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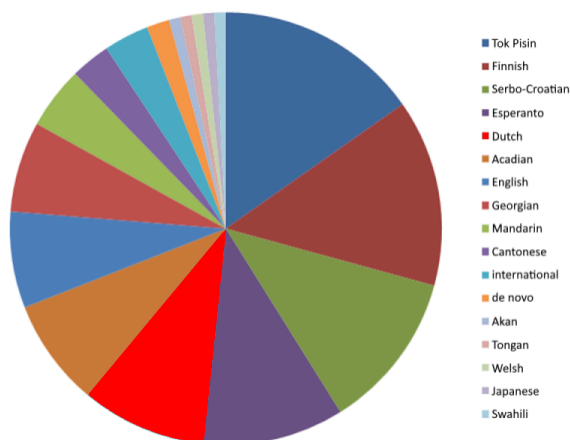
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From sona pona, the Toki Pona wiki



2008 pie chart of source languages of Toki Pona words

The **etymology** of a word is its origin and development over history. Most [Toki Pona](#) words are derived *a posteriori* from words in preexisting languages, while a few were coined *a priori* (from scratch).

Sonja's perspective

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[Sonja Lang](#) originally intended Toki Pona to be effectively *a priori*, since the limited [phonology](#) obscures the derived words' sources. Many etymologies were inspired by personal moments and in her life, such as meeting a speaker of the source language, or finding certain words memorable in linguistics books and dictionaries. Etymologies served a [mnemonic](#) role for Sonja personally;^[1] she asked about replacing at least one word ([noka](#) with [jalan](#)) so that she could remember it better.

Now that Toki Pona is a widely spoken language rather than a personal art project, Sonja does not emphasize Toki Pona etymologies, considering them more anecdotal than linguistically useful.^[1] She has also argued that:

- When the meaning of a Toki Pona word has drifted from the meaning of its source, knowing that etymology could cause confusion about what the Toki Pona word means.
- Leaving etymologies openended gives more freedom to the reader's interpretation, perhaps letting learners form their own connections. Similar thoughts have been expressed about less recognizable [sitelen pona](#) glyph designs.

Sonja has given lists of etymologies as early as 2002; see [History of the dictionary](#). In some more recent lists, she has retrofitted in alternative etymologies for words such as [nasa](#). She has also claimed that some etymologies currently in circulation are speculative.

Folk etymology

[\[edit\]](#) | [\[edit source\]](#)

A *folk etymology* is a popular false explanation for the origin of a term. Toki Pona words such as [esun](#), [pakala](#), and [pu](#) have attracted folk etymologies due to their actual origins not being well-known.

Statistics

[[edit](#) | [edit source](#)]

The most common immediate source languages for Toki Pona words include ([Acadian](#)) [French](#), [Dutch](#), [English](#), [Esperanto](#), [Finnish](#), [Georgian](#), [Serbo-Croatian](#), and [Tok Pisin](#).

If including [nimisin](#), a major proportion of words are also derived from other Toki Pona lexemes and phrases, although these tend to be less used.

While English is often not directly listed at the top of rankings of standard words' etymologies, many of these words can be traced back to English ancestors, including the Tok Pisin borrowings (like [toki](#) ← [tok](#) ← [talk](#)) and the [Tongan](#) borrowing [kulupu](#) (← [kulupu](#) ← [group](#)). Between the Dutch, (ultimately) English, French, and Serbo-Croatian vocabulary, Toki Pona is predominantly based on the [Indo-European language family](#). At the time, Sonja Lang didn't yet have any motive "to optimize Toki Pona etymologies to serve an external neutrality or cultural goal of any kind, like some [IAL](#) proposals like to do."^[1]





List of etymologies

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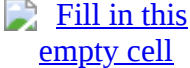


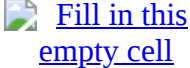


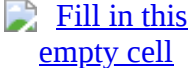

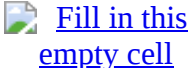
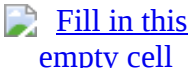

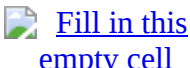

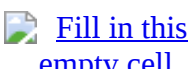



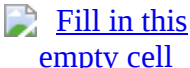


This table only lists immediate etymologies. See the respective word articles for more information, or [Doublets](#) for words with shared etymological roots.

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Word	Source		Coinage	
	Language	Term	Coiner	Year
a	<i>A priori</i>	—	Sonja Lang	2001
aka	Mandarin	迺	kulupu Eki, oni Tewi	2021
aka	English	across , cross	kulupu Eki, oni Tewi	2021
akesi	Dutch	hagedis	Sonja Lang	2001
ako	Korean	아이고	 Fill in this empty cell	 Fill in this empty cell
aku	Romanian	acru	 Fill in this empty cell	 Fill in this empty cell
ala	Georgian	აღა	Sonja Lang	2001

Word	Language	Source	Term	Coiner	Coinage	Year
alasa	Acadian French	à la chasse		Sonja Lang		2009
ale	Dutch	al, alle		Sonja Lang		2001
alente	Toki Pona	ale ante				
ali	Toki Pona	ale				
alu	Toki Pona	la		Smoked Salmon		2018
anpa	Acadian French	en bas		Sonja Lang		2001
anta	Okinawan	油				
ante	Dutch	ander		Sonja Lang		2001
antikontitutonelema	French	anticonstitutionnellement				
anu	Georgian	ან		Sonja Lang		2002
apeja	Finnish	häpeä				2009
apelo	French	apéro				
api	Latin	apis		heav		2021
asu	Hausa	asu		motan		2021
ata	Latin	-ata				
awase	Armenian	հարվածել		jan Lenoka		2021
awen	Dutch	houden		Sonja Lang		2001
e	<i>A priori</i>		—	Sonja Lang		2001
eki	English	ex		jan Anselo		2021
eliki	Cherokee	ᎠᎩᎠ		kulupu telo mun		2023
en	Dutch	and		Sonja Lang		2001
enکو	Toki Pona	tenpo		jan Seli		2021
epiku	French	épique				
esun	Twi	edwom		Sonja Lang		2007
ete	Turkish	öte		jan inwin		2019
ewe	Toki Pona	kiwen		jan ko		2019
ewe	Japanese	岩		jan ko		2019
i				Sonja Lang		2002
ijo	Esperanto	io		Sonja Lang		2001
ike	Finnish	ilkeä		Sonja Lang		2001
iki	Georgian	იდი		Sonja Lang		2001
ilo	Esperanto	ilo		Sonja Lang		2001
insa	Tok Pisin	insait		Sonja Lang		2001

Word	Language	Source	Term	Coiner	Year
inta	Portuguese	ainda			
ipi				Sonja Lang	2002
iseki	Turkish	çiçek		kulupu Solali	2023
isipin	Tagalog	isipin		ko	2020
itomi	English	hit-or-miss			
ja				wuwojiti Haev, jan Pensa, jan Kita, et al.	2021
jaki	English	yucky		Sonja Lang	2001
jaku	Japanese	百		jan Wesu	2018
jalan	Finnish	jalan		Sonja Lang	2002
jami	English	yummy		jan inwin	2017
jan	Cantonese	人		Sonja Lang	2001
jans	Toki Pona	jan			
jans	English	-s			
jasima	Turkish	yansıtmak			
je	English	yay			
jelo	English	yellow		Sonja Lang	2001
jete	French	jeter			
jo	Mandarin	有		Sonja Lang	2001
jonke				cyanidesDuality	2021
ju	<i>A priori</i>		—	Sonja Lang	2021
jule	Japanese	揺れる			
jume	Japanese	夢		jan Seli	2021
kala	Finnish	kala		Sonja Lang	2001
kalama	Serbo-Croatian	galáma		Sonja Lang	2021
kalamARR	Toki Pona	kalama		jan Olipija	2021
kalamARR	English	arr		jan Olipija	2021
kalapisituji	French	carabistouille			
kalijopilale	Translingual	Caryophyllales		jan Likipi	2020

Word	Language	Source	Term	Coiner	Coinage	Year
kama	Tok Pisin	kamaɸ		Sonja Lang		2001
kamalawala	Toki Pona	kama pi lawa ala				 Fill in this empty cell
kan	 Fill in this empty cell	 Fill in this empty cell		Sonja Lang		2001
kana	Tulu	ಕನ				 Fill in this empty cell
kani	Tok Pisin	kain				 Fill in this empty cell
kapa	 Fill in this empty cell	 Fill in this empty cell		Sonja Lang		2001
kapesi	 Fill in this empty cell	 Fill in this empty cell		Sonja Lang		2001
kasan	Malay	كاج				 Fill in this empty cell
kasi	Finnish	kasvi		Sonja Lang		2001
ke	 Fill in this empty cell	 Fill in this empty cell		jan Maliku, jan Kisinja		2015
ken	Tok Pisin	ken		Sonja Lang		2001
ken	English	can		Sonja Lang		2001
kepeken	Dutch	gebruiken		Sonja Lang		2001
kepen	Toki Pona	kepeken				 Fill in this empty cell
kese	English	Keshet		jan Jan		2020
ki	French	qui		akesi kon Nalasuni, jan Atenaja		2020
kijetesantakalu	Finnish	kierteishäntäkarhu		Sonja Lang		2009
kiki	Translingual	kiki		akesi kon Nalasuni		2020
kikolo	French	rigolo				 Fill in this empty cell
kili	Georgian	ბილი		Sonja Lang		2001
kin	Finnish	-kin		Sonja Lang		2001
kipisi	 Fill in this empty cell	 Fill in this empty cell		Sonja Lang		2009
kisa	Russian	киса		kala Asi		2021
kitu	Swahili	kitu		lekoicy		2020
kiwen	Finnish	kiven		Sonja Lang		2002
ko	Cantonese	膏		Sonja Lang		2001
kokoliko	French	cocorico				 Fill in this empty cell
kokosila	Esperanto	krokodilas		Sonja Lang		2020

Word	Language	Source	Term	Coiner	Year
kolo	Swahili	guruwe		soweli pi loje walo	2021
kolo	Zulu	ingulube		soweli pi loje walo	2021
kolo	Kongo	ngulu		soweli pi loje walo	2021
kolo	Spanish	guarro, gorrino		soweli pi loje walo	2021
kolo	Japanese	コロコロ		soweli pi loje walo	2021
kolo	English	grunt		soweli pi loje walo	2021
kon	Mandarin	空氣		Sonja Lang	2001
konsi	Korean	공지			
konwe	English	Conway		jan Emalan	2021
kosan	Irish	cosain		jan Seni, jan inwin	2021
ku	<i>A priori</i>		—	Sonja Lang	2021
kule	Acadian French	couleur		Sonja Lang	2001
kuliĵo	English	coolio		jan pakala	2020
kulu	Toki Pona	kulupu		jan Kiwa, jan inwin	2017
kulupu	Tongan	kulupu		Sonja Lang	2002
kuntu	Toki Pona	kalama musi tan uta			
kute	Acadian French	écouter		Sonja Lang	2001
kutopoma	Toki Pona	kulupu pi toki pona pi ma Anku			
la	Esperanto	la		Sonja Lang	2001
lan	Toki Pona	lon, wan, jan		mu Ekisi	2023
lanpan	Greek	λαμβάνω			
lapan	Arabic	لَين			
lape	Dutch	slapen		Sonja Lang	2001
laso	Welsh	glas		Sonja Lang	2001
lawa	Serbo-Croatian	gláva		Sonja Lang	2001
leko	Translingual	Lego		Sonja Lang	2001
len	Acadian French	linge		Sonja Lang	2001
lete	Acadian French	frette		Sonja Lang	2001
li	Esperanto	li		Sonja Lang	2001
lijokuku	Korean	realkk			
likuĵo	Acadian French	recueil		jan Kawa, jan inwin	2018
lili	Tok Pisin	liklik		Sonja Lang	2001
linja	Finnish	linja		Sonja Lang	2001
linluwi	Welsh	rhyngwyd		jan inwin	2017
linuwi	Toki Pona	linluwi		jan Kekan San	2024
lipu	Finnish	lippu		Sonja Lang	2001

Word	Language	Source	Term	Coiner	Year
lo	Toki Pona	alu		Theepicosity, kala pona Tonyu, akesi kon Nalasuni	2020
loje	Dutch	rooie		Sonja Lang	2001
loka	Toki Pona	luka , noka			
lokon	Toki Pona	lukin , oko			
lon	Tok Pisin	long		Sonja Lang	2001
lonsi	Toki Pona	lon , tonsi			
lu	<i>A priori</i>		—	Sonja Lang	2021
luka	Serbo-Croatian	rúka		Sonja Lang	2001
lukin	Tok Pisin	lukim		Sonja Lang	2001
lupa	Lojban	clupa		Sonja Lang	2001
ma	Finnish	maa		Sonja Lang	2001
majuna	Esperanto	maljuna		Sonja Lang	2001
mama	Georgian	მამა		Sonja Lang	2001
mani	English	money		Sonja Lang	2001
masalo	French	mince alors			
me	<i>A priori</i>		—		
meli	Tok Pisin	meri		Sonja Lang	2001
melome	Toki Pona	meli pi olin meli		jan inwin	2017
meso	Greek	μέσος		jan Olipija	2020
mi	Esperanto	mi		Sonja Lang	2001
mi	English	me		Sonja Lang	2001
mije	Finnish	mies		Sonja Lang	2001
mijomi	Toki Pona	mije pi olin mije		jan inwin	2017
minsu	Kannada	ಮಿನ್ಸು			
misa	Ukrainian	мишка		misa Ewis	2021
misikeke	Ojibwe	mashkiki		Sonja Lang	2007
moku	Japanese	モグモグ		Sonja Lang	2001
moli	Acadian French	mourir		Sonja Lang	2001
molusa	English	mollusc		jan Apen	2021
monsi	Acadian French	mon tchu		Sonja Lang	2001
monsuta	Japanese	モンスター		Sonja Lang	2009
mu	<i>A priori</i>		—	Sonja Lang	2002
mulapisu	<i>A priori</i>		—	Sonja Lang	2019
mun	English	moon		Sonja Lang	2001
musi	Esperanto	amuzi		Sonja Lang	2001
mute	Esperanto	multe		Sonja Lang	2001

Word	Language	Source	Term	Coiner	Year
n	<i>A priori</i>		—	 Fill in this empty cell	 Fill in this empty cell
nalanja	Spanish	naranja		kapesi Pake	2021
namako	Hindi	नमक		Sonja Lang	2009
namako	Persian	نمک		Sonja Lang	2009
nan	Toki Pona	nanpa		 Fill in this empty cell	 Fill in this empty cell
nan	Translingual	NaN		 Fill in this empty cell	 Fill in this empty cell
nanpa	Tok Pisin	namba		Sonja Lang	2001
nasa	Tok Pisin	nasau		Sonja Lang	2001
nasin	Serbo-Croatian	náčín		Sonja Lang	2001
natu	Vietnamese	ngã tŭ		jan Lakuse	2020
neja	Finnish	neljä		jan inwin	2019
nele	Toki Pona	len		 Fill in this empty cell	2021
nena	Finnish	nenä		Sonja Lang	2002
ni	Cantonese	呢		Sonja Lang	2001
nimi	Finnish	nimi		Sonja Lang	2001
nimisin	Toki Pona	nimi sin		 Fill in this empty cell	 Fill in this empty cell
nja	Japanese	ニヤー		jan Kita	2021
noka	Serbo-Croatian	nòga		Sonja Lang	2001
nowi	Vietnamese	nôi		ilo Powa, kulupu Solali	2023
nu	<i>A priori</i>		—	Sonja Lang	2021
nu (synonym)	English	new		 Fill in this empty cell	 Fill in this empty cell
nuwa	English	newer		 Fill in this empty cell	 Fill in this empty cell
o	Georgian	-ო		Sonja Lang	2001
o	Esperanto	ho		Sonja Lang	2001
o	English	O		Sonja Lang	2001
ojuta	Toki Pona	o uta (e sike mi)		 Fill in this empty cell	2021
oke	English	OK, okay		 Fill in this empty cell	 Fill in this empty cell
okepuma	English	ok boomer		jan Elijo	2019
oko	Serbo-Croatian	òko		Sonja Lang	2001
olala	French	oh là là		 Fill in this empty cell	 Fill in this empty cell
olin	Serbo-Croatian	volim		Sonja Lang	2001
omekalike	Toki Pona	omekapo, o moku e kala ike		jan Usawi	2021

Word	Language	Source	Term	Coiner	Coinage	Year
omekapo	Toki Pona	o moku e kala pona				
omen	Toki Pona	o moli e mi		jan inwin		2017
ona	Serbo-Croatian	ona		Sonja Lang		2002
oni	Ancient Greek	ὄνειρος				
open	Tok Pisin	open		Sonja Lang		2001
open	English	open		Sonja Lang		2001
owe	English	Orwell		nano		2021
pa	English	bruh		jan Jan, jan Lija		2019
paka	Toki Pona	pakala				
pakala	Tok Pisin	bagarap		Sonja Lang		2001
pake	English	block		Sonja Lang		2009
pakola	Toki Pona	pakala				
pali	Esperanto	fari		Sonja Lang		2001
palisa	Serbo-Croatian	pàlica		Sonja Lang		2001
pan	Romance	pan		Sonja Lang		2007
pan	Japanese	パン		Sonja Lang		2007
pana	Finnish	panna		Sonja Lang		2001
panke	Toki Pona	pan				
panke	French	baguette				
panpan	Toki Pona	pan				
pasila	Acadian French	facile		Sonja Lang		2001
pasila	Esperanto	facila		Sonja Lang		2001
pata	English	brother		Sonja Lang		2002
pe	Translingual	b				
peta	Esperanto	verda		kili Tesa		2019
peto	Toki Pona	pana e telo (tan) oko		jan kiwa		2017
pi	Tok Pisin	bilong		Sonja Lang		2001
pika	Translingual	Pikachu		Kriskee_		2021
pilin	English	feeling		Sonja Lang		2001
pilin	Tok Pisin	pilim		Sonja Lang		2001
pimeja	Finnish	pimeä		Sonja Lang		2001
Pingo	<i>A priori</i>		—	jan Likipi		2020
pini	Acadian French	fini		Sonja Lang		2001
pipi	Acadian French	bitte		Sonja Lang		2001

Word	Language	Source	Term	Coiner	Coinage	Year
pipo	Toki Pona	pipi		jan Ejewa, jan inwin		2017
po	English	four		Sonja Lang		2001
poka	Serbo-Croatian	bòk, bòka		Sonja Lang		2001
poki	Tok Pisin	bokis		Sonja Lang		2001
polinpin	English	bowling.pin		jan Kisinja		2019
pomotolo	English	pomodoro		jan Kawa		2019
pona	Esperanto	bona		Sonja Lang		2001
poni	English	pony		jan Kita		2020
powe	 Fill in this empty cell	 Fill in this empty cell		Sonja Lang		 Fill in this empty cell
pu	<i>A priori</i>		—	Sonja Lang		2009
puwa	Japanese	ふわふわ		jan Seli		2021
sama	Finnish	sama		Sonja Lang		2001
sama	Esperanto	sama		Sonja Lang		2001
san	Japanese	三		tts919		2007
santa	English	Santa		 Fill in this empty cell		 Fill in this empty cell
sapelipope	French	saperlipopette		 Fill in this empty cell		 Fill in this empty cell
seli	Georgian	ცელი		Sonja Lang		2001
selo	Esperanto	ŝelo		Sonja Lang		2001
seme	Mandarin	什麼		Sonja Lang		2001
sewi	Georgian	ბევით		Sonja Lang		2001
sijelo	Serbo-Croatian	tijelo		Sonja Lang		2001
sikako	French	escargot		 Fill in this empty cell		 Fill in this empty cell
sike	English	circle		Sonja Lang		2001
sikomo	English	sicko mode		jan Lija, jan Wesu		2019
sin	Chinese	新		Sonja Lang		2001
sina	Finnish	sinä		Sonja Lang		2001
sinpin	Cantonese	前邊		Sonja Lang		2001
sipi	Latin	sibi		spad0103		2007
sitelen	Dutch	schilderen		Sonja Lang		2001
siwala	Tagalog	tiwalà		 Fill in this empty cell		 Fill in this empty cell
slape	Toki Pona	lape		jan Kawa		2017
slape	English	sleep		jan Kawa		2017
soko	Georgian	სოკო		jan inwin		2019
sole	Spanish	soler		 Fill in this empty cell		 Fill in this empty cell
sona	Georgian	ცოდნა		Sonja Lang		2001
soto	Swahili	shoto		jan inwin		2019


Word	Language	Source	Term	Coiner	Coinage	Year
soweli	Georgian	ცხოველი		Sonja Lang		2001
su	<i>A priori</i>		—	Sonja Lang		2021
su (particle)	Esperanto	ĉu				
suli	Finnish	suuri		Sonja Lang		2001
suno	Esperanto	suno		Sonja Lang		2001
supa	French	surface		Sonja Lang		2001
supa	Esperanto	surfaco		Sonja Lang		2001
supa	English	surface		Sonja Lang		2001
sutopatikuna	Serbo-Croatian	ĉudnovati kljunaš		Alexandre Baudry		2009
suwi	Tok Pisin	swit		Sonja Lang		2001
ta				the keyring		2023
taki	Korean	탁		jan Kapilu, jan Lewiku		2020
tan	Georgian	-თან		Sonja Lang		2001
tankala	Malay	تنگارا		Sonja Lang		2021
taso	Tok Pisin	tasol		Sonja Lang		2001
tawa	English	towards		Sonja Lang		2001
te	Japanese	つて		kala kala, jan Lakuse		2020
teken	Dutch	teken		jan Kasape		2022
teje	Welsh	de		jan inwin, jan Olipija		2020
teki	Japanese	出来事				
telo	Acadian French	de l'eau		Sonja Lang		2001
ten	Toki Pona	tenpo				
tenpo	Esperanto	tempo		Sonja Lang		2001
to	Japanese	と		kala kala, jan Lakuse		2020
tokana	Tongan	tokanga		jan Sojapoja		2020
toki	Tok Pisin	tok		Sonja Lang		2001
tomo	Esperanto	domo		Sonja Lang		2001
tona	Toki Pona	toki pona, poki				
tonsi	Mandarin	同志		jan inwin		2019
tu	English	two		Sonja Lang		2001
tuli	English	three		Sonja Lang		2001
u	<i>A priori</i>		—	Sonja Lang		2021
ulu	Latin	-ulus				
umesu	Iqglic	umeyz		jan Wija		2021
unpa	<i>A priori</i>		—	Sonja Lang		2001
unu	Indonesian	ungu		Sonja Lang		2020

Word	Language	Source	Term	Coiner	Coinage	Year
usawi	Swahili	uchawi			Đoom Epictooþ	2019
uta	Serbo-Croatian	ústa			Sonja Lang	2001
utala	Serbo-Croatian	ùdarati			Sonja Lang	2001
wa	Cantonese	嘩			jan Lakuse	2020
waken	English	wuggen				
waleja	Quenya	valdëa			jan inwin	2019
walo	Finnish	valko-			Sonja Lang	2001
wan	English	one			Sonja Lang	2001
waso	Acadian French	oiseau			Sonja Lang	2001
wasoweli	Toki Pona	waso , soweli				
wawa	Finnish	vahva			Sonja Lang	2001
wawajete	Toki Pona	wuwojiti			jan Tolin	2019
we (content word)	Spanish	güey			jan Kiwisin, jan Telupiso	2022
we (particle)	Spanish	güey			jan inwin	2019
weka	Dutch	weg			Sonja Lang	2001
wekama	Toki Pona	weka , kama			jan ko	2020
wi	English	we			jan inwin	2017
wile	Dutch	willen			Sonja Lang	2001
wiwi	French	oui oui				
wuwojiti	Toki Pona	* wu , * wo , * ji , * ti				
yupekosi	<i>A priori</i>		—		Sonja Lang	2019
yutu	Turkish	yıldız			inari	2021

See also

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- [Doublets](#), words that share an etymological root
- [History of the dictionary](#).

 English Wikipedia has an article on [etymology](#).

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