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## Trade Slang Terms among Swedish Musicians: Form, Meaning, and Function

### A Study Based on Primary Sources and Secondary Literature<sup>1</sup>

#### 1. Introduction

Most people use one or more **language(s) for special purposes (LSP(s))** as well as **slang** in one form or another in the practice of their profession (Laurén/Nordman 1987: 38; Strömman 1995: 311; Kotsinas 2003: 21). Despite this fact, there has been little research on slang used in various occupations and workplaces (see Andersson 1994: 95; Strömman 1995: 311). However, there has been more research on language usage in workplaces from the sociolinguistic perspective (see Brünner 1998; Gunnarsson 2009: 145-151).

Isolated statements about slang in various occupations can be found in linguistic studies, and a few examples are Bergman (1964: 71-73), Skautrup (1968: 304), Laurén/Nordman (1987: 38, 41), Laurén (1993: 50-51), and Kotsinas (2001: 19; 2003: 9-13, 21). More comprehensive studies include Andersson (1994), who explores slang usage by employees of a Swedish public transportation company, and Strömman (1995), who studies slang in the printing business in Finland. But slang as part of the communicative repertoire of professionals is seldom given any attention in linguistic works devoted to written and oral communication among practitioners about their occupations and in their workplaces (see e.g. Gunnarsson 2009: 145-192).

#### 1.1. Aim

The aim of this study is to further understanding of slang usage among one category of professionals – musicians. The study concentrates on trade slang terms used by professional musicians in Sweden active in military bands, symphony orchestras, and entertainment orchestras from the 1930s onward.

Studies focused on music slang are rare. Earlier studies of LSP in the field of music were devoted mainly to terminology, special types of text and sheet music as a means of communication (see Störel 1998). Slang words are rarely, if ever, listed in LSP glossaries and dictionaries in the field (see Leuchtmann 1981; Brodin 1985; Anderholm 1992). However, there are Internet sites that pay some attention to music slang, including the English-language *JargonDatabase.com*, the German-language *2.sound.de – die Community für Musik, Recording und PA*, and the Danish-language *Cyberhus.dk* (accessed in May 2009).

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## 1.2. Content and organization

In this paper, I discuss 144 Swedish designations for musical instruments, musical activities, and musicians. I regard these designations as trade slang terms. I address the origins and formation of the trade slang terms, as well as their semantic content and functions. The results are discussed in relation to earlier studies of Swedish slang unconnected to the field of music, as well as in relation to studies of theatrical language, since theatre is a closely related sphere of activity. First, however, three central concepts in this context – slang, music slang, and trade slang term – must be defined and the study material presented.

## 2. Definitions of concepts

**Slang** as a concept is usually used to denote words and expressions, that is, the lexical level of the language (see e.g. Strömman 1995: 312-313; Lindfors Viklund 2001: 30; Kotsinas 2001: 17-18; Kotsinas 2003: 15, 21). This is a limitation to which I have ascribed.

Slang used in workplaces and by professionals of various types is given many different names in the literature (see e.g. Bergman 1964: 71; Strömman 1995: 16; Kotsinas 2001: 19; Kotsinas 2003: 21). Specifically with respect to musicians and slang, the designations in the primary sources and secondary literature on which the study was based include *orchestra slang* (Sw. *orkesterslang*), *from the mouths of musicians* (Sw. *i musikermun*), *music language* (Sw. *musikspråk*), *band slang* (Sw. *musikkårsslang*), *musicians' jargon* (Sw. *musikerjargong*), and *in musical circles* (Sw. *i musikantkretsar*) (BIM 1946: 130; Österwall 1990: 112; Edström 1996: 73; Musikerslang 1998: 110; Netzell 2003: 39; Tellemar 2005: 55, 92). I have chosen to use the concept **music slang** and its associated term, by which I mean slang used by musicians, usually professional musicians, not people who are interested in music in general. The designation refers to spoken language used within a limited linguistic community of professionals (see Strömman 1995: 319; see e.g. Gunnarsson 2009: 5 on characteristics of **professional discourse**).

Trade slang can be humorous (Bergman 1964: 71). Also **trade slang terms** can be humorous, but trade slang terms can in some situations replace the correct LSP terms (Strömman 1995: 313; see Kotsinas 2001: 19). Like LSP terms, trade slang terms are usually unambiguous in their professional context(s) and are included in (more or less expansive) conceptual systems.<sup>2</sup> But unlike LSP terms, trade slang terms are not listed in standardized LSP glossaries and dictionaries (Strömman 1995: 17).

## 3. Study material

This current study is an expansion of the study presented in Landqvist (2006). Both were inspired by conversations with my father, Åke Landqvist, between 2004 and 2007. As a sixteen-year-old, he enrolled as a music student at the Royal Bohuslän Regiment in Uddevalla, in western Sweden. He got his musical education at the regiment and what was then the Royal Academy of Music in Stockholm between the years of 1939 and 1951. Thereafter, he was a trombonist in the orchestra of Stora Teatern, a concert hall and musical theatre in Gothenburg, until his retirement in 1989. He continued playing after he retired, mainly in the Police Orchestra in Gothenburg, and was an active musician until his death in 2008.

The conversations with Åke Landqvist were thus the jumping-off point, but the trade slang terms that came up in those talks have been augmented and compared with information from other sources. I have used various primary sources: biographies of Swedish musicians and memoirs written by Swedish musicians born in the first decades of the twentieth century, musicological literature, and LSP glossaries and dictionaries in the field of music. I have also used secondary li-

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<sup>2</sup> Strömman (1995: 392) writes about **trade slang** (Sw. *fackslang*) and **slang terms** (Sw. *fackslangstermer*). I have chosen to use **trade slang term** rather than **slang term** in order to linguistically emphasize the correlation between the musicians' LSP and the lexical resource that the trade slang terms constitute.

terature in the form of monolingual general dictionaries, monolingual slang dictionaries, and linguistic literature about slang.

#### 4. Trade slang terms: introductory overview

As mentioned in section 1.2, the material covers a total of 144 trade slang terms, which I divide into three main categories: **musical instruments**, **musical activities**, and **musicians**. A single meaning is assigned to 102 of the trade slang terms in the material, but at least two different meanings are given for a single trade slang term in 10 cases, which are thus polysemous terms. In 32 cases, the material ascribes a musical instrument, musical activity, or category of musician with at least two designations; the material thus includes synonymous appellations for the relevant phenomenon.

The paper provides many examples from the material. While every endeavor was made to find English translations that capture both the meaning and register of the trade slang terms, meaning has, in some instances, had to take precedence.

The first main category of the three refers to musical instruments, and accounts for 59 of the 144 trade slang terms. The instruments are further broken down into brass, woodwinds, string instruments, percussion instruments, and other types of instruments. One example from each instrument group: *dragsnork* (*sliphorn*) ‘trumpet’ or ‘trombone,’ *kvarpa* (*clary*) ‘clarinet,’ *låda* (*box*) ‘guitar’ or ‘piano,’ *marschkagge* (*marching barrel*) ‘marching drum,’ and *skåp* (*box*) ‘accordion.’

The second main category, musical activities, is notable for 46 instances. They are various designations for playing, conducting, preparing to play, and arranging music. Examples: *lira* (*jam*) ‘play,’ *slå* (*beat*) ‘conduct,’ *repa* ‘rehearse,’ and *arra* ‘arrange.’

The third and last main category is musicians. This category accounts for 39 instances and is divided into seven subcategories, which are shown with examples in Table 1.

Subcategory	Example	Translation	Meaning
Musical leaders, orchestral officials, and arrangers	<i>taktslagare</i>	Lit. <i>time-beater</i>	‘unskilled conductor/director’
Musicians and singers with special tasks	<i>sarkofagtupp</i>	Lit. <i>sarcophagus rooster</i>	‘male singer who performs at funerals’
Musicians who play brass instruments	<i>mässingsplågare</i>	Lit. <i>brass beater</i>	‘trumpeter’ or ‘horn player’
Musicians who play woodwind instruments	<i>saxlirare</i>	Lit. <i>sax player</i>	‘saxophonist’
Musicians who play string instruments	<i>tangentkliare</i>	<i>key tickler</i>	‘pianist’
Musicians who play percussion instruments	<i>skinplågare</i>	Lit. <i>skin beater/hide beater</i>	‘percussionist,’ ‘timpanist’
Musicians who play other types of instruments	<i>komp(et)</i>	Lit. <i>the comp</i>	‘the musicians in the rhythm section’

Table 1. Subcategories to main category Musicians

The division of the trade slang terms into three main categories shows that names for practitioners’ tools account for the largest number of instances (59). The second largest category is designations of musicians’ work operations (46), and the final category covers names for the professionals performing the work (39). The results are consistent with Swedish occupational slang in general and Swedish trade slang terms in the printing business, which primarily designate tools and work operations (Kotsinas 2003: 21 and Strömman 1995: 345; see also Skautrup 1968: 304).

In addition, it is generally common for various practitioners to be given slang appellations (Kotsinas 2003: 9-13).

## 5. Origins and formation of the trade slang terms

This section studies the trade slang terms based on their origins and formation. Accounting for 117 of the 144 trade slang terms, nouns make up the predominant word class, appearing either as separate nouns or headwords in nominal phrases. There are 26 verbs, either separately or included in verb phrases, while there is only one instance of an adjective, including participles. With its plethora of nouns, limited number of verbs, and scanty adjectives, my material is consistent with the lexis in various LSPs and terminologies in general (see e.g. Pilke 2000: 64-65, 286-288; see Kotsinas 2001: 20 on slangwords and word classes).

### 5.1. Figurative expressions: metaphors and metonyms

Figurative expressions are generally very common in slang (see Gibson 1983: [II]). With 77 instances, figurative expressions are by far the most common category in my material when it comes to the origins and formation of the trade slang terms and account for slightly more than half the total. They are primarily metaphors, but metonyms appear as well (62 and 15 instances respectively; see e.g. Lindfors Viklund 2001: 122-123 on metaphors and metonyms). Metaphors are based on similarity, such as *skåp* (*box*) in the sense of ‘accordion,’ while metonyms are based on close association, such as *elfenben* (*ivory*) in the verb phrase *klia elfenben* (*tickle the ivories*) ‘play the piano.’

The material includes metaphors made up of simple nouns and verbs (or verb phrases with implied objects). Examples include the nouns *kagge* (lit. *barrel*) meaning ‘drum’ and *krok* (*hook*) ‘saxophone’ as well as the verbs *baxa* [*an instrument*] meaning ‘to prepare for a rehearsal or concert’ and *slå* (*beat* [*the time*]) meaning ‘to conduct’. Compound nouns and verb phrases with a verb particle or a stated direct object also appear. The string instrument *basfiol* or *kontrabas* (*double bass/contrabass*) can be denoted with four synonymous compound nouns: *hängbjörk* (*weeping birch*), *ståfela* (*standing fiddle*), *ståltrådskommod* (*wire washstand*), and *ståstänka* (*standing tankard*), while two verb phrases that describe musical activities are *sitta in* (*sit in*) meaning ‘play temporarily with an orchestra’ and *hänga tvätt* (lit. *hang the laundry*) ‘conduct an orchestra.’ Noteworthy among the metonyms in the material are the nouns *mässing* (*brass*) meaning ‘wind instrument’ or ‘horn’ and *elfenben* (*ivory*) for ‘piano.’ The metonyms are then used in compound nouns and/or verb phrases, such as *mässingsplågare* (lit. *brass beater*) meaning ‘trumpet player’ or ‘horn player’, *käka mässingssoppa* (lit. *eat brass soup*) ‘play horn music,’ and *klia elfenben* (*tickle the ivories*) ‘play the piano.’

### 5.2. Clipped words

Clips form a comparatively common category in the material, with a total of 37 instances. Most of the clipped words are nominal phrases or separate nouns, examples of which include *tryckt arrangemang* (*printed arrangement, chart*) > *tryckarr*, *musikdirektör(en)* (*musical director, band leader*) > *dirk(en)*, *saxofon* (*saxophone*) > *sax*, and *saxofonist* (*saxophonist*) > *sax*. Words formed with the suffix *-is* are generally very common in Swedish slang, such as *kompanjon* > *kompis* (*buddy*) (see Kotsinas 2001: 21). The suffix is also used to designate practitioners of an occupation, such as *plåtslagare* (*sheet metal worker*) > *plåtis* (Bergman 1964: 69; Kotsinas 2003: 223-227). However, there are only four instances in my material, including *kapellmästare* (*band leader*) > *kapellis* (see Strömman 1995: 337 on the scarce *-is* words in Swedish trade slang in the printing business).

### 5.3. Loanwords

International terminology in the music field has evolved with contributions from many different languages including Italian, Latin, French, and German (Störel 1998: 1336). This fact is reflected in Swedish musical terminology (Brodin 1986: [4]). Theatrical terminology also demonstrates a corresponding lexical situation (Fluck 1996: 98; Beck 1998: 676). Nevertheless, there are few loanwords among the trade slang terms in my material (see Kotsinas 2001: 19-20 and Lindfors Viklund 2001: 57-58 on loanwords and slang).

The trade slang term *brass* as a name for brass instruments and the musicians who play them is an English loanword. The same is true for *jobb* (*job*) meaning ‘date, engagement’ (see e.g. *Nationalencyklopedins ordbok* ‘Dictionary of the National Encyclopaedia,’ hereinafter *NEO*). In addition, there are more or less certain loanwords from English, including the polysemous *horn* meaning ‘wind instrument,’ ‘brass instrument,’ ‘trumpet,’ or ‘saxophone’ (*horn* is also found in the compound *snabelhorn*, lit. *elephant’s trunk horn*, meaning ‘baritone saxophone’), and the clipped noun *sax* meaning ‘saxophone or ‘saxophonist’ (see e.g. *NEO* on *sax*). The clipped word *sax* appears in compounds, either prepended as in *saxlirare* ‘sax player, saxophonist,’ or appended, as in *tenorsax* ‘tenor saxophone.’ The English loanwords are joined by the instrument designation *fela* ‘fiddle, violin’, which is derived from German and Latin, and three trade slang terms in which the morpheme *bax*, of Dutch origin, is included (*NEO*). According to the *NEO*, the verb *lira* ‘play,’ also traces back only to German, and not to both German and Månsing<sup>3</sup> (Swedish peddlers’ cant), as asserted by Bergman (1964: 52).

A total of twelve trade slang terms are loanwords, to a varying degree of certainty. They are thus few in number, and the musical genres involved are probably significant. Presumably there are more loanwords – mainly from English – found in trade slang terms used by Swedish jazz, pop, and rock musicians (see Kotsinas 2003: 248) than by musicians working in military bands, symphony orchestras, and entertainment orchestras.

### 5.4. Swedish dialects, Swedish Romany, and Månsing

Swedish dialects, Swedish Romany, and Månsing, a peddlers’ cant, are three important sources of Swedish slang in everyday use (see Kotsinas 2003: 178-180, 184-186, 206), but very few of the trade slang terms in my material have such origins. The reason may be that the material involves musical genres that offer limited opportunities to derive trade slang terms from these sources.

The only trade slang term of dialectal origin is the noun *snork*, which according to *Svenska Akademiens ordbok* (‘The Dictionary of the Swedish Academy,’ hereinafter *SAOB*) is related to the verb *snarka* (*snore*). The material provides three meanings of the polysemous *snork*: ‘musical instrument,’ ‘trumpet,’ and ‘trombone.’ The word *snork* is also included in the compounds *dragsnork* (*pull snore* or *slide snore*), *slirsnork* (*slip snore*): ‘trombone, slide trombone,’ and *kliasnork* (*scratch snore*): ‘fiddle, violin.’ Swedish Romany contributes the verb *bassa* (*boogie*) and its variant *barsa* ‘play,’ and the nouns *bass* or *bars* (*gig*), whose meanings include ‘engagement, date’ (Bergman 1964: 25-26). The verb *lira*, meaning ‘play,’ is derived from both German and Månsing (Bergman 1964: 52; see section 5.3 above on *lira*). These are joined by the compounds *dansbass* ‘playing at a dance/dances,’ the derivation *lirare* ‘musician,’ and the verb phrase *lira utanför* ‘play from memory,’ ‘play without sheet music.’

### 5.5. Puns

Puns are generally common in everyday Swedish slang (Gibson 1983: [II]; Kotsinas 2003: 240-242), but there are only five instances in the material. Two of those are the verb phrases *spela med*

3 The Swedish cant Månsing is a private language developed by travelling peddlers of textile goods, known as Västergötland Peddlers, in rural Sweden starting in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Many Månsing words and expressions have come into more general use in Swedish slang (see Bergman 1964: 38-55 and Lagerström 2004).

*nötter* (literally, *to play with nuts*, a pun on *playing with notes* (“*nötter/noter*”) or *sheet music*) and *spela utanför* (lit. *to play outside*, ‘play without notes, play from memory’.) Puns and other word plays are more common among musicians when it comes to slang appellations for musical works (see Landqvist 2006). While such designations can be termed music slang, they are not trade slang terms.

### 5.6. Origins and formation of the trade slang terms: summary

According to Strömman (1995: 315-316), Swedish trade slang terms in the printing business are formed in four different ways. They are made up of short forms of proper trade terms, words in everyday language, used in an opaque manner, reformations in the same manner as in general slang, and humorous names for equipment or work operations. Similar patterns emerge in my material, but with two exceptions: words with the *-is* suffix, otherwise so common in Swedish slang, and puns/plays on words are rare. The results may also be compared with Kotsinas’ assessment that words included in **occupational slang** are formed by language users abbreviating or distorting occupational terms. Names, often humorous, for tools and work operations are created through that process (Kotsinas 2003: 21). When it comes to their origins and formation, the trade slang terms in my material thus present a picture familiar through slang in general use. People who develop and use slang usually do so by using words and expressions taken from everyday language and ascribing them new meaning(s) (Lindfors Viklund 2001: 55). For the trade slang terms in my material, this is manifest primarily through figurative expressions, mainly in the form of metaphors, but also metonyms.

## 6. Semantic content of the trade slang terms

Words and expressions used by employees of the public transportation company *AB Storstockholms Lokaltrafik* in Stockholm were analyzed by Andersson (1994), who uses three categories to classify the semantic content of the words and expressions in question. The first category covers words and expressions whose meaning is restricted or more specific compared to **everyday language**, i.e. **language for general purposes, (LGP)**, while the second contains words and expressions, including figurative language, whose semantic content is expanded. Words and expressions whose meanings deviate partially or entirely from everyday language are sorted into the third category (Andersson 1994: 99-100).<sup>4</sup>

In the following, I apply Andersson’s analytical model to 113 of the 144 trade slang terms in my material, while the remaining 31 are not considered. In my judgement, these 31 trade slang terms either do not occur outside musicians’ circles, and thus have no connection to everyday language, or these trade slang terms also occur in the general lexis with the same meaning the professionals ascribe to them (see Fluck 1996: 100 on theatrical terms in everyday language). Examples are the noun *dansbass* meaning ‘playing at an evening dance’ and the verb *kompa* from *ackompanjera* (*accompany*), respectively (see e.g. NEO on *kompa*).

Quantitatively, Andersson’s second category, trade slang terms with an expanded semantic content compared to everyday language, is the largest, with 55 of 113 instances, that is, almost half of the trade slang terms in question. The second-most common are trade slang terms whose meanings deviate partly or entirely from the meanings of the words and expressions in everyday language (36 instances). The third and smallest category is made up of trade slang terms with a restricted or more specific meaning compared to the general lexis (22 instances).

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4 Andersson (1994: 99-100) discusses words and expressions in his material in relation to **normal language** (Sw. *normalspråk*) and **normal linguistic meaning** (Sw. *normalspråklig mening*). Since there is some risk that these terms might be perceived as value judgements, I have chosen instead to discuss the trade slang terms in my material in relation to **everyday language (language for general purposes, LGP)** even though the latter term, with its underlying concept, is at least as difficult to define as **normal language** (see Landqvist 2003: 6–7).

### 6.1. Trade slang terms with restricted or more specific meaning

Examples of the first category according to Andersson (1994), i.e. terms with restricted or more specific meaning compared to everyday language, include verb phrases with implied complements: *lira* [music] ‘play’ and *repa* [a musical piece] ‘rehearse.’ Other examples are the nouns *lirare* ‘musician’ and *baxning* ‘preparation for rehearsals and engagements’ (lit. *to move an object by jogging/walking it in small movements*). The restricted meaning is pragmatically motivated, since something that is familiar or implicit does not need to be said (Andersson 1994: 99). In musical circles, a *lirare* plays music, not football, and *baxning* means to prepare to do the work of a band or an orchestra, not to move heavy objects in general. The everyday language meanings of *lirare* and *baxning*, which are given in the NEO, are thus irrelevant when professional musicians communicate with each other about their joint pursuits.

### 6.2. Trade slang terms with expanded semantic content

The trade slang terms in my material provide many examples of Andersson’s second category of expanded semantic content compared to everyday language, including figurative expressions. A few names for various categories of musicians can be mentioned here: *rörpulare* (*reed whacker*) ‘woodwind player,’ *skinplågare* (lit. *skin or hide beater*) ‘percussionist, drummer,’ and *tangentkliare* (*key tickler*) ‘pianist.’ The trade slang terms with expanded semantic content may be deemed explanatory, since they describe central elements in the practice of these musicians’ professions: the *rörpulare/reed whacker* blows into a reed-shaped mouthpiece, the *skinplågare/skin or hide beater* hits the drum skin, and the *tangentkliare/key tickler* touches piano keys. Trade slang terms with expanded semantic content may to a certain extent be expressive in that they express the feelings of professionals about various instruments, activities, and practitioners (see Lindfors Viklund 2001: 103).

### 6.3. Trade slang terms with deviant meanings

As examples of Andersson’s (1994) third category, i.e. trade slang terms whose meanings deviate from their meanings as words and expressions in everyday language, I have chosen *storspelman*, meaning ‘military band director’; *hornboskap* ‘horn players’ or ‘brass band’; and *lurblåsare*, which has three alternative meanings: ‘trumpet player,’ ‘trombonist,’ and ‘horn player.’ The corresponding words have entirely different meanings in everyday language. SAOB notes that *storspelman* refers to a skilled or prominent folk musician, that *hornboskap* is used almost exclusively about cattle, and that *lurblåsare* is mainly used about people who blow into an S-shaped instrument from the Bronze Age. The trade slang terms with deviant meanings may be categorized as humorous, but they also help professional musicians signal each other by means of language that they belong to a shared community (see Andersson 1994: 100).

### 6.4. Semantic content of the trade slang terms: summary

In summary, the trade slang terms in the material primarily provide examples of expanded semantic content compared to the same words and expressions in everyday language, but some trade slang terms have restricted or more specific semantic content. Likewise, the material includes trade slang terms that are examples of deviant meanings compared to everyday language. One possible parallel is offered by theatrical trade terms, which primarily express expanded semantic content compared to everyday language, but trade terms with restricted semantic content also occur in theatrical language (Fluck 1996: 99-100).

## 7. Functions of the trade slang terms

The basis for discussion in this section is the question of the possible reasons for past and present use of the trade slang terms in my material.

### 7.1. Efficient communication

Strömman (1995: 345) notes that trade slang terms enable efficient, purposeful communication, and that slang in the workplace is an expression of linguistic economy (see Laurén/Nordman 1987: 38). It is reasonable to presume that trade slang terms for instruments, musical activities, and categories of actors in the field promote efficient communication within a band or an orchestra. The meanings of the verb phrases *sitta in* (*sit in*) ‘play temporarily with an orchestra;’ *spe-la med nötter* (*play with nuts*) ‘play from sheet notes/music;’ and *slå* (*beat* [time]) ‘conduct’ are clear to the professionals who use them. To a certain extent, the trade slang terms may also conceal information from outsiders, although that is hardly the primary purpose (see Laurén/Nordman 1987: 38, 41; Laurén 1993: 50; Strömman 1995: 345; Brünner 1998: 645; Kotsinas 2001: 22). But certain trade slang terms in the material can actually impede efficient communication. If two professionals are not aware that a single trade slang term may be polysemous, there is potential risk of misunderstanding. Likewise, the fact that a particular instrument, a certain musical activity, or a specific actor may be referred to by different names, i.e. synonymy, may pose a barrier to efficient communication through the use of trade slang terms instead of musical terminology.

### 7.2. Group cohesion

Kotsinas (2001: 22, 173-176; 2003: 25) underscores the importance of slang and quasi-slang in occupational language for bonding professionals in a group (see Bergman 1964: 71; Skautrup 1968: 304). Andersson (1994: 96, 101) also emphasizes the significance of language when an employee wants to show that he or she has an established position within the public transportation company *AB Storstockholms Lokaltrafik* and that he or she masters the special linguistic usage within the company. My conversations with the informant Åke Landqvist, as well as information found in other primary sources, show very clearly that it was both important and logical for musicians to learn the special words and expressions used by their colleagues, since they could by so doing demonstrate that they belonged to the professional group (Norman 1980: 243; Österwall 1990: 112; Netzell 2003: 39, 75-76; Tellemar 2005: 55, 92).

### 7.3. Good atmosphere in the workplace

In general, occupational slang does not have only the function of facilitating efficient communication about the field among professionals in the field in question, but also a more humorous function (Gibson 1983: [II]; see Strömman 1995: 313). This emerges primarily in trade slang terms with expanded semantic content, including figurative language of various kinds. A few examples are the verb phrases *gnida fårtarm* (*rub the sheepgut*) meaning ‘play a string instrument;’ and *plåga skinn* (*beat the skins*) or *plåga kalvskinn* (*beat the calf’s hides*) meaning ‘beat a drum, to play drums;’ and the nouns *storspelman* ‘military band director’ and *hängbjörk* (*weeping birch*) meaning ‘contrabass/double bass.’ Interestingly enough, theatrical professionals are also reported to use their jargon to express an ironic, distanced attitude towards their own professional activities (Beck 1998: 676).

### 7.4. Functions of the trade slang terms: summary

The trade slang terms in the material thus promote efficient communication among professionals, as well as a sense of community and a good atmosphere in the workplace. However, it might be difficult – or impossible – to identify the intended function or functions of a specific trade slang term. For instance, use of the shorter trade slang term *kvarpa* (*clary*) instead of the longer LSP term *klarinet* (*clarinet*) furthers efficient communication in the workplace because the professionals know which instrument is meant. The designation may also contribute to creating a sense of community among them, since outsiders may not be aware of the meaning of *kvarpa*. And in any case, when the name was coined, *kvarpa* may have been tongue in cheek.



## 8. Concluding discussion

In this study, I present and discuss a total of 144 trade slang terms used by Swedish professional musicians in military bands, symphony orchestras, and entertainment orchestras from the 1930s and onward. The trade slang terms are studied from the angles of form, meaning, and function. In the following, I discuss two methodological questions in relation to studies of slang among professionals/occupational groups in general and identify potential areas of development based on the results of my study.

The first methodological question is how the linguistic scholar should gain access to working material. Most of the trade slang terms studied do not appear in the monolingual general dictionaries used, while certain trade slang terms appear in general slang dictionaries or musicological literature. A number of trade slang terms do not occur at all outside the primary sources used in the study (see Strömman 1995: 319). Thus, the linguistic scholar must get access to (parts of) the professional's linguistic knowledge.

The second question is how the linguistic scholar should evaluate the information to which he or she gains access through primary sources. Where the boundaries between different musical genres can be placed was a central issue for my study (see Nordman 2003: 137). Many musicians have worked in many different contexts, which also made it difficult to draw these boundaries (Edström 1996: 61-75, 212-213). In this context, Åke Landqvist's professional expertise was invaluable to assessing whether words and expressions could be classified with the form of music slang I study here, or whether they are trade slang terms used mainly by jazz, pop, and rock musicians. Despite this, there is some risk of subjectivity, and thus several informants should be used, if possible (see Strömman 1995: 14, 319-321).

I hope that the discussion of trade slang terms in the field of music has shown that music slang, like slang in other occupational categories, is an interesting field of LSP research. In this context, I would like to note three sub-fields of music slang that would be worthy of further study.

Firstly, it would be interesting to relate the results of this study to language usage among currently active musicians, i.e. a diachronic perspective. Many of the trade slang terms in the study originate from primary sources that state, or at least suggest, that the trade slang terms have been used since the 1930s and later (see Andersson 1994: 95). Two secondary sources, *Svensk slangordbok* ('The Swedish Slang Dictionary') and *Norstedts svenska slangordbok* ('Norstedts Dictionary of Swedish Slang') list slang words judged current from the 1930s to the 1960s and in the 1990s, respectively (Gibson 1983: [I] resp. Kotsinas 2000: X). The secondary sources SAOB and NEO provide precise datings for the first occurrence in Swedish of a few of the trade slang terms studied, mainly in the twentieth century but in a few cases even earlier (see Landqvist 2006). The question is how much the trade slang terms I have studied are still used today, early in the twenty-first century (see Kotsinas 2001: 20-22, 161-162 on "words that live and words that die"). To clarify the matter, it would thus be interesting to discuss the trade slang terms with musicians who are currently working in Swedish military bands, symphony orchestras, and entertainment orchestras.

Secondly, it would be intriguing to expand the perspective to categories of musicians and musical genres other than those covered by this study, i.e. in a synchronic perspective (see Bergman 1964: 71 on various genres among professionals and Beck 1998: 676-677 on linguistic subsystems in theatrical jargon). Potential research questions would be whether trade slang terms used by jazz, pop, and rock musicians have the same origins and formation patterns as the trade slang terms in my material, or whether other patterns might emerge. Likewise, it would be interesting to investigate whether the semantic content of the trade slang terms demonstrates the same relation to words and expressions in everyday language (language for general purposes, LGP), regardless of musical genre.

A third avenue would be contrastive studies of music slang, which is of course not the sole province of Swedish. An example of this opportunity is provided by Horstmann (2003). In her study

of women's genderized choices of musical instruments, Horstmann also explores what I consider trade slang terms. This can be illustrated with two German designations for the accordion and one for the harpsichord. According to Horstmann, the accordion may be called *Asthmabeutel* 'asthma bag' or *C-Dur-Expander* 'C Major Expander', while the harpsichord may be called *Eierschneider* 'egg slicer'. There are thus intriguing opportunities here to study music slang in different languages based on the origins and formation, semantic content, and functions of single words and multiword expressions.

As discussed in section 1, linguistic studies of slang in various LSPs, occupations, and workplaces are not especially common. One of my ambitions for this study, here focused on music and musicians, was to show that trade slang in various fields is a subject worthy of the attention of LSP scholars. I am convinced it is so, both in order to further understanding of this kind of communication among professionals, as an important part of their communicative repertoire and linguistic knowledge, and to develop the methodological tools of LSP research, by using various possibilities such as interviews, surveys, and written documentation.

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