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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
 - tʃi:ka: > tsi:ga: 'look'
- 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
mallaspiirtelö '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* 'ø'
 - *Bastuskär* 'Sauna Islet' / *Pastuskeri* 'ø'
 - *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
Kaivarin bårtjit > *Kaivarin kaltsit*
- Also alternate names for officially-named places
Sörkan yliopisto 'University of Sörkka',
fi *Kallion yhteiskoulu* '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
Urkin kartsa < fi *Urho Kekkonen katu* 'Urho Kekkonen Street', named after a former president
- Not necessarily literal – but then, translations aren't always
Snarandraisaaja 'rope puller [street]' <
fi *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?

