

Language Specific Peculiarities Document for TOK PISIN as Spoken in Southern Papua New Guinea

1 Dialects

The regional dialects of Tok Pisin can be categorized according to their geographical location within Papua New Guinea (Devette-Chee 2011; Smith 2002).

Dialect Region	Districts or Cities
Momase	Morobe, Madang, and East and West Sepik Provinces
Islands	East and West New Britain, New Ireland, Manus and Bougainville Provinces
Papuan	Central, Gulf, Milne Bay, NCD (incl. Port Moresby), Northern, Western Provinces
Highlands	Eastern, Southern and Western Highlands, Simbu, Hela, Jiwaka and Enga Provinces

This collection will focus on the Papuan dialect.

2 Deviation from native-speaker principle

No deviation, only native Papuan region speakers will be collected.

3 Special handling of spelling

Tok Pisin is an English-based creole that is in the process of decreolization (Devette-Chee 2011). As such, words and phrases used in speech may fall somewhere on a continuum with Tok Pisin at one end and English at the other. In fact, it has been argued that many Tok Pisin speakers have the entire English phonological system at their disposal (Smith 2004:720). The database contains English words and phrases that are pronounced using some English phones. However, to avoid inconsistencies that could arise from differences of opinion, all common words (that is, not proper names) in the database will be given a nativized Tok Pisin spelling.

Where an existing Tok Pisin word and an English word differ by only one or two similar phones, the Tok Pisin spelling is chosen. Phones are considered similar if:

1. They are commonly interchangeable in native orthography, e.g. /f/ ~ /p/.
2. If they belong to the same manner of articulation class and the only difference is voicing, e.g. stops /g/ ~ /k/.
3. One of the phones is not native but overlaps with a native phone in manner, place or voicing e.g. non-native sibilants /S/ and /z/ map to native /s/. Interdental fricatives /T/ and /D/ map to their alveolar stop counterparts /t/ and /d/.

For example, if a speaker said the words “finish” and “dog” in English rather than their Tok Pisin counterparts “pinis” and “dok” they are spelled as in Tok Pisin and the pronunciation variants provided in the lexicon:

English word used	Database spelling
finish	pinis
dog	dok

Dialectal and other alternative spellings of native words will be standardized according to dictionary spelling¹ (or by consensus in the absence of a dictionary entry or inconsistency between dictionaries) and variant pronunciations will be handled in the lexicon.

Proper names of English origin are spelled as in English.

4 Description of character set used for orthographic transcription

Tok Pisin is written with a subset of the Latin alphabet: <abdefghijklmnoprstuvwy>. The letters that are not used are: <qxz>, except in proper names. The letter <c> is used in some abbreviations and names.

5 Description of Romanization scheme

No Romanization required.

6 Description of method for word boundary detection

Word boundaries in the orthography are determined by localization of white spaces.

7 Tables containing all phonemes in the stipulated notation

The phonemic transcription of the words in this database uses X-SAMPA symbols, which can be found at <http://www.phon.ucl.ac.uk/home/sampa/x-sampa.htm>. Tok Pisin pronunciation can display a considerable amount of variation, see below. Most authors (Laycock 1985, Smith 2004) propose a "core" phonological system of between 24 and 27 phonemes. The “core” set comprises all the phonemes shared among most speakers of the language. In contrast, the maximal 32 phoneme system comprises 18 consonants, 5 vowels, and up to 9 diphthongs, in addition to foreign phonemes. Variation in vowels is the cause of discrepancies in phoneme counts. English phonemes in this table are annotated with *.

¹ The two dictionaries ABH will consult are: Mihalic, F. 1971. The Jacaranda Dictionary and Grammar of Melanesian Pidgin. Jacaranda Press and Volker, C. A. 2008. Papua New Guinea Tok Pisin English Dictionary. Oxford University Press. Mihalic is the standard, but may be somewhat dated; Volker may include more modern terms. Where Mihalic and Volker disagree, Mihalic will be followed unless consensus and expert opinion suggest otherwise.

Orthography	IPA	SAMPA	Example
Consonants			
p	p	p	pik
t	t	t	tit
k	k	k	kik
b	b	b	bet
d	d	d	dok
g	g	g	go
s	s	s	sik
f	f	f	faiv
v	v	v	vot
j	dʒ	dZ	jas
h	h	h	hap
l	l	l	lip
r	r	r	rop
m	m	m	mit
n	n	n	nil
ng	ŋ	N	long
w	w	w	wet
y	j	j	yet
t	θ	T*	tetin
d	ð	D*	fada
s/ts/si	tʃ	tʃ*	sekim
s	z	z*	siro
s/si	ʃ	ʃ*	sip
Monophthongs			
a	a	a	hat
e	e	e	les
i	i	i	lip
o	o	o	kol
u	u	u	sut
Diphthongs			
ai	aɪ	aI	taim
au	aʊ	aU	maus
oi	ɔɪ	OI	boi
e/ei	eɪ	eI	pe
ia	ie	i6	bia
ua	ue	u6	dua
e/ea	eə	e6	prea
o/oa	oə	o6	moa
o/ou	oʊ	oU	blou

OTHER SYMBOLS	
"	primary stress
.	syllable break
#	word boundary

7.1 List of rare phonemes

The following native phones are rare:

Orthography	IPA	SAMPA
f	f	f
j	dʒ	dZ
ia	iə	i6
ea	eə	e6
oa	oə	o6
ua	uə	u6

8 Other language specific items

8.1 Table of digits

Digit	Tok Pisin
0	siro
1	wan
2	tu
3	tri
4	foa
5	faiv
6	sikis
7	seven
8	et
9	nain

8.2 Other numbers

Digit	Tok Pisin	Digit	Tok Pisin
10	ten	20	twenti
11	ileven	100	wan handet
12	twelv	1000	wan tausen
13	tetin	10,000	ten tausen
14	fotin	100,000	wan handet tausen
15	fiftin	1,000,000	wan milien
16	sikstin	10 million	ten milien
17	seventin		
18	etin		
19	naintin		

9 References

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