

Appellativized first names as terms of abuse: The case of the three pejorative Finnish expressions *uuno*, *tauno*, and *urpo**

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Abstract: In the article, three appellativized Finnish personal names are analysed in their use as a derogatory part of communication. In support of the argumentation, two kinds of data are used: corpus data from the internet forum Suomi24 ('Finland24') and internet questionnaire data. The methods of qualitative corpus and questionnaire research are adapted, and the approach is loosely cognitive. It is evident that the three expressions are used pejoratively and to express negative emotions. Thus, their usage makes the communication impolite or emphasizes impoliteness. By showing the meanings and usages of the three expressions, it is argued that appellativized proper names have a specific, complex semantic profile.

Keywords: socio-onomastics, cognitive onomastics, personal names, first names, appellativization, deonymization, terms of abuse, derogatory terms

Maria Sarhema (University of Helsinki). Appellativized first names as terms of abuse: The case of the three pejorative Finnish expressions *uuno*, *tauno*, and *urpo*.

* The research for this article was supported by a grant from the Kone Foundation in Finland.

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1. Introduction

Using first names as appellatives or adjectives is a common and productive phenomenon in contemporary colloquial Finnish. In this article, I analyse appellativized first names as a part of communication, more precisely, as terms of abuse. In this study, I look at first names which have lost their properhood, i.e. have been appellativized, and are used pejoratively or as terms of abuse. Even though appellativized expressions are widespread not only in Finnish but in various languages, there are few studies on the use of appellativized first names as terms of abuse.

I focus on three appellativized expressions, *uuno*, *tauno*, and *urpo*, which are originally Finnish male names but can be used colloquially as appellatives or adjectives with pejorative meanings. I have chosen these three expressions, as they are widely known among Finnish speakers and they were appellativized in different decades, with *uuno* being the oldest and *urpo* the latest expression as an appellative. I discuss the meanings and usages of these three expressions. I also address the semantic profile of the appellativized proper names as terms of abuse and how insulting they are. I argue that appellativized personal names have a specific semantic profile, and their meaning is thus more complex than that of general terms of abuse.

I use two kinds of data to support my argument, namely, corpus data from a Finnish internet forum and online questionnaire data, using qualitative corpus and questionnaire research methods with a loosely cognitive linguistic approach. By drawing on material collected from an internet forum, I can determine how the expressions are used authentically in informal contemporary language. On the other hand, the questionnaire data provides semantic intuition of native speakers. Naïve speakers may not be capable of giving detailed information about the differences of the expressions or exact semantic descriptions, nevertheless, a large sample can help clarify semantic issues (Langacker 2008:86).

The analysis illustrates that *uuno*, *tauno*, and *urpo* have common meanings, but they also have individual meanings and usages. They

are used to express negative emotions, and their usage is either a part of impolite communication or makes the communication impolite.

The structure of the article is as follows. First, the context is outlined (Section 2), followed by the data and the method (Section 3). Thereafter, the meanings and usages of the three expressions are analysed using the empirical data (Section 4). The approach then becomes more theoretical, with a discussion of the semantic profile of the appellativized proper names used as terms of abuse (Section 5). Finally, the findings are summarised and discussed (Section 6).

2. Outlining the context

2.1 Appellativization of *Uuno*, *Tauno*, and *Urpo*

Appellativization is the process in which a proper name acquires an appellative meaning, i.e. appellativizes. The terminology of the phenomenon varies, and the terms *deproprialisation* ~ *deproprialization*, *deonymisation* ~ *deonymization* ~ *deonimization* and *antonomasia* have been used in addition to appellativization (see e.g. Harvalík 2012:12; Reszegi 2018:25).

A previous study of mine (Sarhema 2021), shed light upon the background and the motivation of the appellativization of *Uuno*, *Tauno*, and *Urpo*. Of these, *uuno* is the oldest expression as an appellative with the first examples of its use being from the 1910s (Paunonen 2000). During that time, *Uuno* was a common first name, but after the appellativization its popularity slowly started to decrease. According to Hämäläinen (1956:207–208), in the 1920s, *uuno* was a common expression in army slang with the meanings of ‘stupid’, ‘silly’, ‘incompetent’, ‘beginner’. There were also compounds with the head *uuno*, for example *talliuno* (literally ‘stable’ + *uuno*) ‘horse-drawn vehicle driver’, ‘horseman’. The motivation of the appellativization of *Uuno* remains unclear. Nevertheless, Paunonen (2018) finds it possible that the origin of the pejorative *uuno* might relate to the founder of the Finnish elementary school system, Uno Cygnaeus (1810–1888). It is possible that school, which many pupils considered as boring,

got the name of the founder as its symbol, and the pupils started to call teachers *uuno*. Afterwards the expression *uuno* [stupid] spread to broader use.

The first name *Tauno* originates in Karelia¹ and is probably based on the homonymous adjective *tauno*, which in Karelian language has the meaning of ‘gentle’, ‘good-tempered’ (Vilkuna 2005; Saarelma 2007). The adjective has been used in Finnish dialects too, especially from the Karelian Isthmus. Therefore, it could be possible that the adjective *tauno* has went through a change of meaning and gotten the meaning of ‘stupid’ in colloquial Finnish. However, I find this unlikely. Hence, the motivation for the appellativization needs to be discovered elsewhere. More plausible explanation is given by Paunonen (2018). According to Paunonen (2000), the first examples of the name being used to mean ‘stupid’ in Helsinki slang are from the 1950s. Paunonen (2018) assumes that the motivation behind the meaning ‘stupid’ lies on the expressions with somewhat similar sound structure and pejorative meaning, such as *taulapää* [blockhead], *tauhka* [junk], and *taukki* [stupid] (*Taukki* has also been a hypocorism of *Tauno*). Most of those named *Tauno* were born before the appellativization happened, in 1915–1929. That means that in the assumed time of the appellativization *Tauno* was mainly a name of middle-aged men. This may have a bearing on the appellativization, as young people likely found the name old-fashioned.

Urpo has never been a common first name, nor does it appear to be gaining popularity; it was already a rare name in the 1970s, when it is assumed to have been appellativized (Paunonen 2000). Its appellativization may lie on sound symbolism, that is, the sound structure of *urpo*, more precisely, the consonant cluster *rp*. It can be considered as a phonestheme, which is a submorphemic, affective, meaning-carrying entity (Bolinger 1950:130; Hinton et al. 1994:5; see e.g. Abelin 2015; Kawahara et al. 2018; Shih & Rudin 2021; for more about sound

¹ Karelia is an area located in two sides of the border of Finland and Russia, most of it being situated in Russia. In the area, besides Finnish and Russian languages, also Karelian language is spoken. Karelian is a Finno-Ugric language which is closely related to Finnish.

symbolism in onomastics). According to Paunonen (2018), an affective verb *urputtaa* [shoot one's mouth off] which is an older slangy expression than *urpo* with the same phonestheme, may also have motivated the appellativization.

2.2 Impoliteness and terms of abuse

Using terms of abuse is a way to express impoliteness in language, although there is no consensus about the exact definition of impoliteness. Bousfield & Locher (2008:3) establish a minimalist definition 'Impoliteness is behaviour that is face-aggravating in a particular context' (see Bousfield & Locher 2008:3–8 for more exhaustive information about impoliteness). Culpeper (2011:19–21) discusses several definitions of impoliteness and summarizes that its key notions are face (threatening), social norms, intentionality, and emotions. Linguistic impoliteness has been researched from different angles and disciplinary perspectives, for example in discursive pragmatics (Garcés-Conejos Blitvich & Sifianou 2019) and from cross-cultural perspective (Culpeper et al. 2014).

According to Culpeper (2010:3242–3243), the conventionalised impoliteness formulas include – not exhaustively – insults, pointed criticisms and complaints, challenging or unpalatable questions and/or presuppositions, condescension, message enforcers, dismissals, silencers, threats, and negative expressions. Of course, these are not all equally impolite, some of them might even seem inoffensive and require specific context to have the effect of impoliteness (Culpeper 2010:3243). The same phrase may be extremely impolite in one context, but entirely innocuous in another. Muikku-Werner (2005) has studied linguistic jeering – a type of impoliteness – and concluded that jeering is a continuum with malicious wickedness at one end and friendly teasing at the other. The latter is a positive phenomenon which expresses community spirit and being a part of 'us' (Muikku-Werner 2005:274).

In this article, I only focus on one way of expressing impoliteness in language, namely appellativized expressions used as terms of

abuse. When speaking about abusive terms, the terminology varies. They have been called terms of abuse (e.g. De Raad et al. 2005; Van Oudenhoven et al. 2008; Beirne 2020), derogatory words (e.g. Norri 2000) and (dysphemistic) terms of insult (Allan & Burrige 1991:27–28). I do not address the differences with these terms. I use ‘(appellativized) terms of abuse’ to refer to appellativized expressions used in a derogatory meaning.

According to Allan & Burrige (1991:27–28), dysphemistic terms of insult can metaphorically compare people with animals (e.g. calling someone a *rat*), include tabooed body parts or sexual behaviour (e.g. *motherfucker*), or mental or physical inadequacy (e.g. *idiot*). De Raad, Oudenhoven & Hofstede (2005) compared the use of terms of abuse in three languages, Spanish, Dutch, and German, and found that the meanings of the terms of abuse vary in these languages. They argue that there are cultural differences in abusive language and that the different terms of abuse violate distinct cultural values and may also display fewer known taboos in a given culture (De Raad et al. 2005:163).

The dysphemism of a term of abuse might lie in the way the expression is used. Hence, it is not necessarily a property of the word itself (Allan & Burrige 1991:28). The expressions I analyse are appellativized first names. Therefore, it is an interesting question whether the dysphemism in this case is a property of the word or not. Indeed, it is not a property of the homonymous first name, rather it can be a property of the appellativized form. The pejorative nature of the expressions will be discussed in the coming sections.

De Raad et al. (2005) distinguish the use of terms of abuse according to the person in which the sentence is used. First-person expressions can be used for self-disclosure and to rouse oneself, and third-person expressions to exchange negative information. However, if we look at terms of abuse as a method of hurting someone with verbal abuse, De Raad et al. (2005) propose that second-person expressions are the most interesting. They may be used to express breach of expectations, as well as to elicit a certain reaction. Using terms of abuse also tells something about the person uttering them. They

may be used to affect another person and make them despicable. (De Raad et al. 2005:153–154.) The use of terms of abuse may thus be seen as representing confrontation between ‘us’ and ‘them’. Pälli (2003) studies human groups as discursive formations and adapts the terms ‘in group’ and ‘out group’, originally used in the framework of social psychology. Human beings have groups with which they identify (in groups), but also groups with which they do not identify (out groups). Negative features relate to out groups, and the members of them are seen as similar with each other (Pälli 2003:41). In Section 4.1 I analyse the use of *uuno*, *tauno*, and *urpo* in different grammatical persons in the corpus data.

3. Data and method: Corpus and questionnaire

I analyse two data sets in this study. The first was collected from the Suomi24 Sentences Corpus (Aller Media Ltd. 2014) provided by The Language Bank of Finland. This corpus includes all the discussion forums of the Suomi24 (‘Finland24’) website from the years 2001 to 2016. People use the Suomi24 forums to discuss various topics, such as human relations, entertainment and politics. I collected a total of 1,500 sentences in which appellativized *uuno*, *tauno*, or *urpo* have been used (500 sentences each). The language used on the Suomi24 is informal and the participants remain anonymous. Moderators may remove comments or threads, but this only usually happens if user asks them to do so (Lagus et al. 2016:9). Only slightly moderated discussion forums allow various expressions and free the relatively anonymous users from the fear of expressing extreme views (Sobkowicz & Sobkowicz 2012:448–449). Abusive and impolite language is thus evident on Suomi24 as can be seen in the upcoming section. Discussions on Suomi24 include hate speech and even death threats (Harju 2018:63), however, there are no examples of the latter in the data.

The second data set was compiled through an online questionnaire. I used the E-lomake online form to design and publish a questionnaire. E-lomake is a form builder software that enables survey creation and management. First, a pilot questionnaire was available to a

limited number of respondents over a four-day period. As no changes were made to the questionnaire after the pilot, the responses of the pilot are also included in the data. After the pilot, the questionnaire was available to the public online for one week during autumn 2017. I posted it as a public post on my Facebook profile and asked people to share it. It was shared 71 times and completed by 542 respondents and a total of 531 responses were included in the data. One participant was excluded as they were underage and it was not possible to obtain parental consent and ten respondents were excluded from the data as they were not native speakers of Finnish. Evaluating the meaning of colloquial expressions requires native-like language skills, and the number of the non-native speakers was not big enough for comparing their answers with the native speaker group. The age distribution of the respondents was 18–86 years, with the average age being 41 years. The majority (85.3%) of the respondents were women, 14.7% were men, 0.2% non-binary, and one did not state their gender. In the questionnaire, the respondents were asked about the meanings of *uuno*, *tauno*, and *urpo*, and how pejorative they find them. They were also asked to fill one of the expressions in sentences that had been adapted from the Suomi24 data. The entire questionnaire (in Finnish) is presented in an appendix to Sarhemiaa (forthcoming).

I adapt the methods of qualitative corpus and questionnaire research. I categorize the corpus data according to the meanings and usages of the expressions and analyse them qualitatively. Using the numerical questionnaire data, I estimate how the informants have rated the pejorativity of the expressions. I have compiled frequency lists of the open-response items from the questionnaire data using #LancsBox (Brezina et al. 2020). By analysing them, I outline the meanings of *uuno*, *tauno*, and *urpo*. I use a loosely cognitive linguistic approach, i.e. I adapt appropriate methodology and concepts of cognitive semantics. Furthermore, I utilize the cognitive concepts of conceptualization and domain and base my analysis on them.

4. Meanings and usages of *uuno*, *tauno*, and *urpo*

4.1 Corpus data

According to dictionaries, *uuno*, *tauno*, and *urpo* are to some extent synonymous, and mean ‘dumb’ and ‘stupid’, or other similar pejorative adjectives. The extensive dictionary of Helsinki slang (Paunonen 2000) gives additional meanings to these expressions, including ‘slow-witted’ and ‘fool’ for *uuno*, ‘crazy’ and ‘dull’ for *tauno*, and ‘weird’ for *urpo*. *The Dictionary of Contemporary Finnish* (Kielitoimiston sanakirja) adds ‘jerk’ for *uuno* and *urpo*, and ‘yokel’ for *uuno*. It does not, however, include *tauno* as a search term. In summary, the basic meaning of *uuno*, *tauno*, and *urpo* is pejorative. Thus, they can be described as somewhat synonymous even though the dictionaries describe also differences between them. Nevertheless, my analysis is based on the impossibility of synonymity. Even if two expressions designate the same situation, they are not semantically identical because they are structuring it through different images (Langacker 1991:35). Hence, one of my research questions is the meanings and usages of these expressions: What do they mean in contemporary colloquial language? How do they differ?

I analysed 1,500 sentences from the Suomi24 data as per the meanings and usages of *uuno*, *tauno*, and *urpo*. It was often difficult to determine whether the meaning of the expression was ‘silly’, ‘stupid’ or something similar, so I refer to these meanings simply as pejorative. Therefore, the corpus data are used particularly to study the uses of the expressions, whereas their meanings are distinguished especially by using the questionnaire data. In addition to pejorative meaning, however, the expressions in the corpus data are sometimes used in the meaning of ‘ordinary person’, ‘average Joe’. In this case, the pejorative connotation is often questionable if the sentence or the broader context does not include something which clearly carries pejorative meaning, such as derogatory modifiers.

When the expression is used pejoratively, it may refer to another participant in the same thread, to the writer themselves, or to someone else. In the latter case, the referent can be either generic or a spe-

cific person who is not participating in the conversation. I refer to this group simply as a general pejorative meaning. The data also include sentences in which the verb *uunottaa*² [scam, cheat] derived from *uuno* is used, or include playful modifications based on the names of two Finnish politicians³ and the expression *urpo*, and have a pejorative meaning. However, I do not discuss these two latter cases here, because the *uunottaa* verb is not used as a term of abuse, and the specific forms derived from *urpo* only refer to two individuals, instead of being used generally abusively. Figure 1 shows the distribution of meanings, and the referents of *uuno*, *tauno*, and *urpo* in parentheses in the corpus data all added together (excluding the latter cases).

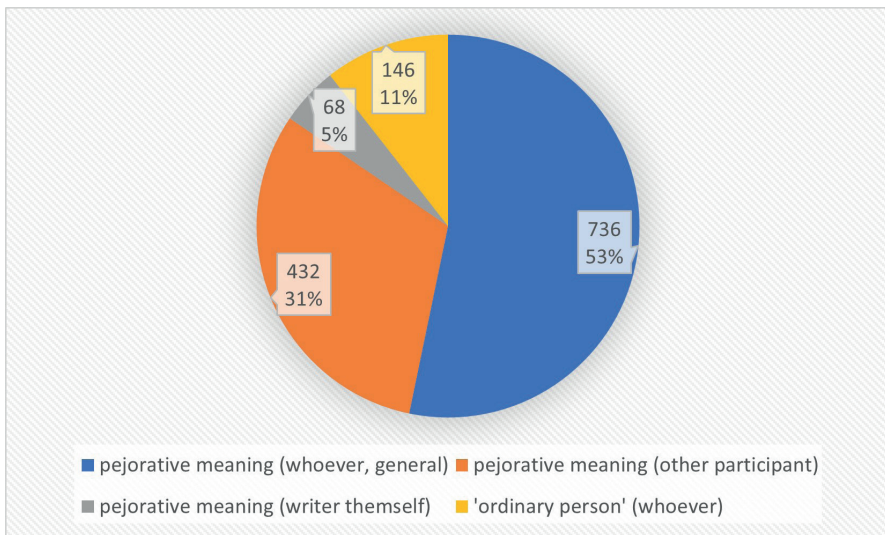


Figure 1. Meanings and referents of *uuno*, *tauno*, and *urpo* added together in the corpus data.

² *Uuno-tta-a* contains the stem *uuno*, a verbal derivational affix *-tta-* and an infinitive ending *a*. The meaning of the derivational affix *-tta-* is to make the entity into an item expressed by the stem (VISK § 317).

³ These politicians are Petteri Orpo, the chair of the Finnish National Coalition Party and Jutta Urpilainen, European Commissioner. They both have formerly served as ministers in Finland. The sound structure of their surnames is somewhat similar to the word *urpo*, which motivates the pejorative modifications of their names such as *Petteri Urpo* and *Jutta Urpolainen*.

In more than half of the sentences (53%), the expression has a general pejorative meaning and the referent can be anyone (Example 1), and almost one-third (31%) is used pejoratively to refer to another participant (Example 2). Hence, it is rare (5%) for somebody to refer to themselves pejoratively using these expressions (Example 3). In 11% of the sentences the expression has the meaning of ‘ordinary person’, which is usually emphasized with a modifier such as *tavallinen* [ordinary] (Example 4). In these cases, the referent can be anyone.

1. Kohta joku uuno taas kyselee ihan samaa.
[Soon some *uuno* will ask the same again.]
2. Hanki urpo itsetunto!
[Get some self-respect, *urpo*!]
3. Olen ihan uuno ja aloittelija, joten kaipaisin neuvoja alusta loppuun.
[I am such an *uuno* and a novice, so I would like advice from start to finish.]
4. Noinpa se tavallinen tauno haksahaa linuksiin.
[This is how an ordinary *tauno* slips up using Linux.]

As stated above, the three expressions are most often used in a general pejorative meaning. This holds true not only when the expressions are counted together but also when we look at each of them separately. However, when studying the other usages, we can find differences between the three expressions.

Uuno is the expression which most often refers to oneself and can be used for self-disclosure (see De Raad et al. 2005:153). In Example 3, the writer explicitly mentions that they are a novice, which can be understood as an attempt to disclose their inexperience and as a form of apology. In the data, the sentences in which the appellativized expression refers to oneself are often a part of a thread where someone is asking for advice and apologizing for their question. An apology can be seen as endeavour to avoid unpleasant responses and

to ease tension in relation to the other participants of the conversation. Since *uuno* is the most common expression in this use, it seems to be the most likely expression to use for easing tensions when constructing social relations.

Typical for *tauno* is the use of it in the meaning of ‘ordinary person’. One reason for that might be its use with the alliterative adjective *tavallinen* [ordinary] (see Example 4) or its colloquial forms *tavis* or *tavan*. Indeed, *Tauno* is often used with a modifier that emphasizes the meaning of ‘ordinary’. The modifier, however, is not always *tavallinen* or its derivative. Other examples are *takametsän* [backwoods] and *naapurin* [neighbour]. Nevertheless, it is rare for *tauno* to be used in this meaning without any modifier. When *tauno* is used in the meaning of ‘ordinary person’ is not necessarily always pejorative, or at least its pejorativity is questionable.

Of the three expressions, *urpo* is the one which is most often used in a pejorative meaning referring to other participants of the discussion. Example 2 is an insult for another writer, and in it *urpo* is by far used as a term of abuse.

In addition to insults, applying Culpeper’s (2010:3242–3243) conventionalised impoliteness formulas introduced in Section 2.2, it can be shown that in the corpus data *uuno*, *tauno*, and *urpo* are used in sentences which express all impoliteness formulas except threats. This implies that they are not formidable enough to express threat, but instead they can express impoliteness in various ways.⁴

As mentioned above, when studying the terms of abuse, second-person expressions are the most thought-provoking (see De Raad et al. 2005:153–154). By directly addressing a person with a term of abuse, the speaker may indicate that the other person belongs to the out group, in other words, is not a member of the speaker’s in group. This kind of use is common in the corpus data (Examples 5–7). Other people can be referred to by either using the verb in second-person singular (5) or second-person plural (6) or by explicating the reference

⁴ Threats might also be less frequent on internet forums than the other formulas mentioned. This may be one reason why there are no threats in the data.

in a different way, such as the writer addressing themself to someone by using the appellativized expression (7).

5. Oletko niin uuno, ettet muka tiedä, että kaikki valtamedia on näitten uutta siionistista maailmanjärjestystä ajavien konkkanokkien omistuksessa?
[Are you such an *uuno* that you pretend you don't know that all mainstream media is owned by these large-nosed people furthering the new Zionist world order?]
6. Vittu te ootte taunoja, ei helkkari vieköön :D
[Shit, you are such a *taunos*, fucking hell :D]
7. Ryyppäminen on vanhanaikaista urpot.
[Boozing is old-fashioned, (you) *urpos*.]

In Example 5, the writer's in group believes in a Zionist conspiracy theory. The writer seems to find it impossible that someone is such an *uuno* that they do not know that the conspiracy exists. By using the word *uuno*, the writer on the one hand expresses that the other person belongs to the out group, and on the other hand suggests that the person might not have the necessary mental abilities to understand their claim. In Example 7, the writer indicates that drinking heavily is not desired behaviour in their in group (at least anymore), whereas the *urpos* of the out group still do that. In Example 6, however, the writer does not elaborate on why the other people are considered to be *taunos* belonging to the out group, so it is necessary to look at the larger context. Example 6 was taken from a thread about cars. The original poster writes that they have bought a premium car and the others start to discuss about what constitutes a premium car and what does not. Example 6 is part of a message where the writer suggests that the original poster does not see that the other participants of the discussion are taunting them. Thus, the writer tries to show to the original poster that they have been placed in the out group by the others, but at the same time the writer also excludes the original poster from their own in group.

The sentences in which a term of abuse is used to address another person are pejorative, and occasionally the pejorativity is emphasized by using swear words. In Example 6, there are two swear words which emphasize the pejorativity. However, an emoticon is used at the end of the sentence, which tends to make the sentence less insulting (see Huffaker & Calvert 2005). All the three expressions, *uuno*, *tauno*, and *urpo* may be used highly pejoratively, in rude and impolite sentences with swear words, but also in less pejorative sentences in which the only hint of abuse is the appellativized expression itself. For instance, Example 7 would not really be impolite without the word *urpot* at the end. That is to say, the appellativized expressions may be used as a part of impolite communication, but they can also be used to make the communication impolite.

Thus, it can be concluded that by using appellativized expressions as terms of abuse it is possible to represent confrontation and impoliteness, as well as to convey other people's belonging to the out group, as it is by using other terms of abuse. However, the semantic profile of appellativized expressions is different from that of the other terms of abuse. This will be discussed further in Section 5.

4.2 Questionnaire data

In the questionnaire, the respondents were asked to fill in *uuno*, *tauno* or *urpo* in 20 sentences, which were partly formed by using the sentences from the corpus data. In the responses to 16 sentences, the most often used expression was *urpo*. This implies that *urpo* is the most widely known and used expression of these three. *Uuno* was the most often chosen expression in the two sentences, which refer to oneself, and *tauno* in the two sentences, in which the missing word has the meaning of 'ordinary person'. One of these sentences included the word *tavallinen* [ordinary] and the other the word *naapurin* [neighbour] as a modifier. These findings are in line with the analysis of the corpus data.

The respondents were also explicitly asked about the meanings of the three expressions (e.g. *What does urpo mean?*). The most often

mentioned feature for *urpo* and *uuno* was *tyhmä* [stupid]. For *tauno*, however, this was only the third most often mentioned feature. *Tauno* was most often mentioned to be *tavallinen* [ordinary], and the second most often *yksinkertainen* [simple]. The corpus data show that *tauno* is indeed used pejoratively, however, the questionnaire data confirms that besides that, a central meaning of *tauno* is ‘ordinary’. *Hidas*(*älyinen*) [slow(-witted)], *hyväntahtoinen* [benevolent] and *hölmö* [fool] are examples of other common features questionnaire respondents often connected to *tauno*. This implies that *tauno* is rather a kind and decent expression despite its pejorative meaning. Someone called *tauno* seems thus stupid because of their mental features, such as slow-wittedness. In other words, their stupidity is unintentional.

Hölmö [fool], *yksinkertainen* [simple], and *hidasälyinen* [slow-witted] are features also connected with *uuno*. Other features the respondents mentioned were for example *tietämätön* [ignorant] and *ajattelematon* [unthinking]. This shows that a person called *uuno* may act foolishly because they do not pay attention to their own behaviour. Therefore, the stupidity of *uuno* is unintentional, as it is with *tauno* too.

Urpo, on the other hand, is often connected with features such as *idiootti* [idiot], *ärsyttävä* [irritating], *ääliö* [jerk]. Also, the word *tahallaan* [on purpose] recurs in the answers. Consequently, *urpo* is someone acting stupidly on purpose, not because of their mental properties.

The respondents were also asked about how negative they find the three expressions, i.e. the pejorativeness of the expressions. The answers for the questions about the pejorativeness demonstrate that *urpo* is the most pejorative of the three expressions. The respondents were asked to give the expressions a value between 1 and 5, 1 being the least negative and 5 the most. The average values were *urpo* 4.56, *uuno* 3.60 and *tauno* 3.18. This shows that *urpo* is the most pejorative of these expressions, and the difference in the pejorativeness between it and the second most pejorative expression *uuno* is greater than the difference between *uuno* and *tauno*. The answers to the other question about pejorativeness confirmed this finding; respondents were asked to rank

the expressions based on their negativity, with the expression with the most negative tone receiving the value 1 and the least negative tone 3. The average values were *urpo* 1.25, *uuno* 2.15 and *tauno* 2.61. This clearly confirms that *urpo* is the most pejorative and consequently the most insulting of these expressions, whereas *tauno* is the least pejorative and the least insulting.

Respondents were also asked if they knew someone called *Uuno*, *Tauno* or *Urpo*, and if they thought it influenced their answers. The answers naturally greatly vary between the respondents. Many respondents mentioned the effect of a public figure with the first name *Uuno*, *Tauno* or *Urpo*, or a fictional ragged movie character Uuno Turhapuro. One respondent mentioned having older relatives called *Tauno*, and had it not been for the negative connotation of the name they would have named their son *Tauno*. Another respondent said that they know someone called *Urpo* and feel pity for him, whereas some wrote that they do not consider the appellativized form and the first name as a same word at all. One respondent wrote that they know people with these names but when thinking about these people they do not associate them with the homonymous expressions. Interestingly, however, when they meet an unknown person called *Urpo*, they start thinking if the person is also *urpo*.

In summary, for some people the link between the name and the appellativized expression is clear and evident, while others do not see a connection between them or at least do not consider it significant. It is also possible that if a person does not know anyone called *Urpo*, the interpretation will be affected exclusively by the stereotypes around the name and the appellativized homonym. However, if a person knows someone called *Urpo*, the name bearer's personal features may have a greater influence than the connotations of the appellativized expression (see Reszegi 2022:212). In other words, *Urpo* becomes a part of the person's in group and the connotations of the name are thus less negative.

So far, I have used an empirical approach and analysed the meanings and the use of the three appellativized expressions and compared them with each other. I will now proceed to a more theoretical analy-

sis. Namely, I will discuss the appellativized expressions as a vocabulary group in contrast to the other terms of abuse, and analyse their semantic profile.

5. The semantic profile of the appellativized terms of abuse

In this section, I argue that the appellativized terms of abuse have a specific semantic profile. By examining them as one category, I can form an overall view about appellativized expressions as terms of abuse.

When using appellativized expressions as terms of abuse (see the examples in 4.1), the appellativized expression could theoretically be replaced by some other term of abuse, such as the Finnish equivalent for *stupid*, *fool* or *idiot*. However, the writer has chosen to use the appellativized expression, i.e. they have conceptualized the state of affairs in a way that it can plausibly be described by appellativized expression (for conceptualization, see Langacker 2008:27–30). This implies that the meaning of such an expression is wider and more multifaceted than the meaning of a more conventional adjective or noun. In the framework of cognitive grammar, the basis of a linguistic meaning is a set of cognitive domains that an expression invokes (Langacker 2008:44). I argue that the domain matrix of an appellativized expression is more complex than that of an average term of abuse. In many contexts, all three expressions, *uuno*, *tauno*, and *urpo*, could be translated into English using the above-mentioned adjectives. However, their semantic import would be different and none of them would be their exact equivalent. The reason for this is that the adjectives characterize the feature (e.g. stupidity) directly, whereas an appellativized personal name characterizes its referent and conceptualizes the meaning indirectly, without specifying the exact feature. The appellativized personal names are thus used as cultural indexes, since cultural, contextual, and encyclopaedic knowledge is required in greater deal when interpreting the meaning of such an expression

(see Reszegi 2021:126; 2022:212). As stated in Section 4.1, they are also used to imply confrontation between ‘us’ and ‘them’. According to Allen (1983:311), English uses *John* in the same way, as ‘pejorative denomination for outsiders’. For example, *John Doe* is used for an average or unknown person and *dumb John* for an easy target or victim (Allen 1983:311; see also Sjöblom 2006:72). Of course, it would be possible to refer to these with a suitable adjective or appellative but the use of an appellativized proper name makes the interpretation more complicated, as its semantic profile is more complex.

What follows, then, is that the interpretation might also vary between different readers or hearers even though the expressions have fixed semantic features (see Reszegi 2021:126). That is, when interpreting such an expression, not only are the connotations of the appellativized expression evoked in the mind of the hearer or reader, but also the connotations of the proper name. In other words, different sociolinguistic factors may affect the interpretation, for example, the expected age of the bearers of the homonymous name. In terms of cognitive grammar, the domain matrix of the homonymous proper name is also evoked in the mind when interpreting such an expression (for domains, see Langacker 2008:44–54). Connotations of the proper names vary to a greater extent than connotations of widely known and conventional adjectives or appellatives, as people may or may not know bearers of the name, which subsequently may influence how they are interpreted. This is based on the fact that this kind of connotations is highly subjective. Whether the reader does or does not perceive that the expression has proper name origin, it might also affect the connotations and interpretation. Moreover, language learners may be unaware of the word’s origin as a proper name, instead they may only be familiar with the expression as a term of abuse. Hence, the role of the word as a first name cannot affect the way it is interpreted as a term of abuse.

It is possible that people who know someone with a homonymous name do not use these expressions, especially if their relationship is close – or may at least find the use of them more impolite than other people. The same holds true also for illnesses used as terms of abuse.

For example, in Dutch the word *kanker* ‘cancer’ is a common term of abuse, however, people with cancer or who have a relative with cancer may find the use of this expression harsh (De Raad et al. 2005:154). As mentioned in Section 4.2, some respondents knew people called *Uuno*, *Tauno* or *Urpo*, but only a part of them think that it influenced their answers. This illustrates that some people see the first name and the corresponding appellative in a way as the same but polysemous word, whereas the others see a stricter border between the proper name and the homonymous appellative and do not consider that they are connected.

It is an interesting question whether the proper name and the appellativized form actually have something in common, except the homonymy and the origin (*urpo* < *Urpo*). Nyström (2016) discusses names with homonymous common noun origin, such as Swedish male name *Björn*, which originates from the word *björn* ‘bear’ (see also Khoa 2022 for Vietnamese proper names with homonymous common name origin). In this case, the relation between the proper name and the common noun is opposite than in the case of appellativization. Nevertheless, there are similarities in the processes of interpreting such names. Not only does the name *Björn* denote someone bearing this name but also activates various processes in the brain with connotations of the homonymous noun (Nyström 2016). Nyström (2016) also argues that proper names and common nouns should be seen as two communicating and integrated parts of the mental lexicon and that in their interpretation, connotations have a significant role. I agree and, consequently, argue that the link between the appellativized expression and the original first name goes both ways. Hence, the connotations of the first name may affect the interpretation of the appellativized expression’s meaning, and in turn, the appellativized expression’s meaning may affect the idea of how we view the first name. The popularity of the first names *Uuno*, *Tauno*, and especially *Urpo* has remained relatively low after the appellativization (Sarhema 2021:108–112). The reason why the name givers avoid these names might be their negative connotations, which are due to the pejorative appellativized homonym.

6. Conclusions

In this article, I have analysed three appellativized Finnish male names, namely *Uuno*, *Tauno*, and *Urpo*, which all have pejorative meanings. It has been shown that they have both common and individual meanings and uses; despite the ostensible synonymy they are not synonymous. Specific for *uuno* is that it is used to refer to speakers themselves more often than the other two expressions. In particular, it is used to ease tensions and for self-disclosure. Besides the pejorative meaning, *tauno* also has another central meaning, namely ‘ordinary person’. The questionnaire respondents mentioned the meaning of ‘ordinary person’ more often than the pejorative meaning, however, according to the corpus data, *tauno* is more often used in pejorative meaning without the meaning of ‘ordinary person’. One reason for that might be that the language on an anonymous internet forum is often offensive. Special for *urpo* is that it is used in pejorative meaning referring to other people participating in the discussion more often than the other two expressions. The questionnaire data imply that someone called *urpo* acts foolishly on purpose, whereas the stupidity of *uuno* and *tauno* is unintentional.

The findings about the pejorativeness of the expressions are confirmed by the analysis of both the corpus and the questionnaire data. The most pejorative and hence the most insulting of these expressions is indisputably *urpo*. *Tauno* is the least pejorative and the least insulting – possibly because of its another central meaning ‘ordinary person’ – and *uuno*’s pejorativeness lies between the other two expressions. Even though there are prominent differences in the pejorativeness, all three expressions can be used abusively, and the use of them can make communication impolite or emphasize impoliteness.

It has been argued that even though the appellativized terms of abuse can be used in a same way as the other terms of abuse, their semantic profile is more complex. This is because the interpretation of appellativized expressions also evokes the domain matrix of the homonymous proper name in the hearer’s or reader’s mind. That is why the connotations of the proper name might also affect the interpretation of such an expression. Furthermore, the appellativized

expressions might have an impact on our impression of the first names lying behind them.

The object of this study, appellativized personal names as abusive part of communication, is under-studied. Yet, it is a relevant topic and needs further research. Personal names are indeed personal, to put it another way, a name bearer has a personal relationship to their name and a name is close to a person's identity. Therefore, it is good to keep in mind that someone may be offended if the homonym of their name is used as a term of abuse.

When researching the meanings of appellativized expressions we touch upon the question of the meaning of proper names. The question whether proper names have a meaning – other than lexical or etymological – is a widely and vividly discussed topic among the onomastics (see e.g. Coates 2006; Sjöblom 2006; Van Langendonck 2007; Nyström 2016; Reszegi 2021 & 2022; Khoa 2022). In the future, it would be worthwhile to study the meaning of proper names in relation to the appellativization and the semantics of appellativized expressions. It is possible that the connotative meanings of the proper names are more commonly shared between different people if the name has an appellativized homonym. This is because of a two-way link between the name and the appellativized expression. Another question is, of course, whether these connotative meanings can be seen as a property of the name itself, or are they only related to the appellativized expression. To conclude, there remains a need for further research to discuss these issues more thoroughly.

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