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This issue of the *International Journal of Language and Culture* is devoted to how the aesthetic ideas of 'beautiful' and 'ugly' are conceptualised in different languages and, hence, cultures. Within the framework of Folk Aesthetics--that is, the analysis of the meanings that are coded in the linguistic expression of aesthetic concepts--, the authors in this volume tackle the concepts of 'beautiful' and 'ugly' in different European, Slavic, Iranian, Asian and Sinitic languages like English, Spanish, Danish, Russian, Japanese, Persian or Mandarin Chinese. The analyses offered are eminently corpus-based and, therefore, data-driven. They depart from the assumption that the terms employed in the above-mentioned languages to refer to what is beautiful and what is ugly encode different culture-specific assumptions and ways of looking at the world that may be deconstructed and scrutinised using cognitive and corpus linguistics methods. In this sense, the theoretical ideas explored are not only relevant in the area of Cultural Linguistics but also in the disciplines of Corpus and Cognitive Linguistics.

The research reported is of considerable relevance in the field of Cognitive Linguistics for two main reasons. Firstly, as the editors mention in the Introduction, very little attention has been devoted to how humans conceptualise these aesthetic ideas and what their conceptualisation can reveal about the underlying assumptions in specific cultures. Secondly, and perhaps less explicitly stated, the development of the discipline of Folk Aesthetics goes hand in hand with the study of aesthetic concepts on the part of emotion researchers, who consider beauty and ugliness not exclusively as aesthetic ideas but as embodied phenomena (see Menninghaus et al., and Fingerhut and Prinz). In this sense, the studies offered in this volume are individually aimed at determining the meanings that are prototypically associated with 'beautiful' and 'ugly' in the languages analysed with a view to giving rise to a theoretical background that, down the line, will be solid enough

to assess the extent to which these ideas are consistently experienced universally across languages and cultures.

The issue comprises seven papers preceded by an introduction by Gladkova and Romero-Trillo in which they present the reader with an overview of the research that has been carried out regarding the linguistic conceptualisation of aesthetic ideas as well as some suggestions for future research in the study of folk aesthetics. They place special emphasis not only on their own research on the linguistic expression of aesthetic ideas in Present-Day English, Spanish and Russian, but also on different languages and cultures in which beauty is associated with morality. They justify the linguistic approach to the study of aesthetics by pointing out how very frequently the ideas of ‘beauty’ and ‘ugliness’ are associated with other phenomena, like space, colour or light. Similarly, they argue for a broader perspective on the study of aesthetic phenomena that allows for a consideration of these ideas in the framework of art but also in everyday situations. In short, they lay down the foundations of the theoretical ideas on which the volume will be based.

The first paper is authored by Carsten Levisten. In it, the author looks into some Danish aesthetic terminology, particularly the adjectives *pæn*, *flot*, *dejlig* and *lækker*, which are relatively frequent in everyday contexts and which refer to the experience of positive aesthetic emotions. He analyses these four terms from the perspective of Lexical Anthropology and the Natural Semantic Metalanguage (henceforth, NSM) using the Danish corpus *DaTenTen17*, consisting of internet texts. His analysis emphasises that there are certain implicit associations in these terms: for example, *pæn* frequently refers to home design, *flot* is associated with colour and salience, *dejlig* with delight, while *lækker* is often applied to gustatory pleasure. This fact proves how certain terms are more suitable or frequently employed than others in describing particular aesthetic experiences, and shows some of the possibilities for what Levisten denominates “aesthetic talk” through different bodily domains that range from the visual to the bodily-oriented.

The conceptualisation of ‘beauty’ in Mandarin Chinese is the focus of the second paper, authored by Jock Wong and Marshall Or. They discuss the relevance of ‘beauty’ in contemporary culture and society before moving on to their analysis of the Mandarin Chinese terms *měi* and *piàoliàng*. Using the same methodology as above (NSM), they

demonstrate that, despite the polysemy of the two terms analysed, when applied to women, the first one refers to an aesthetic response akin to that indexed in Present-Day English *beautiful*, while the second one is more similar to *pretty*. Their analysis of *piàoliàng* proves that this term is commonly used to refer to someone who is good-looking because of specific facial features or skin colour, while the findings of their study of *měi* point to a different sort of perceived beauty based on morality. Finally, they conclude that the notion of 'beautiful' in the English-speaking world is far from being universal.

The third paper, written by Laura Miller and Carolyn Stevens, presents an analysis that echoes the discussion in the second one, namely the semantic change in meaning from 'beautiful' to 'cute' in Japanese language and culture. The authors analyse two terms, *utsukushii* and *kawaii*, which are found in different contexts and referring to two different aesthetic ideas. While the first one is more oriented towards a rather traditional, minimalist and elegant appreciation of beauty, the second one refers to an aesthetics that is both local and international and that is more akin to popular culture and consumerist art forms. Their analysis of *kawaii* suggests a multiplicity of contexts and usages that are relevant in discussions of age, gender, class, while its comparison with *utsukushii* evinces a tension between the aesthetics that these two terms represent at cultural and artistic levels.

In paper number four, the research carried out by one of the editors of this issue, Anna Gladkova, is presented. Acknowledging the variety of Russian terms for aesthetic experiences, Gladkova's research looks into four terms that she distributes alongside a continuum from the positive to the negative where the terms are ordered in increasing intensity: *krasivyy* 'beautiful' and *prekrasnyj* 'beautiful/fine', which refers to a more intense aesthetic response; and *nekrasivyy* 'ugly/plain' and *bezobraznyj* 'ugly/frightful', which exemplify how additional senses of a word can inform about the particular aesthetic traits that are appraised as negative. Employing the methodology designed in previous research (Gladkova and Romero-Trillo) and the NSM, the author demonstrates that aesthetic notions embed cultural meanings related to morality, and that the usage of these terms may be censured by politeness.

Gladkova and Romero-Trillo collaborate in the fifth paper in this volume, which focuses on how ugliness is conceptualised in English.

Following their research on the adjective *beautiful* in English, they employ the same methodology to analyse *ugly* in the Cobuild Wordbanks Online corpus in order to determine the most frequent collocations of this adjective and to offer a semantic explanation within the framework of the NSM. Their analysis shows that *ugly* is indeed a polysemic word that is applied to stimulus of different natures, from the visual to the auditory and the behavioural. Furthermore, it evinces the core differences in the conceptualisations of *beautiful* and *ugly*, putting forward different cultural approaches to these aesthetic experiences.

Moving on to the sixth contribution, Tahmineh Tayebi looks into the conceptualisation of two Persian aesthetic terms, *zesh* 'ugly' and *zibā* 'beautiful', more specifically on how they are used in the evaluation of acts that are deemed polite or impolite. Using a corpus of 80.000 words retrieved from Internet forums and blogs, Tayebi reveals the ways in which aesthetic markers are frequently used in evaluations of politeness or lack thereof, thus emphasising the behavioural dimension of terms for beauty and ugliness. This research work exposes a culture-specific aspect of aesthetic terminology in Persian that encompasses social and cultural norms.

The last paper in this issue is authored by Romero-Trillo and it concerns the conceptualisation of beauty and ugliness in Spanish through the analysis of the terms *bonito* 'beautiful' and *feo* 'ugly'. Using the *Corpus de Referencia del Español Actual*, Romero-Trillo goes over the differences in the contexts and applications of these adjectives, highlighting the prevalence of attestations for *bonito* over those for *feo*. Moreover, he explains that these adjectives are polysemous in the same respects, as they are both used to prototypically refer to visual appreciation, but also to auditory phenomena, behavioural judgments and resultative effects. As in most of the preceding papers, Romero-Trillo highlights the polyvalence of aesthetic terminology to index moral and behavioural judgments.

All things considered, all of the papers in this volume offer different perspectives on the ways in which aesthetic experience is conceptualised, expressed and understood in different cultures through the analyses of different languages. The analyses proposed as to the associations and usages of the terms under scrutiny evince some degree of universality with regards to how different languages employ aesthetic terminology;

in a great percentage of the cases, terms for beauty and ugliness go beyond the exclusively visual and they are employed to refer to sound, smell, taste, value judgments, morality and behaviour, while at the same time allowing for particular culture-specific meanings that are not consistently identified across cultures. This volume does not only offer great insight as to the issue under analysis, but it also opens the door for further research into different aspects of aesthetic experience. Through the different examples on how corpus and cognitive linguistics and the NSM methodology can shed light on cultural conceptualisations of aesthetic notions, this issue stresses how the possibilities in the application of these methods to other contemporary and ancient languages and cultures are manifold.

Works cited

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