

ISO 639-3 Registration Authority

Request for Change to ISO 639-3 Language Code

Change Request Number: 2021-043 (completed by Registration authority)

Date: 2021-8-31

Primary Person submitting request: Spencer van der Meulen (jan Pensa)

Affiliation: volunteer of the Toki Pona ISO 639-3 working group

E-mail address: spencer.vd.meulen at gmail dot com

Names, affiliations and email addresses of additional supporters of this request:

Contributors of the application and additional supporters from from the Toki Pona community (added in parentheses are Toki Pona names commonly used within the community)

Wong Cho Ching - jansate at sadale dot net (jan Sate)

Chuck Smith - chuck at amikumu dot com

Robin van der Vliet - info at robinvandervliet dot com (jan Lopin)

Lev Brekalov - leobrekallini at gmail dot com (jan Lewa)

Theodore Dubois - tbladot at icloud dot com (jan Tepo)

Joop Kieft - joop at kieft dot net (jan Mimoku)

Lorenzo Passaretti - lorensz at hotmail dot it (jan Lole)

Carson Black - uhhadd at gmail dot com (jan Jan)

Bowen Dobson - bowen.dobson at gmail dot com (jan PoTo)

Bartosz Jacek Stachniuk - bartekstachniuk19 at gmail dot com (jan Josuwa)

jan Ne - nena.esun at gmail dot com

Gavin Bisesi - daenyth at gmail dot com (jan Deni)

Zac Stanislawski - zmstanislawski at gmail dot com (jan Sa)

Ret Samys - samysisme at gmail dot com (jan Ke Tami)

Haven Hamelin - havenhamelin at gmail dot com (soko Awen)

Jacque Goupil - jacque.goupil at usherbrooke dot ca (jan Tomino)

Ryan O'Farrell - ryanofarrell0430 at gmail dot com

Benjamin Herman - benjamin at metanomial dot com (jan Pensamin)

jan Lipamanka - misterlipman at gmail dot com

Chelsea Raacz - tokipona.sasalin at gmail dot com (jan Lakuse)

Noah Saunders - millaclare at gmail dot com (jan Nowa)

jan Son - jannanpason at gmail dot com

Adrian Edgar - theepicadrian at gmail dot com (kule epiku Atawan)

Ian Grenville - ian.grenville at mail dot mcgill dot ca

jan Seni - secnyt at gmail dot com

Re - citrons at mondecitronne dot com (jan Le)

C. Ryan Moniz - elijolo66 at gmail dot com (jan inwin)

Kasra Rahimi - kasra012345 at gmail dot com (jan Kawa)

Mitch Halley - mitchelljhalley at gmail dot com (jan Misali)

Olli Wilkman - olli.wilkman at iki dot fi (jan Olawi)

Sonja Lang - sonjaaa at gmail dot com (jan Sonja)

kapesi Pake - bankonsax at gmail dot com

Jiang Tongyu - fqdingsky at gmail dot com (kala pona Tonyu)

Maxim Shestakov - mdshestakov at edu dot hse dot ru (kala Asi)

jan Lili - 8o7wermobile at gmail dot com

Sasi Olin - sasi at olin dot cc (ilo Sasi)

PassTheSun86 - passthesun86 at gmail dot com (jan Suno/jan Sunya)
onlymx13 - onlymx13 at gmail dot com (jan Ensasin)
Nicole Di Bisceglie - quirby001 at gmail dot com (kqa/jan Nikoleta)
Ethan Fleming - aquario.1133 at gmail dot com (jan Kokili)
Perseus Norcross - loogaloogagoog at gmail dot com (kulupu Pinwila / epikulupu)
Bryant Knight - pije.sb at slmail dot me (jan Pije)
Gavin D King - gdking01 at gmail dot com (jan ilo Katapin)
Andre Pieters - andrebacon2 at yahoo dot com (jan Anwe)

Postal address for primary contact person for this request (in general, email correspondence will be used):

PLEASE NOTE: This completed form will become part of the public record of this change request and the history of the ISO 639-3 code set and will be posted on the ISO 639-3 website.

Types of change requests

This form is to be used in requesting changes (whether creation, modification, or deletion) to elements of the *ISO 639 Codes for the representation of names of languages — Part 3: Alpha-3 code for comprehensive coverage of languages*. The types of changes that are possible are to 1) modify the reference information for an existing code element, 2) propose a new macrolanguage or modify a macrolanguage group; 3) retire a code element from use, including merging its scope of denotation into that of another code element, 4) split an existing code element into two or more new language code elements, or 5) create a new code element for a previously unidentified language variety. Fill out section 1, 2, 3, 4, or 5 below as appropriate, and the final section documenting the sources of your information. The process by which a change is received, reviewed and adopted is summarized on the final page of this form.

Type of change proposed (check one):

1. ☐ Modify reference information for an existing language code element
2. ☐ Propose a new macrolanguage or modify a macrolanguage group
3. ☐ Retire a language code element from use (duplicate or non-existent)
4. ☐ Expand the denotation of a code element through the merging one or more language code elements into it (retiring the latter group of code elements)
5. ☐ Split a language code element into two or more new code elements
6. ☒ Create a code element for a previously unidentified language

For proposing a change to an existing code element, please identify:

Affected ISO 639-3 identifier:

Associated reference name:

1. Modify an existing language code element

(a) What are you proposing to change:

- ☐ Language reference name; generally this is changed only if it is erroneous; if usage is shifting to a new preferred form, the new form may be added (next box)
- ☐ Language additional names
- ☐ Language type (living, extinct, historical, etc.)
- ☐ Language scope (individual language or macrolanguage)

(b) What new value(s) do you propose:

(c) Rationale for change:

2. Propose a new macrolanguage or modify a macrolanguage group

(a) For an existing Macrolanguage, what change to its individual language membership do you propose:

(b) Rationale for change:

For a new Macrolanguage proposal, please also complete the form “Request for New Language Code Element in ISO 639-3” (file name “ISO639-3_NewCodeRequest.doc” or “ISO639-3_NewCodeRequestForm.rtf”), which must also be submitted to fully document the intended meaning for the new macrolanguage.

3. Retire a language code element from use

(a) Reason for change:

☐

There is no evidence that the language exists.

☐

This is equivalent to another ISO 639-3 language.

(b) If equivalent with another code element, with which ISO 639-3 code element (identifier and name) is it equivalent:

(c) Rationale for change:

4. Expand the denotation of a code element through merging of one or more code elements

(a) List the languages (identifier and name) to be merged into this code element and retired from use:

(b) Rationale for change

5. Split a language code element into two or more code elements

(a) List the languages into which this code element should be split:

By the language identification criteria set forth in ISO 639-3, the simple fact of distinct identities is not enough to assign separate identifiers. The criteria are defined in the standard as follows:

For this part of ISO 639, judgments regarding when two varieties are considered to be the same or different languages are based on a number of factors, including linguistic similarity, intelligibility, a common literature (traditional or written), a common writing system, the views of users concerning the relationship between language and identity, and other factors. The following basic criteria are followed:

- Two related varieties are normally considered varieties of the same language if users of each variety have inherent understanding of the other variety (that is, can understand based on knowledge of their own variety without needing to learn the other variety) at a functional level.
 - Where intelligibility between varieties is marginal, the existence of a common literature or of a common ethnolinguistic identity with a central variety that both understand can be strong indicators that they should nevertheless be considered varieties of the same language.
 - Where there is enough intelligibility between varieties to enable communication, the existence of well-established distinct ethnolinguistic identities can be a strong indicator that they should nevertheless be considered to be different languages
- (b) Referring to the criteria given above, give the rationale for splitting the existing code element into two or more languages:
- (c) Does the language code element to be split represent a major language in which there already exists a significant body of literature and research? Are there contexts in which all the proposed separate languages may still be considered the same language—as in having a common linguistic identity, a shared (or undistinguished) body of literature, a written form in common, etc.? If so, please comment.

In order to complete the change request, the form “Request for New Language Code Element in ISO 639-3” (file name “ISO639-3_NewCodeRequestForm.doc” or “ISO639-3_NewCodeRequestForm.rtf”) must also be submitted for each new identifier that is to be created. That step can be deferred until this form has been processed by the ISO 639-3 registrar.

6. Create a new language code element

- (a) Name of missing language: Toki Pona
- (b) State the case that this language is not the same as or has not been included within any language that already has an identifier in ISO 639-3:
Toki Pona is a constructed language, but it is clearly not identical to any of the constructed languages that are included in ISO 639-3 so far. See addendum for specific arguments.

In order to complete the change request, the form “Request for New Language Code Element in ISO 639-3” (file name “ISO639-3_NewCodeRequest.doc” or “ISO639-3_NewCodeRequestForm.rtf”) must also be submitted to more fully document the new language.

Sources of information

Please use whichever of the points below are relevant in order to document the sources on which you have based the above proposal.

- (a) First-hand knowledge. Describe:
Personal experience and research as a long-time Toki Pona speaker and an enthusiast of constructed languages and their origins.
- (b) Knowledge through personal communication. Describe:
- (c) Knowledge from published sources (please give complete bibliographical references):

The change proposal process

A request to change the code set goes through a six-step process:

1. A user of ISO 639-3 proposes a change and submits it to the ISO 639-3 Registration Authority (ISO 639-3/RA) using this form.
2. The ISO 639-3 registrar processes the change request to verify that the request is compatible with the criteria set forth in the standard and to ensure that the submitter has supplied all necessary information. This may involve rounds of interaction with the submitter.
3. When the change request proposal is complete in its documentation (including all associated New Code Requests), the change request is promoted to “Proposed Change” status and the ISO 639-3 registrar posts the request on the official web site of the ISO 639-3/RA. Also at this time, an announcement is sent to anyone requesting notification of new proposals matching their specified criteria (region and/or language family of interest). Periodically, a message maybe sent to the general LINGUIST discussion list on Linguist List (<http://linguistlist.org/issues/index.html>), and other appropriate discussion lists, inviting individuals to review and comment on pending proposals. Anyone may request from the ISO 639-3 registrar to receive notification regarding proposals involving languages in a specific region of the world or specific language family.
4. Individuals may send comments to the ISO 639-3 registrar for compilation. The consensus of early reviews may result in promotion to “Candidate Status” (with or without amendment), or withdrawal of the change request, if the conclusion is that the request is not in keeping with the stated criteria of the ISO 639-3 standard.
5. Three months prior to the end of the annual cycle of review and update, a new notice is posted on the official web site of the ISO 639-3/RA, and an announcement listing the Candidate Status Change Requests is posted to the LINGUIST discussion list and other discussion lists, as requested by their owners. All change requests are then open to further review and comment by any interested party for a period of three months. A Change Request received after the start of Candidacy phase must wait until the next annual cycle for consideration. The purpose of this phase is to ensure that a minimum of three months is allotted for the review of every proposal.
6. At the end of the formal review period, a given Change Request may be: 1) adopted as a whole; 2) adopted in part (specific changes implicit in the whole Change Request may be adopted separately); 3) rejected as a whole; or 4) amended and resubmitted for the next review cycle. All change requests remain permanently archived at the official web site of the ISO 639-3/RA.

Please return this form to:

ISO 639-3 Registrar
SIL International, Office of Language Information Systems
7500 West Camp Wisdom Road
Dallas, Texas 75236 USA
ISO 639-3/RA web site: <http://www.sil.org/iso639-3/>
E-mail: iso639-3@sil.org

An email attachment of this completed form is preferred.

Sources of documentation for ISO 639-3 identifiers:

Gordon, Raymond G., Jr. (ed.), 2005. Ethnologue: Languages of the World, Fifteenth edition. Dallas, Tex.: SIL International. Online version: <http://www.ethnologue.com/> .

Linguist List. Ancient and Extinct Languages. <http://linguistlist.org/forms/langs/GetListOfAncientLgs.html>

Linguist List. Constructed Languages. <http://linguistlist.org/forms/langs/GetListOfConstructedLgs.html>

For proof that **Toki Pona's corpus of text is steadily growing**, see the list of recent texts on [page 5](#).

For **sources confirming the significance of the language**, see the list on [page 9](#).

As for **whether the language is owned by its community rather than its creator**, in our request form we wrote the following:

In most constructed languages, the norms for the use of the language and changes to those norms are determined by a small number of documents authored by authority figures. In Toki Pona, this has not been the case for a number of years. Authority on what is and isn't considered standard Toki Pona has become almost completely decentralized, and norms are determined by consensus of the community of speakers as a whole - as is the case with many natural non-constructed languages.

Toki Pona: The Language of Good (Lang, 2014) marked the end of Toki Pona's construction by its creator Sonja Lang. This book formally lays down the foundation of the language: the basic grammar and vocabulary of 120 words. The next publication by Lang, the Toki Pona Dictionary (Lang, 2021), is a descriptivist work which, by its own words, "documents Toki Pona as a living language."

For more information on the topic, see the section on [page 7](#).

It would appear that the main thing left to prove, which might not have been explained adequately enough in the request form, is that **Toki Pona's grammar and lexicon are complete and fully functional**.

SIL's new guidelines suggest that a fully functional constructed language is to have grammar covering all areas of language structure and a lexicon of several thousand items. I agree that for the vast majority of constructed languages this is a good guideline to determine whether a language is underdeveloped. However, unlike other constructed languages, Toki Pona was designed specifically to challenge the assumption that a language needs this many core words and grammatical rules to be functional and effective for human communication.

I believe, and many Toki Pona speakers would agree, that Toki Pona has succeeded in proving that with a cleverly designed language and a skilled speaker, a minimalistic set of words and grammatical rules are sufficient for communicating almost anything. The expressive potential of the language is comparable to a constructed language with thousands of lexical items that does not have this focus on extreme efficiency of its words and grammar.

For proof of this, I would point mainly to:

- the existence of [Toki Pona Dictionary](#) (published August 2021), an extensive reference book of around 400 pages that gives Toki Pona translations of over 5000 English words
- many examples of people successfully using Toki Pona to talk about a wide range of complicated topics (for a list of such examples, see [page 4](#))

Toki Pona is simple yet elegant, capable of great things in the hands of a skilled user. See also the section on [page 3](#) that goes into more detail about how the lexicon and grammar of Toki Pona achieve this.

It is also worth pointing out that the practical implications of the minimalistic nature of Toki Pona means it is in some aspects fundamentally different to other languages. At times it needs a paragraph to clearly explain a concept for which another language needs but a short sentence, and at other times the language can describe a thought very succinctly and lay bare the essence of the matter in a way that would fall flat in most languages. The language is highly dependent on context, which forces speakers to always be creative, and mindful of what they are saying and how those words are likely to be interpreted by the listener or reader in the given situation.

Toki Pona provides a novel means of self-expression and thought that is quite unique compared to the languages that came before it. It can give its speakers a new kind of lens through which they can see the world and explore what it is to be human. Pushing the boundaries of this new frontier of communication and exploring the possibilities it holds is what intrigues and drives Toki Pona speakers, and the main reason why I think Toki Pona is a most valuable new addition to the languages of the world.

Appendix

The grammar and lexicon are complete enough for the constructed language to be fully functional

The number of root words in Toki Pona is intentionally far fewer than several thousand (around 137). However, the lexicon exceeds the thousands by far, as compiled in the collaborative *Toki Pona Dictionary* (more on that below). Polysemy is a prevalent feature among individual root words; they have a wide semantic space that can cover dozens of terms that are usually encapsulated in many different words in natural languages.

Words are also intended to be combined with each other and be used in all possible syntactic roles to express a further breadth of meanings. A typical word can be used as a subject or object, modifier, predicate, transitive verb, prepositional phrase, or context phrase, and can hold discrete meaning in each role. Many words have further use as prepositions, auxiliary verbs, conjunctions, interjections, and particles. Hence, each root word, multiplied by their number of possible grammatical functions plus the use of compound nouns results in a lexicon of well over thousands of items.

The recently published [Toki Pona Dictionary](#) includes over 11,000 entries in 366 pages. This includes both English to Toki Pona (170 pages) and Toki Pona to English (196 pages). The dictionary was compiled from survey responses asking how respondents would translate over 5,000 common English words. The surveys were conducted on the Toki Pona Discord server, currently the community with the most activity.

Concepts that are not simple or universal enough for a single word are expressed as a combination of their core ideas and mechanics. The simplest attributive construction, one word directly modifying another, can yield tens of thousands of phrases with the same flexibility as their components. The complexity of a single subject or object phrase can further escalate with prepositions and a particle, *pi*, that allows modifiers to be grouped into their own phrases. There is a movement against lexicalization and calquing of phrases from other languages so that Toki Pona can retain the aforesaid benefits of its minimalistic vocabulary.

Similar to its vocabulary, Toki Pona's grammar is fully capable of expressing arbitrary concepts using a small set of rules. The combination of these few and simple grammar rules yields the

complexity and expressive power of a standalone language. Several major rules are synonymous with the definitions of a closed class of sentence-structuring particles, including *e*, *en*, *la*, *li*, *o*, and *pi*. Others involve clever use of root words. For example, clausal recursion is realized through use of the pronoun and determiner *ni*, which can be used to refer to an adjacent sentence that acts as a subordinate clause. This is comparable to the English use of *that* as a conjunction. For example, “I don’t eat fruit that has gone bad” can translate as “mi moku ala e kili ni: ona li kama jaki,” which literally back-translates as “I don’t eat this fruit: it has become disgusting.”

Other grammatical features:

- Grammatical particles indicate the grammatical function of words in the sentence (not unambiguously). These functions can be: Nouns and adjectives (in subject, direct object or prepositional complement), adverb, verb (transitive or intransitive), preposition, interjection or *special particle*.
- Toki Pona does not have verbal tenses, but has a special particle to introduce context in the sentence, which allows for specifying the time of the action and some other features like conditionals. It presents another particle for commands and wishes.
- There is a particle to introduce the predicate of a sentence, another for introducing the direct object, and several prepositions that introduce different complements, like indirect objects.

Examples of Toki Pona being used to express complex and different topics and areas of knowledge:

- An introduction to non-euclidean geometry:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tL1WBUOqE48> (turn on the subtitles for a literal translation to English). The correctness of this introduction was checked by a mathematician that consumed the original Toki Pona content and certified its correctness except for a small mathematical error that was pointed out in the comments.
- A complete documentation of the grammar and vocabulary for the Toki-Pona-derived sign language “luka pona” and explanation of its grammatical structure:
<https://lukapona.blogspot.com/2021/04/nasin-toki-pi-luka-pona-open.html>
- Description of the mechanism of the COVID-19 mRNA vaccines:
<https://janketami.wordpress.com/2022/01/13/telo-pi-pona-sijelo/>
- The proof that there are an infinite number of prime numbers:
<https://denizaksimsek.com/2022/nanpa-pi-ken-ala-kipisi/>
- Video lecture about philosophy: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MntQiMqwQIA>
- Lecture on book history: <https://youtu.be/5x8ZGP9gKsY>
- Documentary-style video on wildlife in New Zealand: <https://youtu.be/-2zi-dYwPIA>
- News videos about major events:
 - seme li sin?
<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLYVQaWIAWWRErOzvWcQXABSV5SHTUAd5R>
 - sona sin https://youtube.com/playlist?list=PLLrnNZ0mYpipkRKKjyMOkDpbgl_iryh0y
- Full localization of several apps, websites and video games, including:
 - Instant messenger app Telegram (beta translation)
 - Popular video game Minecraft ([Java Edition 1.18](#)), includes over 5000 fragments of text, including a lot of Minecraft-specific terminology, phrases, and various other in-game text.

Also notable are ongoing efforts to localize the search engine DuckDuckGo (duckduckgo.org) and the online chess platform Lichess (lichess.org)

The constructed language has a substantial and growing text corpus

A large, incomplete collection of existing works can be found here:

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1ldMucmhPCzvoUF94Gp25XCwocWOl4PfQ_wfOkiU8cu8/edit?pli=1

To show recent growth in the text corpus, here is a selection of notable works created the last year:

- [Translation of Winnie the Pooh](#), Jan 2022
- [Translation of 1 John](#), Jan 2022
- [toki pi kon pona](#), article about language acquisition through comprehensible input, Dec 2021
- ["toki pona li kama seme?"](#), article speculating on where toki pona will go in the future, Nov 2021
- [toki musi pi jan monsuta loje](#), translation of the Japanese fairy tale 泣いた赤鬼, Oct 2021
- ['kute'](#), reflections on vocabulary used for the Deaf community, Oct 2021
- [uta monsuta](#), an anthology of short horror stories, Oct 2021
- [jan pi lili mute en kala sulì](#), translation of a Polish children's story, Aug 2021
- A [complete documentation](#) of the grammar and vocabulary for the Toki-Pona-derived sign language "luka pona", Apr 2021
- [lon ma tomo pi tenpo pini sulì](#), an original poem, Feb 2021 (published in print in Toki Pona Dictionary later that year)
- [tu kuntu](#), a 45-page original play, Jan 2021
- [lipu kule](#), a new online publication posting about a wide array of topics ([language](#), [poetry](#), [science](#), [programming](#), [technology](#), [stories](#), [cooking](#), [politics](#), [logic](#))
- [lipu tenpo](#), a monthly short form (16-page) magazine with original articles, poetry, and various other content
 - [lipu tenpo nanpa lete](#), Dec 2021
 - [lipu tenpo nanpa moli](#), Nov 2021
 - [lipu tenpo nanpa toki](#), Oct 2021
 - [lipu tenpo nanpa kule](#), Sep 2021
 - [lipu tenpo nanpa suno](#), Aug 2021
 - [lipu tenpo nanpa pan](#), Jun 2021
 - [lipu tenpo nanpa kasi](#), May 2021
 - [lipu tenpo nanpa soweli](#), Apr 2021
 - [lipu tenpo nanpa mun](#), Mar 2021
 - [lipu tenpo nanpa akesi](#), Feb 2021
- [Multiple picture books](#) for the "One Book, One Life" project in contribution to the UNESCO project "The futures of Education"
 - [One more cloud, please](#)
 - [The book planet](#)
 - [Gina and Leonie the turtle](#)
 - [Noa and Ayo](#)
 - [Vicky's first day at school](#)
 - [Aziz's adventures](#)
 - [Birdy wants to swim](#)
 - [Tica the bat](#)
 - [One day at the lake](#)

- [My new home](#)
 - [Mia wants to save the village](#)
- [StoryWeaver picture books](#), Nov 2021 - ongoing
 - [musi kepeken lipu](#)
 - [kule](#)
 - [soweli poka pi soweli lili](#)
 - [kasi luka](#)
 - [lipu pi jan Puku](#)
- [Complete translation of Pepper&Carrot webcomic episodes and website](#), Jan - Dec 2021
 - Pepper&Carrot episodes [11](#) and [12](#), Jan 2021
 - Pepper&Carrot episodes [13](#) to [16](#), Feb 2021
 - Pepper&Carrot episodes [17](#) to [21](#), Mar 2021
 - Pepper&Carrot episodes [22](#) to [25](#), Apr 2021
 - Pepper&Carrot episodes [26](#) to [34](#), May 2021
 - Pepper&Carrot episodes [35](#) and [36](#), Jun 2021
 - Pepper&Carrot episode [37](#), Dec 2021
- [kijetesantakalu ol](#), original webcomic, Feb 2021 - ongoing

Besides in text, Toki Pona is frequently used as a spoken language. A large amount of music, videos, and other audio material exists in Toki Pona. One notable example is the weekly podcast [kalama sin](#), which publishes transcripts of their episodes that add to the growing corpus of texts that the language has.

The previous year has been the most productive year for Toki Pona yet by a significant margin, with new magazines and podcasts, and significant new additions to literature. There is no sign of this accelerating growth stopping in the coming years, so we expect many more texts to come.

The constructed language is “owned” (and further developed) by a vigorous user community rather than by its inventor

The inventor, Sonja Lang, has not controlled the development of the language since the publication of the book *Toki Pona: The Language of Good* in 2014; she has only intermittently been involved, and her most recent work, namely the Toki Pona Dictionary, has involved documenting community use descriptively. Since the public documentation of the language in 2001, but especially since the 2014 publication, various Toki Pona communities have carried the language forward, experimenting with words, grammatical structures, and writing systems, whether established, formerly deprecated, or newly invented.

Lang listed herself as the compiler of the *Toki Pona Dictionary* rather than its author, and has made it clear that she wants the future of the language to be community-driven. In the *Dictionary*'s opening sections, she emphasizes that her books should not be regarded as prescriptive guides, but that the language's lexicon, semantic spaces, and standards of “correctness” should defer to community use as Toki Pona continues to develop and progress, and that additional words that are sufficiently common “are now an essential part of Toki Pona” (page 22).

The survey responses used to compile the *Toki Pona Dictionary* included 62 new root words (*nimi ku*) on top of the 120 words canonized in *Toki Pona: The Language of Good* (*nimi pu*). Lang had deprecated some words that would later become *nimi ku*. Three were listed as “synonyms” of *nimi pu*, though the community has used them with distinct meanings both before and after its publication. Other preexisting words had been removed throughout the early drafts leading to *Toki Pona: The Language of Good*, but were revived and even made notable through community use.

While the acceptance of *nimi ku* varies, these words can be considered “essential vocabulary” and elevated to the status of better-established words. For example, the community-created word *tonsi*, a nonbinary equivalent to the binary gendered words *meli* and *mije*, is sometimes regarded as an honorary *nimi pu*, that even speakers who prefer to only use the 120 *nimi pu* should learn and accept as an expansion of the language.

In the *sitelen pona* writing system consisting of ideographs, also originally designed by Lang, members of the community have independently designed glyphs for other words both within and beyond the *nimi ku* category. Many of these glyphs are widely accepted and have even become emblems of the Toki Pona community, such as the *kijetesantakalu* glyph designed by James Flear.

The official German translation of the first Toki Pona book, *Toki Pona: Die Sprache des Guten*, was led by speakers other than Lang, and incorporates new features and notes of community consensus, with some overlap with the content of the *Toki Pona Dictionary*.

Furthermore, community members other than the inventor of the language have stepped forward describing their own compilation of the grammar, explaining how the community has evolved the language, such as:

- <https://rmd.neocities.org/tokipona/>
- [nasin toki](#)
- [lipu lili pi toki pona](#)

The significance of the constructed language is confirmed by non-trivial coverage in reliable, neutral sources

Academia:

- Analysis and discussion of Toki Pona, computational linguistics (2017)
Excerpt: “*The language is useful for being a used and somewhat established minimal conlang with at least hundreds of fluent speakers.*”
<https://arxiv.org/abs/1712.09359> Fabbri, R. (2018) “Basic concepts and tools for the Toki Pona minimal and constructed language: description of the language and main issues; analysis of the vocabulary; text synthesis and syntax highlighting; Wordnet synsets”, *arXiv [cs.CY]*.
- Toki Pona and Klingon used to test assessment of the learnability of constructed languages in interactions between robots and children
<https://dl.acm.org/doi/abs/10.1145/1520340.1520620> Mubin, O. et al. (2009) “Using Language Tests and Emotional Expressions to Determine the Learnability of Artificial Languages”, in *CHI '09 Extended Abstracts on Human Factors in Computing Systems*.

New York, NY, USA: Association for Computing Machinery (CHI EA '09), bll 4075–4080.
doi: 10.1145/1520340.1520620.

- <https://doi.org/10.36505/ExLing-2020/11/0047/000462> Skotarek, D. (2020) “Zipf’s law in Toki Pona,”. *11th International Conference of Experimental Linguistics*, ExLing Society. doi:10.36505/exling-2020/11/0047/000462.
- [The Study of Machine Translation Aspects Through Constructed Languages](#), Papakitsos, EC., Giachos, I. *International Journal of Electronic Engineering and Computer Science* Vol. 1, No. 1, 2016, pp. 28-34. Uses Toki Pona in a study of machine translation. Concludes that “the usage of constructed languages can be an easier way both to train linguistic engineers in developing machine translation software and to study the linking of different robotic interfaces, as a novel field of research.”
- Libert, Alan Reed. (2016) “On Pragmemes in Artificial Languages.” In *Pragmemes and Theories of Language Use*, edited by K. Allan, et al, 375-389. Springer International Publishing, 2016. DOI 10.1007/978-3-319-43491-9_20
- Coluzzi, Paolo. (2022). “How learning Toki Pona may help improving communications strategies in a foreign or second language.” *Language Problems and Language Planning*, vol 46, no.1, forthcoming.
- <http://www.interlinguistik-gil.de/wb/media/beihefte/18/beiheft18.pdf>
German publication gives a linguistic overview of Toki Pona (2011)

Media coverage:

- <https://gizmodo.com/whats-the-newest-language-1847750011#h66863>
An article in Gizmodo asking the question “What’s the Newest Language?” to various experts. (2021) The fourth expert (Elaine Gold, Executive Director of the Canadian Language Museum) argues it is Toki Pona.
Excerpt: “Conlangers seem to be creating new languages all the time, but not all of them take root and spread. I’m going to put my vote in for Toki Pona, which is new and seems to be growing.”
- Toki Pona: A Universal Language to Discover (Radio-Canada)
https://tokipona.org/universal_language.html (transcript and translation of <https://ici.radio-canada.ca/ohdio/premiere/emissions/michel-le-samedi/segments/entrevue/365010/sonja-lang-langue-toki-pona-dictionnaire>)
An interview with Sonja Lang, the creator of Toki Pona, on Canadian radio (2021)

- <https://www.hawaiipublicradio.org/local-news/2017-10-09/the-nerdiest-languages-you-need-to-learn-are-invented>
Article about constructed languages in Hawai'i Public Radio, in which linguist Geoffrey Taylor speaks favorably about Toki Pona. (2017)
Excerpt: *"it may be far-fetched, but a simple conlang like this could be a game changer in the world of linguistics"*
- https://www.elconfidencial.com/tecnologia/ciencia/2020-03-03/toki-pona-idioma-felicidad-diana-orero_2473656/ A Spanish language article covering an author's journey with Toki Pona and how that led to them publishing a book (2020)
- <https://www.theguardian.com/education/2015/jan/08/toki-pona-invented-language-memrise>
An article in The Guardian about the language learning company Memrise using Toki Pona in one of their projects. (2015)
- <https://www.theatlantic.com/technology/archive/2015/07/toki-pona-smallest-language/398363/>
Article introducing Toki Pona in The Atlantic (2015)
- <https://www.inverse.com/science/klingon-linguistics> (Inverse magazine)
Excerpt: *"What's the easiest invented language to learn?"*
"Ones that are meant to be simple are probably the easiest. I might say Esperanto. People also vote for Toki Pona."
- <https://www.theglobeandmail.com/technology/canadian-has-people-talking-about-lingo-she-created/article20399052/>
Article introducing Toki Pona in The Globe and Mail (2007)
- <https://archive.ph/20130103134152/http://www.latimes.com/news/science/la-sci-conlang24aug24,0,4155484,full.story>
Article about language construction in Los Angeles Times, prominently featuring Toki Pona. (2007)
- <https://web.archive.org/web/20180402102258/https://blog.oxforddictionaries.com/2018/03/27/toki-pona-invented-language-120-words/>
An Oxford Dictionaries blog post titled "Exploring Toki Pona: do we need more than 120 words?" (2018)
- https://www.elconfidencial.com/tecnologia/ciencia/2020-03-03/toki-pona-idioma-felicidad-diana-orero_2473656/
Coverage of Toki Pona in a mainstream Spanish newspaper (2020)

- <https://www.lavanguardia.com/historiayvida/mas-historias/20190212/47312500810/10-idiomas-que-se-crearon-de-la-nada.html>
Another article featuring Toki Pona in a different mainstream Spanish newspaper (2019)
- <https://hackaday.com/2019/01/20/building-and-controlling-19-leds-five-buttons-from-five-outputs/>
Article about the creation of an electronic calculator that has a Toki Pona interface and runs using its numbering system (2019)
- <https://www.irishtimes.com/culture/tv-radio-web/podcast-of-the-week-the-smallest-language-in-the-world-1.3597426> Article commenting on the Alusionist podcast episode about Toki Pona. (2018)
- <https://www.irishtimes.com/culture/art-and-design/visual-art/art-in-focus-therapy-notebook-1-pp-1-6-by-eoin-mchugh-1.4050202> Description of a work of art inspired by Toki Pona. (2019)
- https://dedalvs.com/misc/latimes/full_story.html Interview with Sonja Lang and discussion of Toki Pona's place among constructed languages. (2007)
- <https://medium.com/@ebrulato/toki-pona-le-langage-du-bien-5ab993b5877> Introduction to Toki Pona and collection of resources and communities. (2017)
- <https://erik-engheim.medium.com/lets-talk-about-abstractions-156ecc1001f4> Compares methods of abstraction in Toki Pona and computer programming. (2017)
- <https://medium.com/snipette/the-littlest-language-11bb2301dcfc> Discusses the core concepts and philosophy of Toki Pona. (2017)
- <https://medium.com/@ebrulato/aui-2-toki-pona-7bee78f7e300> Comparison of the constructed language aUI to Toki Pona. (2018)
- <https://medium.com/the-coffeelicious/everything-changes-in-time-70b84e918ff1> Article describing a *Comatose Podcast* writer's enjoyable experience with toki pona in writing a segment about Toki Pona. (2017)

- <https://medium.com/sciforce/top-dead-and-constructed-languages-to-learn-80a71bb1a10b> List of dead and constructed languages (including Toki Pona) that are worth learning. (2019)
- <https://www.mentalfloss.com/article/66403/language-only-123-words-less-more> An overview of Toki Pona and its mechanics and philosophy (2015)
- <https://www.piqd.de/fundstuecke/sprechen-sie-toki-pona> This German language article introduces “the smallest language in the world” with a short explanation of how minimalist Toki Pona is, based on the Atlantic article “How to Say (Almost) Everything...” (2016)
- <https://www.newscientist.com/article/dn28386-appy-talk-how-tech-is-changing-the-way-we-learn-languages/> Talks among other things about Toki Pona, positive thinking and its relation to the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis (2015)
- <https://termcoord.eu/2016/02/the-biggest-or-the-smallest-vocabulary-everything-will-be-pona/> Introduction to Toki Pona, discussing how it might be easier to express things in another language on occasion (2016)
- <https://archive.is/SUUIT> (<https://www.canil.ca/what-is-a-language/>) Article about Toki Pona and Ithkuil as an introduction to Philosophy of Language (sometime between 2015 and 2018)
- <https://www.quebecscience.qc.ca/balados/tout-dire-avec-120-mots/> Interview with Sonja Lang. (2017)
- <https://www.nyest.hu/hirek/melyik-nyelv-tanulhato-meg-ket-nap-alatt> Hungarian language description and introduction of Toki Pona (2009)
- <https://focus.ua/ukraine/388398> Russian language article interviewing a Toki Pona speaker about the linguistics and the philosophy of the language and the descriptivist approach in the community (2018)
- <https://www.belpressa.ru/society/drugoe/29575.html> Russian language article introducing and explaining constructed languages other than Esperanto, including Toki Pona (2019)
- <https://www.sasapost.com/toki-pona-a-language-you-can-learn-in-48-hours/> Arabic-language article covering toki pona as a very easy to learn language, giving a very simple summary of what Toki Pona is, as well as related information on Esperanto as a historical example of conlangs (2016)

- https://www.casadellibro.com/libro-todo-cuenta/9788417779085/9152851?gclid=CjwKCAiA-vLyBRBWEiwAzOkGVFbENYYcicVx3NAI-WHkilcOyOSrsFwyB5MwKccxrlVv7Buf8mvNrRoCg_0QAvD_BwE The book mentioned in the above article (2020)
- <https://www.nouvelobs.com/rue89/rue89-monde/20150927.RUE0627/peut-on-tout-dire-avec-la-langue-la-plus-concise-du-monde.html> French language article introducing the minimalist philosophy behind Toki Pona. (2016)
- <https://www.ulyces.co/longs-formats/peut-on-tout-dire-avec-la-langue-la-plus-concise-du-monde-toki-pona-ithkuil/> Translation of the Atlantic article “How to Say (Almost) Everything...” (2015)
- <https://www.unidivers.fr/toki-pona-langue-language/> Short introduction to Toki Pona. (2017)
- <https://www.20min.ch/fr/story/le-toki-pona-est-la-nouvelle-langue-a-la-mode-sur-le-net-768438534891> Notice of Toki Pona’s invention. (2007)
- <http://amikeco.ru/2008/01/art-revolyuciya-v-formate-avi.html> (Art Revolution) on MTPK «Мир» (TV and radio company Mir) (2007, 16-minute segment on constructed languages in Russian)

<https://baike.baidu.com/item/%E9%81%93%E6%9C%AC%E8%AF%AD/2298059> the Baidu Baike (similar to Wikipedia) article demonstrating that knowledge of Toki Pona has spread to mainland China as well