

## Calquing is the new black

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The idiom *X is the new black* was calqued into Finnish around the 1990s as *X on uusi musta* 'X is (the) new black'. Both the English and Finnish idioms roughly mean 'X is fashionable'. The English idiom gave rise to the construction *X is the new Y*, as in *trashy-chic fashion is the new clean-cut*. Finnish *X on uusi Y* 'X is (the) new Y' might be assumed to also come from either *X on uusi musta* or English *X is the new Y*, but in fact, *X on uusi Y* appears to predate both *X on uusi musta* and *X is the new Y*, though the early meaning of *X on uusi Y* was later influenced by English.

According to searches in corpora including the Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA), the idiom *X is the new black* arose in the 1980s. Early examples have the form *pink/gray/brown/red is the new black*, in which black stands for the role of 'fashionable color'. The construction then generalized to allow non-colors in the X slot in *X is the new black*, as in *Jesus is the new black* 'Jesus is the new fashionable thing'.

At around the same time, *X is the new black* also generalized to form *X is the new Y*, in which Y stands for any role it prototypically filled, and X is the new filler of that role. English has long allowed unidiomatic *FILLER X is the new ROLE Y*, as in *pink is the new fashionable color*. However, idiomatic *FILLER X is the new FILLER Y*, as in *pink is the new black* or *renting is the new buying*, appears to have arisen only under the influence of *X is the new black*.

Like English, Finnish has long allowed *FILLER X is the new ROLE Y*, such as *Heikki Ojamo on uusi bioprosessiteknikan professori* 'Heikki Ojamo is the new professor of bioprocess technology'. Unlike English, Finnish also allowed idiomatic *FILLER X is the new FILLER Y*. However, prior to the late 1990s, such examples are rare and seem limited to proper nouns, as in *Powell on uusi Eisenhower* 'Powell is the new Eisenhower'. More recent examples show that the Finnish *X on uusi Y* construction has adopted the 'fashionable' connotation and wider range of usage of English *X is the new Y*, as in *jalkapallo on uusi sushi* 'football is the new sushi'.

Based on the English progression from *X is the new black* to *X is the new Y*, and the calquing of the former into Finnish, it could easily be assumed that *X on uusi Y* in Finnish is either a calque or developed from *X on uusi musta* in parallel with English. However, if *X on uusi Y* predates *X on uusi musta*, neither of these explanations is possible. The comparison of these idioms underscores the need to consider each construction in its own right, without assuming that a progression in one language was the same in another.

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