Borrowing from oneself: slang names as intra-language loans

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Introduction
Helsinki slang

- Two different phases

- Old slang
  - Roughly pre-WWII
  - Common language for Finnish and Swedish speaking street gangs
  - More a pidgin than a slang

- New slang
  - Roughly from 1950’s onward
  - Changes in the society
Introduction
Old and new slang: differences

- Phonological

- Morphological
  - læhetsæ > læhets ‘are you (sg.) going’
  - læhekste > læhettekste ‘are you (pl.) going’

- Lexical
  - most notable from an onomastic point of view
Introduction
Lexical changes

- Old slang
- Words from Swedish, Finnish and Russian
- Familiar words, adapted to the morphophonology – in essence, loans
  
  *jäde* ‘ice cream’ (fi jäätelö)
  *fönari* ‘window’ (se fönster)
  *safka* ‘food’ (ru завтрак ‘breakfast’)
Introduction
Lexical changes

- New slang

- Loans from English
  *drinksu* (en *drink*)

- Words from Finnish, often affective
  *mallaspirtelö* ‘beer’, lit. ‘malt milkshake’
  *leegot* ‘teeth’ (cf. the Lego brand of children’s building blocks)
Slang names
Old vs. new

- Again, difference between old and new slang

- Old slang: common language for the street gangs
  - important to be able to talk about the places
  - mix of the other languages present
  - mostly loan names
  - new places named as needed

- New slang: social variant of Finnish
  - important for group identity
  - an influx of affective names
  - continuity with old slang
Slang names
Loan names

- Many ‘core’ names created by the same process
  - take an official name
  - make it to conform to slang morphophonology
    - use contractions, suffixes, sound changes and the like
      - fi Kulosaari > Kulis
      - se Rödberget > Rööperi

- Compare with how loan names are formed
  - take a name in another language
  - make it to conform to the morphophonological system
    - fi *Kaukalaksi > se *Kauklax > Köklax
    - se Bastuskär > fi Pastuskeri
Slang names
Onymic nature of loan names

- The result often semantically opaque or misleading
  - Rödberget ‘Red Hill’ / Rööperi ‘∅’
  - Bastuskär ‘Sauna Islet’ / Pastuskeri ‘∅’
  - Kaukalaksi ‘Long Bay’ / Köklax ‘*Kitchen Salmon’

- Onymic function most important
- Used often enough to get entrenched
Slang names
Loan names in new toponyms

- Typically for places without an official name
  - may follow changes in the language
    
    \[ \text{Kaivarin bärtjít} > \text{Kaivarin kaltsit} \]

- Also alternate names for officially-named places

  \[ \text{Sörkan yliopisto} \ '\text{University of Sörkka}', \]
  \[ \text{fi Kallion yhteiskoulu} \ '\text{Kallio high school}' \]
Slang names
Translated names

- Partial translations

- Typically, the classifying element is translated
  *Porthaninkartsa* < fi *Porthaninkatu* ‘Porthan Street’

- Sometimes a secondary name with an untranslated
  classifying element (but which name is the real loan?)
  *Kaisiksen lahti* <? fi *Kaisaniemenlahti* ‘Kaisaniemi Bay’
Slang names
Translated names

- Full translations

- Not very common, but sometimes used
  \textit{Urkinkartsa} < fi \textit{Urho Kekkosen katu} ‘Urho Kekkonen Street’, named after a former president

- Not necessarily literal – but then, translations aren’t always
  \textit{Snarandraisaja} ‘rope puller [street]’ < fi \textit{Köydenpunojankatu / se Repslagaregatan} ‘Roper Street’
Slang names
Other slang names

- Not all slang names can be viewed as loans
  - name transfer
    - Mogadishu / fi Vuosaari
    - Suomen Kongo / se Åland
  - new names
    - Kutukallio ‘Shagging Hill’
  - more common in new slang – or is it just that these names are more short-lived?

- Similar processes as with non-slang naming
  - For the most part, structure of new names similar to the structure of Finnish and Swedish names in the area
Conclusions

- Similarities between ‘slangification’ and loans
  - name changed to conform to new grammar
  - semantic content lost
  - requires frequent enough use to result in entrenchment

- Lots of other slang names
  - naming practices in more mainstream Finnish
  - tendency towards affective in slang

- Slang as a $1\frac{1}{2}$-lingual environment?
Thank you