation of the West to stand with Ukraine against the greater evil. However, as we all know, clothing's aesthetic value cannot achieve this goal on its own; rather, language must play a significant role in the success of these efforts.

*How the Language We Use to Bring about Unity* by Atkinson (2023) tells us that a new narrative of our 'wholeness' is required to frame this emerging

interconnectedness as we move towards a consciousness of global integration. The time has come for humanity to once again unite through narratives that express the unified nature of reality in order to ensure our own survival. The stories brands create to tell about themselves must be unifying. Language that is consciously chosen to come from and speak to the heart possesses a healing power that can mend the scars left by the horrors of war. The fundamental quality of wholeness is unity. We will be able to live into the realisation that wholeness is all there is if we comprehend this and put it into practise in everything we do, especially in the language we use (Atkinson 2022, 2023).

So how does one use language to achieve unity? Let us respond to this query using examples of the language used by Ukrainian brands. According to the data, some of the words and phrases that are frequently used to represent unity are:

*Together as one; integrity, inclusivity, diversity (listed as values); stand in solidarity; unite the nation; unification; unified society; reunification; unity; united front; together as a whole; wholeness; form a fashion coalition; harmony; balance; protect the democracy; equality, equal society; sovereignty is under threat; Ukraine’s allies, alliance; prosperity; harmonious society; based on friendship; territorial integrity; independence; patriotic motifs; a sense of belonging; etc.*

Among other ways to unite people through language and fashion is to remind them of their common past and long forgotten traditions (Table 6):

Table 6

Language used by the brand	Name of the brand	Representation of the idea in clothing
“We must be <i>mindful of our traditions</i> and try to use something that we have <i>accumulated over the centuries</i> that is really <i>the DNA of the country.</i> ”	Fashion House Ivanova	The eponymous label IVANOVA incorporates traditional shapes and patterns with cutting-edge modern tailoring, taking inspiration from the garb of the Carpathian hill tribes, the Hutsuls.
“...a collection inspired by <i>rich Ukrainian culture and incredible nature.</i> ”	Navro Brand	Olga Navrotsky used a powerful finale in one

<p>“...connecting with ancestors and realizing their own <i>identity</i> can give them confidence in future victory.”</p>		<p>of her latest collections where a wedding dress of the legendary Princess Olga was show casted.</p>
<p>Our collections are <i>reminiscent of ancient roots</i> and say who we are now. “Gaptuvalnya” are <i>our roots, our present, people who love themselves and their work</i>.</p> <p>Created many generations ago, <i>traditional patterns</i> have much more than a purely aesthetic component – a <i>manifesto of love for Ukrainian traditions and values</i>. Right now, Ukrainians need this energy more than ever: <i>connecting with ancestors and realizing their own identity</i> can give them <i>confidence in the future, give them hope and faith</i>.</p> <p>The founder of the brand Natalia Gergeliuk adopted the passion for embroidered clothes in <i>her own family, inspired from childhood by the aesthetics and strength of traditional Ukrainian ornaments</i>.</p>	<p>Gaptuvalnya a</p>	<p>Gaptuvalnya uses authentic Ukrainian embroidery in their clothing.</p>

It should also be pointed out that the traditions and the idea of going back to one’s roots is realised through the merging of the contemporary and the old: “*The brand explores the concept of ethnicity through the lens of modern clothing in order to demonstrate its relevance.*” ([Gaptuvalnya website](#)); “The brand team studies and reflects the traditions of these people in modern women's clothing, using innovative, environmentally friendly or stock fabrics.” (FRAMIORE brand website).

There are also more abstract themes present in the collections of Ukrainian brands that are nevertheless closely connected with the war and the impact it has had on the society, such as those by Ukrainian designer Anton Schnaider from KSENIASCHNAIDER. He considered how people around the world view Ukraine when creating prints for their collections. The use of fuzzy traditional Ukrainian ornaments conveys the idea of uncertainty in the Ukrainian society. The idea of preserving Ukrainian culture and going back to one’s roots is also explored by the same

brand and is unquestionably in the spotlight: Traditional roots are here to stay, whether it is in Kyiv—or Paris.

Some brands such as Gaptuvalnya went as far as incorporate the idea of appreciating one's roots, history, and cultural identity into the name of the brand. "*We are paving our path and fighting for it; we are not afraid; we are brave and courageous. Because we are Ukrainians,*" explains Natalia Gergeliuk, the brand's founder. "*Gaptuvalnya*" is derived from the word "*haptuvaty*" (to embroider with gold or silver). This word has two meanings, a literal and a metaphorical one: 'embroidering' and 'treading the path,' or 'going your own way.'

Lastly, it has to be mentioned that the idea of going back to one's roots in Ukrainian fashion is directly connected with using ecologically clean materials and protecting the environment. In the past, it was customary for native Ukrainians to make one's own clothes out of natural materials such as hemp, cotton, silk, and wool, as well as clay, glass, and wood. Natural materials ensured product durability and were safer/healthier to wear on the body. Furthermore, our forefathers had a close relationship with nature. Ukrainian people have been closely watching the surrounding world and natural phenomena since ancient times. These observations evolved into a universe-knowledge system. So, knowledge of weather phenomena became the system of folk meteorology; knowledge of plants became the systems of folk botany; and observations of celestial bodies became the system of folk astronomy (Sobolieva 2021). They used this knowledge to improve working conditions, make healthy foods and clothes.

Nowadays, Ukrainian brands making organic clothing and jewelry allows you to conserve natural resources in the event of excessive consumption, make them more durable and healthier for the body. We will next attempt to analyse the language used by Ukrainian brands to represent the motif of favouring ecologically clean materials and the reasons for that.

First and foremost, there is mentioning of the use of 'natural fabric' ("*...so it only uses **natural** fabrics and pays attention to material distribution,*" *Biblioteque's garments are made from **natural** fabrics..*"). In addition, the authors did not fail to

specify what the fabric is made of, what the exact plants used for the production of these clothes were (“...*ecological footwear from natural hemp,*” “*fully sustainable materials, ...such as coffee and flower petals, sunflowers, marigolds, and cornflowers.*”). The latter gives credibility to their claims since, as we have concluded earlier, it is of paramount importance to be as transparent as possible when establishing a sustainable business. Some brands emphasise the location of their production to make the offer more appealing and trustworthy (...“*coffee and flower petals grown in Ukrainian fields.*”). In the fashion industry, a brand that produces and purchases materials locally is ultimately sustainable without even acknowledging it. As a result, by asserting the origin, the Ukrainian soil, they inevitably cancel their brand as unsustainable.

As for the grammar, there seems to be an evident preference for the **passive voice** in sentences representing the eco proofness of Ukrainian brands. The passive serves a goal of putting the emphasis on what happens to the garments instead of on who the performer is. Otherwise, the sentence would include too many unnecessary details. By using the passive voice, the author can easily take the reader’s focus to what is the most important:

*“Each FRAMIORE item is handmade..”*

*“Each Broq piece is carefully crafted and designed to be very wearable.”*

*“The glasses are made of fully sustainable materials..”*

*“Biblioteque’s garments are made from natural fabrics and are sewn in small batches.”*

Another stylistic feature that comes into play for this part of the analysis, it pervasive use of **personification** (giving inanimate objects human or animal characteristics). A brand is still an inanimate object, but the owners of some quite successful brands appear to be trying to give their creations a soul with the help of personification. This is done so that buying from that particular brand would feel more like a personal affair, as if dealing with a person that has values, ideas, that is capable of feeling and evoking feelings in others. On the other hand, use of personification lets people know that there is not only one person behind its success (the designer), but that

it takes a village to make all the concepts devised by the designer a reality. And lastly, personification assimilates a brand to a breathing, living being with its own independence hinting at the fact that in the case of the designed who established it disappearing from the picture, it will live. Some examples from the data:

*“Gaptuvalnya **follows** ecological production principles..”(A brand cannot follow certain principles, this is a quality of a person : to have values, standards, follow a tenet, principle).*

*“Ochis eyewear company **firmly believes...**” (A brand cannot believe, it does not have a heart or a mind. However, this sentence creates an allusion that it does.)*

*“Hanftek **insists** that ecological footwear from natural hemp maintains a healthy microclimate of the foot.” (A brand is not capable on insisting or coming up with a theory. These mental processes belong to living creatures. Nevertheless, the phrasing of this sentence sounds much more convincing with a touch of personification to it).*

Furthermore, the idea that one can prevent excessive consumption by using organically grown fabric is addressed through the following words which make use of **anaphora** (a type of repetition which involves repeating words at the beginning of clauses). In our case, it is the repetition of the prefix **over-** (*“Each FRAMIORE item is handmade and custom only to avoid **overproduction** and **over-consumption.**”*) It highlights what is being said and leaves a mental imprint on consumers (repetition has this effect on our mind) suggesting that they should cut back on this behaviour themselves. The prefix over- signals that there is too much of something.

The appeal of natural materials is created by listing the very reason they are the best fits from the point of view of sustainability. This is done with the help of words ending in **-able** that express longevity of products made from this type of fabric:

*“Each Broq piece is carefully crafted and designed to be very **wearable.**”*

*“The glasses are made of fully sustainable materials made to be **durable.**”*

Finally, we would like to draw your attention to the connotations ascribed to the word ‘Ukraine’ in this statement: *“Ochis eyewear company **firmly believes in Ukraine's natural wealth and strong connection to the Earth.**”*

The connotation of a word refers to the social, cultural, or emotional connotations that a person may have when using that word. For instance, the word "Ukraine" nowadays evokes ideas of "war," "warzone," and "danger." But in the sentence above, the brand seems to want to add an additional meaning to this word reminding people of the rich natural resources that Ukraine has to offer. The words "*Ukraine's natural wealth*" and "*strong connection to the Earth*" attach a "wealth of resources" connotation to the word and, essentially, the country in this context, as we can see. It is indeed a very positive connotation that puts Ukraine and its fashion industry at an advantage. This might just be selling itself out of all the other phrases since it also evokes a feeling of being one with the planet. No matter the fact that a lot of consumers live in cities, we all long for a connection with nature, it inspires us, heals our body and soul.

### **CHAPTER 3. CONCLUSIONS**

The third chapter included a corpus-based and discourse analysis of the websites and social media pages of Ukrainian fashion brands. The most salient findings were:

Ukrainian brands' terms were more precise, including information about the residual materials used to make the clothing ('hand-assembled, "made from leftovers, "made from scraps, "made from discarded cutaways'). This was done to capitalise on the transparency that underpins their sustainability claims in order to foster a trusting relationship with customers.

Expressions such as *'reworked,' 'leftovers,' and 'hand-assembled'* are used in lieu of more common ones in the UK such as *'upcycled,' 'scraps,' 'hand-made'* due to the language having a direct connection to our cultural background and social identity.

The narrative plot of limitations in Ukrainian sustainable fashion was represented by words like *'custom-made,' 'one-of-a-kind,' 'limited-edition,' 'exclusive,'* etc. The Russian invasion influenced the concept of limited clothing. The concept of limited-edition clothing made under impossible conditions is a way for Ukrainian brands to continue operating and a clever way to raise prices on such pieces to compensate for the decrease in production.

Brands provide customers with a much-needed sense of belonging to a group by highlighting and raising awareness of various issues that Ukrainian society is currently facing, as well as relevant information about pervasive issues to share with friends, peers, and colleagues (Uses and Gratification theory). Among the social issues discussed are:

- 1) Conservation of natural resources.
- 2) The decline of marine life in the Black Sea due to the Russian invasion.
- 3) Promoting road safety.
- 4) Sex education and LGBTQ right.

Certain linguistic means were used to strengthen the above-mentioned strategy such as alliteration, polysemy, antithesis, metaphor, female language consciousness, linguistic signs (signified and signifier), word-formation patterns like blending, use of the Uses and Gratification theory.

Finally, the idea of going back to one's roots was embodied by extensive use of the words denoting unity, allusion to traditions of the past, connecting the idea to using ecologically clean materials and protecting the environment through the passive voice, personification, anaphora, suffix *-able*, changing of the frames prescribed to the word *'Ukraine.'*

## **GENERAL CONCLUSIONS**

The corpus-assisted analysis of the language around sustainable fashion has shed light on the current attitudes and discourse surrounding sustainable fashion and has provided with a range of manipulative linguistic tactics used by brands to promote their products as sustainable.

Research into sustainable fashion and its language is a diverse field for interdisciplinary research. The overview of previous papers in the field allowed to pinpoint the history, meaning, and importance of fast and slow fashion, provided with

an analysis of preexisting English vocabulary used to express sustainable fashion, pandemic-induced changes in the industry, and examples of how brands leverage sustainable fashion on social media through language. Additionally, use of corpus linguistics and critical discourse analysis is justified by the large amount of data and a need for a combination of methods to produce reliable research findings. Ecolinguistics, framing theory, Uses and Gratification theory, cognitive linguistics, and semiotics are discussed in terms of providing a foundation for deeper analysis. The conclusion is drawn that fashion is connected to various fields, and critical insights can only emerge through cross-disciplinary observation of language in the evolving sustainable fashion industry.

The investigation of the language around sustainable fashion in the online space was carried out with the help of a corpus and discourse analysis of 10000 Twitter messages retrieved with the online tool TAGS. It was broken down into 3 subsections. The first subsection was focused on identifying any linguistic and word-formation patterns in the hashtags used to elaborate on the topic of sustainable fashion online either by consumers or brands promoting their products. It was concluded that 95% of all tweets contained at least one hashtag. The hashtags which occurred in more than 2000 tweets were then classified according to Daer, Hoffmann, and Goodman's classification of hashtags within the Internet's cognitive structures: emphasising, criticising, identifying, iterating, and rallying. Rallying and critiquing hashtags were among mostly widespread in the category of 'sustainable fashion.

Another finding was that abbreviations seem to take a prominent place among other types of hashtags. The most frequently appearing included: #ootd, #EthicalOOTD, #PAYUP, #af (affordable fashion), #al (affordable luxury), #MAKESMTHNG. As seen from the examples, there appears to be a tendency to use abbreviations and hashtags to shed light on the issues that fast fashion has birthed such as a fail to provide fair wages for garment workers, fashion becoming a luxury, and fail to recycle clothes. As for the type of word form and its popularity with the Twitter community, acronyms and abbreviations are considered part of netspeak which are

meant to speed up message typing, conserve time, and serve as economical expressions to keep discussions flowing.

The second category of hashtags related to the sustainable fashion segment of Twitter content that could be identified were words with the prefixes re-, pre-, and -de, which are used to convey the true meaning of sustainable clothing — “make old clothes suitable for reuse” (#recycle, #rewear, #rethink, #preloved, and #detoxfashion). In the process of analysing the above-mentioned hashtags, terms like ‘thriftling’ and ‘thrift-flipping’ emerged. Looking at the etymology of these words helped arrive at the conclusion that there are certain misconceptions and negative connotations surrounding the activity of thrifting in our culture. However, by embracing the original positive connotations of this word, the media and big organizations are trying to change the narrative previously associated with thrifting. Whether through linguistic or marketing means, or both, the terms surrounding the sustainable fashion sector are expanding and gaining new connotations as a result of global economic and social changes, as well as a strong shift in people's mindsets towards a more ethical and sustainable way of life.

One more conspicuous syntactic pattern discovered was a distinct preference for V+Adj to V+Adverb in hashtags such as #shoplocal, #shopsmall, #shopslow. There might be two reasons for this evolution of language: 1) It is less time-consuming to use adjectives instead of adverbs in online communication and the phrase then fits into the frame of a hashtag better; 2) These intentional grammar slip-ups often only happen in either spoken language and have migrated to online communication where they are considered necessary evils to make the conversation flow smoothly and easily. Whichever it is, this discovery only emphasizes the idea that English grammar is constantly changing, and the concept of a standard is gradually but steadily fading.

Next, the metaphorical interpretations of the colour “green” in representation of sustainable fashion online were investigated. Green has grown in importance in fashion discourse, as evidenced by expressions such as #weargreen, green fashion, green trend, green policy, and #gogreen. It appears in >3500 (>35%) in the analyzed data. Among the hashtags that employ the word “green,” the color green is both used to promote

greenness in fashion, rally people together for this cause (#weargreen, #Gogreen), and to scorn those companies who pretend to be sustainable but are actually doing very little to contribute to the movement (#greenwashing, #greenflation). This is evident of the fact that the colour “green” in English (specifically in the semantic field of sustainable fashion) can have both positive and negative qualities.

Further linguistic analysis was performed on other words and expression related to sustainable fashion, excluding hashtags. Firstly, new coinages denoting a type of shopper who engages in conscious shopping were identified: cyan-shoppers, thrifters, and greenies, with “greenie” being the most frequently occurring term. Two of them were formed with the help of a derivational suffix –er, while “greenie” is a diminutive form used colloquially. “Greenie” was concluded to be the broadest term encompassing the two others, with “thrifter” having the narrowest meaning limited to ‘thrifting’ only.

Secondly, some fashion terms turned out to be loan words (such as moda, pumps, jacket, stilettos, etc,) which were then categorized into loan blends and shifts according to Haugen. This part of research is important in a way that it provides the fashion community with an understanding of how the pronunciation of certain fashion-related terms changed due to the process of borrowing. This knowledge in turn can help avoid misunderstanding among non-native speakers of English who often say words the way they are pronounced in their native language without paying attention to the phonemic adjustments that happened to this word.

Thirdly, various derivational patterns were discovered such as use of the suffix “-able” (*traceable, verifiable, accountable*) to describe trustworthiness of sustainable fashion brands and V-ing words for actions of cyan-shoppers and alleged environmentally friendly corporations: *Recycling, Thrifting, Regenerating, Upcycling, Thrift-flipping, Greenwashing, Carbon offsetting*.

The websites of well-known world brands such as Burberry, H&M, and Zara employ the misleading language that draws on greenwashing. Discourse analysis of the websites points out extensive use of: generic and ambiguous language as well as sustainability claims used without any specifics or proof of adhering to them; baseless claims often wrapped in buzzwords such as ‘circular,’ ‘close the loop,’ ‘modern

material used;’ positive language (‘less,’ ‘reduce,’ ‘minimize’) and reiteration of it throughout the website which promote a positive attitude to the author of the said words (i.e. the brand) as well as leads to faster decision-making on a psychological level; another set of manipulative language includes that one which evokes ‘a moral responsibility:’ ‘conscious,’ ‘ethical,’ ‘drive change,’ ‘go beyond,’ ‘support the planet,’ ‘protect,’ ‘take action,’ ‘fight against.’

The third chapter is a corpus-based and discourse analysis of the websites and social media pages of Ukrainian fashion brands such as KSENIASCHNAIDER, O(FourFour), Broq, Bibliotheque, etc. For this portion of research, a separate 7000-word DIY corpus was created.

The narrative plot of limitations in Ukrainian sustainable fashion was explored, where words like ‘*custom-made*,’ ‘*one-of-a-kind*,’ ‘*limited-edition*,’ ‘*exclusive*,’ etc. represent the idea. The idea of limited clothing was partially influenced by the Russian invasion. Seeing how it is virtually impossible to produce the amount of clothes needed to sustain the business during a full-scale war, the concepts of *limited-edition* clothing made under unbelievable circumstances was a way for these brands to keep operating and a clever way to raise prices on such pieces to make up for the decrease in production.

Furthermore, it was identified that various social issues are driving the linguistic and visual packaging of brands in Ukraine. Social and environmental issues, which many people believe to be the defining issues of our time, are of great concern to younger consumers. As a result, they are more often demonstrating their beliefs through their purchasing decisions, favouring companies that share their values and avoiding those that do not (Amed et.al. 2019). Ukrainian brands also understand the importance of positioning their label as ‘*woke*’ as possible but do it in accordance with country-specific social issues. In this, they follow the principles of the Uses and Gratifications theory by Blumler and Katz. By highlighting and raising awareness of various issues the Ukrainian society is facing at the moment, brands give customers a much-needed sense of belonging to a group, provide them with relevant information

about pervasive issues to share with friends, peers, colleagues. Some of the social issues highlighted include:

- 1) Conservation of natural resources (use of words with the prefix eco-; descriptive use language focused on Ukraine's natural scenery).
- 2) The decline of marine life in the Black Sea due to the Russian invasion (O (FourFour)'s "Black Sea" collection serves as an allusion to this issue).
- 3) Promoting road safety (the polysemous use of the hashtag #safefashion denoting both use of reflective fabric to ensure road safety for children and use of sustainable materials as a means to reduce the impact of the fashion industry on the planet).
- 4) Sex education and LGBTQ rights (reinforcement of Roussin's mission by using words like 'safety' and 'protection' and their various connotational meanings; use of the metaphorical 'belonging to one color' to advocate for LGBTQ rights).

From a linguistic and marketing perspective, implementing language that highlights current social issues has proven to be effective in attracting younger customers. Among the linguistic devices used to strengthen the impact of said technique are: alliteration, polysemy, antithesis, metaphor, female language consciousness, linguistic signs (signified and signifier), word-formation patterns like blending, use of the Uses and Gratification theory.

One of the final findings is that one related to the idea of going back to one's roots in Ukrainian sustainable fashion. According to this research, Ukraine was in a dire need of unification at the start of war. The language of the fashion industry changed greatly in the attempts to unite the West and Ukrainian people for one single goal – victory against the aggressor. According to the data, this goal manifested itself in the extensive use of words and phrases denoting unity (*stand in solidarity; unite the nation; unity; united front; together as a whole; form a fashion coalition; etc.*) as well as mentions of once cherished traditions of the past in descriptions of the analysed brands' agendas and collections ("Our collections are *reminiscent of ancient roots* and say who we are now," "... a *manifesto of love for Ukrainian traditions and values*). It was also revealed that the idea of going back to one's roots in Ukrainian fashion is

directly connected with using ecologically clean materials and protecting the environment. In the old days, natural materials ensured product durability and were safer/healthier to wear on the body. Nowadays, Ukrainian brands making organic clothing and jewelry allows you to conserve natural resources in the event of excessive consumption, make them more durable and healthier for the body. Some of the linguistics means to express this concept were:

1) The passive voice which put the emphasis on what happens to the garments instead of on who the performer is.

2) Personification (buying from that particular brand would feel more like a personal affair).

3) Anaphora (“...*overproduction and over-consumption.*”) It highlights what is being said and leaves a mental imprint on consumers.

4) Suffix **-able** that express longevity of products (*durable, wearable*).

5) Shifting of the frames associated with the word ‘Ukraine’ from "war," "warzone," and "danger" to "*natural wealth*" and "*strong connection to the Earth.*"

The paper yielded some thought-provoking results which promise to render themselves useful not only for the linguistics community but also researchers interested in brand management, brand identity, and linguistic packaging of successful sustainable fashion brands. Additionally, the study aims to increase non-native English speakers' knowledge of the increasingly broad field of sustainable fashion as well as their vocabulary and grammatical proficiency in the selected semantic domain.

Prospects for future studies might involve examining the differences between the language used in texts promoting sustainable fashion and those promoting conventional (i.e. unsustainable) fashion as well as the formation and dissemination of sustainable fashion discourse across different contexts (e.g. media, academia, etc.).

## SUMMARY

The **topic** of the MA degree paper is “Corpus Analysis of the Language Around Sustainable Fashion.”

The **topicality** of the research is stipulated by the role played by numerous neologisms that have sprung into use in the English language as a result of the rise of sustainable fashion over the last couple of years as well as by the absence of in-depth

linguistic analysis of the discourse in the field within the framework of Lexicology, Sociolinguistic Studies, Semiotics, Word Formation, and Stylistics.

**The aim of the present study** is to examine the language utilized within the semantic field of sustainable fashion in order to explore 1. new developments in language on social media, 2. use of manipulative linguistic techniques, and 3. effective language practices to elevate one's brand, using the inventory of Sociolinguistics.

The objective set foresees fulfilling of the following **objectives**: identify linguistic theories that can be used to analyze language on the topic of sustainable fashion; pinpoint the most common language manipulation strategies used in online advertisements of sustainable fashion; study the Morphology, Syntax, Semantics, Stylistics, and Pragmatics of the language relating to sustainable fashion; examine how speakers use language around sustainable fashion in context to convey intended meaning, including social and cultural factors that influence communication.

**The subject of this study** is the language employed in relation to sustainable fashion used by brands as well as consumers. **The object of this research** is lexical, stylistic, morphological, semantic, syntactical, pragmatic features and manipulative strategies used in the discourse around sustainable fashion.

**Methods used.** Quantitative data analysis in the form of a corpus-based analysis, which allowed for the identification of metrics such as frequency of usage; qualitative data analysis in the form of discourse analysis which revealed more information about factors like word formation, cohesion, syntax, new coinages, morphology, stylistic devices, complexity of the terminology, and use of imagery. Critical discourse analysis was the predominant type of discourse analysis used. It allowed to examine the language in relation to its social setting. Other research methods included the triangulation methodology and the Interview.

**The novelty of the topic** lies in the intersection of two different fields - sustainability and language analysis. By combining these two fields, the study can shed light on how the language is used to frame the discourse around sustainable fashion, what kind of narratives are being constructed, and how they shape our

understanding of sustainable fashion. The analysis also helps understand the complexities involved in promoting sustainable fashion practices.

**The practical significance** of the findings is determined by their ability to be used in Practical English courses as well as theoretical and practical courses in Lexicology, Discourse Analysis, Communication Studies, Semantics, and Sociolinguistics. Additionally, the study offers insights into how fashion brands utilize web-based communications to convey brand personality, manipulate customers with the help of verbal and non-verbal means or to generate more interest in the brand. It also provides a helpful methodology that fashion businesses can adopt to make sure they are effectively communicating the intended brand personality, their sustainability goals and accomplishments.

The paper consists of an **introduction** that highlights the relevance, object, subject, aim and objectives, actual material of the study, reveals its scientific novelty and relevance, theoretical and practical significance.

The **first chapter** reveals the entire theoretical and methodological foundation for this research.

**The second chapter** is a corpus-based analysis of the language around sustainable fashion in online communication and well as the language used by alleged sustainable UK brands.

Finally, **the third chapter** is the linguistic analysis of Ukrainian sustainable fashion.

The **conclusions** set out the main theoretical and practical results proposed in the paper and determined the prospects for further scientific research.

There is also a list of references, list of illustrative material, appendices, and a summary at the end.

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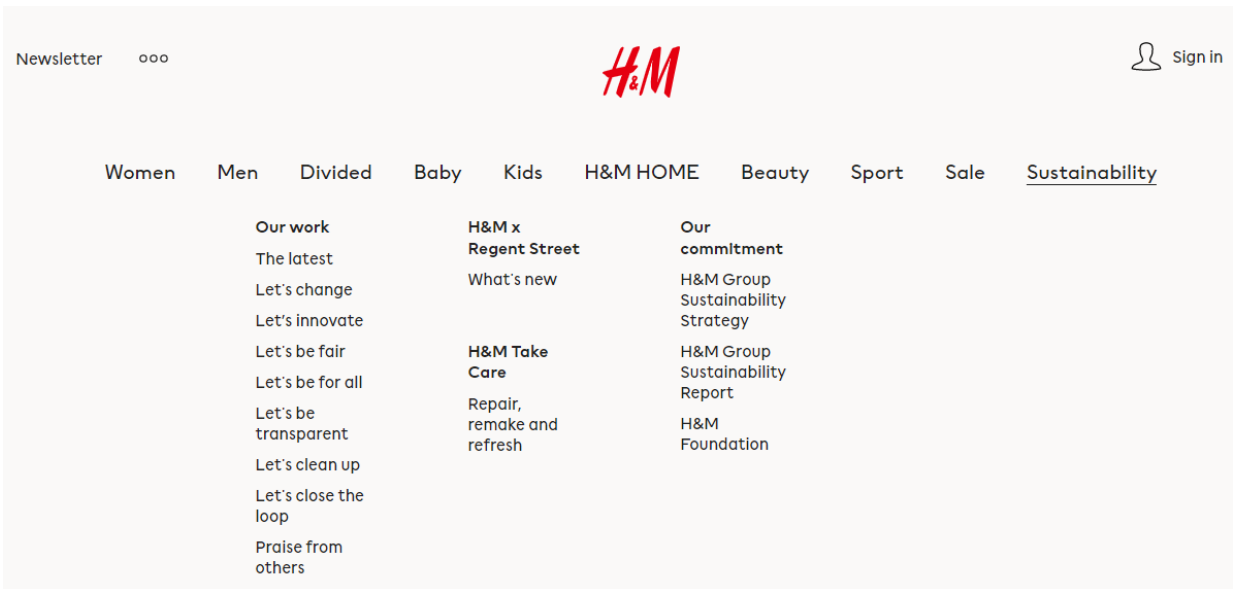
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## APPENDICES



## Appendix 1

# Let's clean up

Just like our food and water, we like our clothes toxic-free.

## Appendix 2



## Appendix 3



## PUFFER JACKET

Stand out in this hot pink puffer jacket with shell, lining and padding made from recycled polyester. The shell fabric is sourced from REPREVE® Our Ocean® – a collection of fibres sourced from ocean-bound bottles. All textile materials are mono fibre to further enable recycling.

### Appendix 4

## H&M is again the biggest user of organic cotton in the world

thousands of cotton farmers to grow more cotton with **less water** and less chemicals through trainings

### Appendix 5



NEWS · 17 MAR, 2022

H&M's latest collaboration with illustrator Liunic embraces of kids' creativity the techniques is digital printing, which consumes **less water**, **less energy** and **less chemicals** than traditional printing. Each piece has also been ...

### Appendix 6



NEWS · 29 MAR, 2021

H&M's Colour Story collection puts a contemporary, sustainable spin on colour dyeing techniques

only create unique and charming colours but have **less** impact on the environment. Carefully crafted earthy tones give the collection a soothing, ...

### Appendix 7

NEWS · 31 OCT, 2012

## Latest update on chemical management

Since 1995, H&M has been working actively to **reduce** the use and impact of hazardous chemicals.

## Appendix 8

NEWS · 20 AUG, 2015

### New denim styles at H&M help close the loop for more sustainable fashion

only minimize textile waste, but also significantly **reduce** the need for virgin resources as well as other impacts fashion has on our planet," says ...

## Appendix 9



NEWS · 10 MAR, 2022

### H&M's latest denim collection innovates with water-saving processes

chemical intensive printing processes. And to further **minimize** water usage, H&M worked with suppliers who used recycling water systems ...

## Appendix 10

NEWS · 24 AUG, 2015

### H&M at World Water Week

lines. H&M does this to protect the environment, **minimize** risks in our operations and to secure the availability of water. To get an overview of ...

NEWS · 20 AUG, 2015

### New denim styles at H&M help close the loop for more sustainable fashion

"Creating a closed loop for textiles, in which unwanted clothes can be recycled into new ones, will not only **minimize** textile waste, but also ...

## Appendix 11

[SORT BY](#) ▾ | [COLOUR](#) ▾ | [B CONSCIOUS](#) ✓ | [Reset All](#)



Vintage Check Nylon Baby Changing Bag

£950



Leather Trim Nylon Baby Changing Backpack

£650

LIMITED AVAILABILITY

## Appendix 12