The idiom \textit{X is the new black} was calqued into Finnish around the 1990s as \textit{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 \textit{X is the new Y}, as in \textit{trashy-chic fashion is the new clean-cut}. Finnish \textit{X on uusi Y} ‘X is (the) new Y’ might be assumed to also come from either \textit{X on uusi musta} or English \textit{X is the new Y}, but in fact, \textit{X on uusi Y} appears to predate both \textit{X on uusi musta} and \textit{X is the new Y}, though the early meaning of \textit{X on uusi Y} was later influenced by English.

According to searches in corpora including the Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA), the idiom \textit{X is the new black} arose in the 1980s. Early examples have the form \textit{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 \textit{X is the new black}, as in \textit{Jesus is the new black} ‘Jesus is the new fashionable thing’.

At around the same time, \textit{X is the new black} also generalized to form \textit{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 \textit{FILLER X is the new ROLE Y}, as in \textit{pink is the new fashionable color}. However, idiomatic \textit{FILLER X is the new FILLER Y}, as in \textit{pink is the new black or renting is the new buying}, appears to have arisen only under the influence of \textit{X is the new black}.

Like English, Finnish has long allowed \textit{FILLER X is the new ROLE Y}, such as \textit{Heikki Ojamo on uusi bioprosessitekniikan professori} ‘Heikki Ojamo is the new professor of bioprocess technology’. Unlike English, Finnish also allowed idiomatic \textit{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 \textit{Powell on uusi Eisenhower} ‘Powell is the new Eisenhower’. More recent examples show that the Finnish \textit{X on uusi Y} construction has adopted the ‘fashionable’ connotation and wider range of usage of English \textit{X is the new Y}, as in \textit{jalkapallo on uusi sushi} ‘football is the new sushi’.

Based on the English progression from \textit{X is the new black} to \textit{X is the new Y}, and the calquing of the former into Finnish, it could easily be assumed that \textit{X on uusi Y} in Finnish is either a calque or developed from \textit{X on uusi musta} in parallel with English. However, if \textit{X on uusi Y} predates \textit{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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