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Toki Pona and Circumlocution:
How a Minimalist Constructed Language can Improve
International Communication

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105218036Y: Introduction to Interlinguistics

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Abstract

This paper will analyse the potential benefits of learning Toki Pona, a minimalist constructed language, to determine whether it can be used to improve certain aspects of global communication, acting as either an IAL or as a pedagogical tool, used to improve second language acquisition skills. This paper examines how the simplicity of Toki Pona (and Toki Ma, a Tokiponido which aims to extend Toki Pona into a full IAL) can be both an asset and a disadvantage to its internationality and auxiliarity, and explores how well the language does at meeting the goals and requirements for modern IALs, which are also defined in a proposed framework. In addition, this paper will examine and build upon previous research conducted by Dr. Paolo Coluzzi, effectuated to explore whether learning Toki Pona can help students develop the ability to express complex ideas using intentional circumlocution, the simplification of complex ideas into simplified noun phrases. Coluzzi's research explores whether this skill, which is a necessity to speak Toki Pona, can be transferred, in order to improve the ability to express ideas in natural languages, such as Italian, when a requisite word is unknown to the speaker. In conclusion, it is proposed that Toki Pona meets many of the requirements for modern IALs and that it has much communicational value, due to its universality and simplicity. Moreover, an in-depth analysis of Toki Pona's propaedeutic value is presented, and it is suggested that more research is needed to conclusively determine how best to use Toki Pona as a pedagogical tool, perhaps a study completed in line with the Paderborn method for second language acquisition.

Keywords: Toki Pona, Toki Ma, international auxiliary languages, circumlocution, second language learning, interlinguistics

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Introduction

Toki Pona is a philosophical constructed language, created in 2001 by linguist Sonja Lang, designed around the core idea of minimalism (Lang, 2014). The standard form of this isolating language contains only 137 words and relies on grammatical particles and heavy use of constructed noun phrases to express complex ideas. The language was designed by Lang in order to facilitate the processing of complex, negative thoughts into positive, simplified ones, in line with the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis (Kay and Kempton, 1984).

At first glance, it may seem absurd to consider a language as basic as this one as a good candidate for an international auxiliary language (IAL), which often need to be both elaborate and expressive, but its simplicity lends it to easily accomplish one of the main goals for an IAL - ease and speed of learnability for people all over the world, no matter their native language. This paper will address the necessary traits and goals of modern IALs, proposing a new framework for analysing their utility, as well as analysing both Toki Pona and Toki Ma (2020), a Tokiponido (an extension or variation of Toki Pona, where "ido" comes from an Esperanto word meaning "offspring") which attempts to extend Toki Pona into a true IAL, in order to discern whether either language makes an effective candidate.

In addition, the paper will build upon Paolo Coluzzi's (2022) research, where Toki Pona was learnt alongside Italian, in order to determine whether learning how to deal with Toki Pona's inherent constraints, which force speakers to simplify ideas in order to express them, also helps with expressing ideas in Italian when the speaker doesn't know a requisite word. Intentional circumlocution, this simplification of complex ideas into longer noun phrases, which often describe the constituent parts

or characteristics of a certain noun, is a useful strategy to employ to avoid complete breakdown of communication when a particular word isn't known to the speaker (Coluzzi, 2022). Coluzzi's (2022) research showed that learning Toki Pona made students marginally better at using intentional circumlocution when asked to translate a sentence into Italian which contained one or more words they didn't know, while still remaining intelligible.

In sum, this paper attempts to answer whether Toki Pona's inherent minimalist nature can improve global communication, and whether it is worth adopting as an international auxiliary language or using as a pedagogical tool for learning second languages.

Toki Pona an as IAL

What Makes a Good IAL?

In this first section, I compare and contrast the goals set by Auguste Kerckhoffs (1888) for Volapük with those laid out for Esperanto in the Manifestos of Rauma (1980) and Prague (1996), in order to understand what aspects are the most important for modern IALs in general.

Kerckhoffs' (1888) *Abridged Grammar of Volapük* outlines the importance of international neutrality, where Volapük need act not as a vehicle for science and literature, but as a practical contact language between travellers, sailors, and traders of "all the civilized nations of the world" (Kerckhoffs, 1888) which should facilitate international communication and cooperation. He also explains the importance of an IAL being easy to learn, with simplified grammar and phonology, as well as a phonetic writing system and reduced syllabic structure. Volapük was the first successful constructed a posteriori language, taking its vocabulary from existing languages - another key ideal for IALs.

The Rauma Manifesto (1980) was created by the International Youth Congress (IJK), a group of young Esperantists with the goal of redefining the Esperanto community as a "stateless diaspora" based on freedom of association. This manifesto outlined new positive values for Esperanto (and by extension, any IAL), consisting of a) propaedeutics for second language acquisition, b) contact between ordinary people, c) non-discrimination, and d) a new type of international culture. This new distinction is important as it sets the stage for IALs to have their own culture and identity, without having to actually rival English as an international language.

The Prague Manifesto (1996) expands on the goals of Esperanto (and again, IALs in general) set 16 years previously. A focus is placed on the need for democratic, egalitarian communication, effective global education (including propaedeutics), and worldwide human emancipation, as well as putting a focus on Esperanto as a second language, maintaining linguistic rights and diversity around the world. Taking all of the above considerations into account, I now define five goals for modern IALs.

1. **International Neutrality.** An IAL should act as a contact language between people all over the world and should be equally easy to learn for speakers of any language. In addition, an IAL should be non-discriminatory, placing people of all genders, nationalities, and social standings on an equal footing.
2. **Simplified Grammar.** An IAL needs a reduced phonemic inventory and simplified phonotactic rules, as well as a regularised grammar, an a posteriori vocabulary, and a phonetic transcription system.
3. **Identity and Culture.** An IAL should have its own culture and its speakers their own identity. The language should be used as the community likes, but should not be imposed onto unwilling peoples or states. This culture should not be discriminatory or counter to any other cultures and should only take the role of an auxiliary language, not a national one.
4. **Propaedeutic Value.** Learning an IAL should be beneficial to the speaker's linguistic development, aiding them to learn other languages and understand other cultures more easily.
5. **Linguistic Diversity.** To speakers of an IAL, linguistic diversity should be seen as an indispensable source of enrichment, meaning every language should be viewed as valuable and necessary. An IAL is a second language and as such, should not take precedence over any other language.

Linguistic Overview of Toki Pona

As previously mentioned, Sonja Lang's 2001 conlang, Toki Pona, was designed to promote simplicity and positive thinking by limiting communication to a small set of words which can be regularly combined into complex ideas (Lang, 2014). Toki Pona's vocabulary is entirely derived from the vocabulary of natural languages, taking inspiration from all over the globe, but words are often substantially altered phonologically and broadened semantically. A large portion of the vocabulary comes from Finnish, French, English, and Dutch, but many other languages appear too, such as Croatian, Mandarin, and Swahili (Segers, 2021). Verbs are not inflected to mark person or tense and nouns have only one form. In addition, Toki Pona has no articles and there is no difference between adjectives and adverbs (Lang, 2014).

Toki Pona is comprised of only 9 consonants and 5 vowels, all of which are phonologically distinct and very common cross-linguistically (Blahuš, 2011). With only one set of plosives, Toki Pona does not distinguish between voicedness or aspiration, meaning [b d g] and [p^h t^h k^h] could be substituted as allophones of the ideal [p t k] while still remaining mostly intelligible. Moreover, the syllable structure of (C)V(N) is extremely restrictive, allowing only one consonant to precede a vowel and only one nasal to follow it (Lang, 2014). Toki Pona's simplified phonology allows it to be written in a vast array of writing systems, including but not limited to: abjads (e.g. Arabic, Hebrew), alphabets (e.g. Latin, Hangul, Cyrillic), and logographies (e.g. Sitelen Pona, a script created by Lang and published in her 2014 book).

Toki Pona's most distinctive feature is clearly its tiny vocabulary, meaning any complex concepts must be expressed through expanded noun phrases created by process of circumlocution. For example, one could call alcohol *telo nasa* (lit. strange/weird

liquid) or a banana *kili palisa* (lit. stick(-shaped) fruit). Even the name, Toki Pona, means *good language*, but also *simple language*, as the words for good and simple are one in the same, in complete agreement with the ideology of the language (Jan Misali, 2021). According to Lang, (2014) set noun phrases should be avoided, provoking fluidity and changeability of speech, depending on the mood of the speaker. Everything in Toki Pona is relative, meaning concepts are described by personal interpretation. In an article for Atlantic, Lang explains this idea, posing the question “What is a car? You might say that a car is a space that’s used for movement. That would be *tomo tawa*. If you’re struck by a car though, it might be a hard object that’s hitting me. That’s *kiwen utala*” (Morin, 2015). The idea behind this relativity is to immerse the speaker in the moment, to force them to think about what impact the world has specifically on them (Lang, 2014).

Taxonomic Classification

Prof. Dr. Federico Gobbo (2017) classifies constructed languages into three main groups along the two axes of a cartesian plane. The x-axis represents publicity: how accessible documentation on the structure of the language is, on a scale from completely secret, where only the author knows the grammar of the language, to entirely public, where the grammar is openly organised and published. The y-axis represents purpose, where auxiliarity (effectively usefulness as an IAL) is given the positive *aux* space, and languages planned for other purposes are given the negative *alt* space. The *aux-pub* quadrant therefore contains IALs such as Esperanto and Interlingua, while the *alt-pub* quadrant includes languages planned for fiction, such as Star Trek’s Klingon and Game of Thrones’ Dothraki. The *secr-alt* quadrant shows languages such as Tolkien’s, for which formal grammars were not available when his books were first published. Created as a philosophical language, the original purpose of Toki Pona was not international communication, placing it squarely in

the *pub-alt* quadrant. However, as time has passed, Toki Pona has been used more and more by speakers of various L1s, and is now one of the most-used conlangs online (Morin, 2015). As it shifts further away from its original philosophical purpose, we can categorise it closer and closer to the *aux-pub* quadrant. The following sections will discuss whether it could be seen to cross the x-axis entirely.

Analysis as an IAL

As discussed previously, IALs need to have simplified, regularised grammar and phonotactic rules, as well as a small, regularised phonemic inventory, allowing it to be used easily by speakers of any L1. Toki Pona clearly accomplishes the need for reduced phonotactics and phonemic inventory. The lack of any distinction by voicedness or aspiration means Toki Pona's phonology is as easy to use for Mandarin speakers (whose stops are differentiated by aspiration) as it is for English speakers (whose stops differ by voicedness). While many speakers might be put off by Toki Pona's vague nature, there is no denying that it is easy to learn. The grammar is intuitive and regular, and the vocabulary is so minimal it could be memorised in a single weekend of study (Morin, 2015). However, despite its simplicity and ease of use, Toki Pona does, of course, have limitations as an IAL. Its small vocabulary, although easy to learn, limits its expressive power. With only 120 root words and a lack of any inflection or tense distinctions, speakers may struggle to convey nuanced or complex concepts accurately, as Toki Pona's method of constructing noun phrases makes ideas inherently relative and often ambiguous (Morin, 2015). As such, it may not be suitable for use in fields such as science, technology, or academia, where more precise and specific terminology is often required. It may also be difficult to convey subtle distinctions in meaning or to accurately translate from Toki Pona into other languages, given its vague nature.

Despite these restrictions, Toki Pona meets the requirements for many of the previously defined goals for IALs. The goal of Simplified Grammar is clearly met, though, as above, the oversimplification may lead to misinterpretation and ambiguity. Moreover, with no associated national or state affiliation, Toki Pona meets the requirements of International Neutrality. It is also non-discriminatory, having gender neutrality ingrained in its core linguistic traits, by means of exclusively gender-neutral pronouns, something that can't be said for Esperanto (Gobbo, 2020). The language also already has the beginnings of its own Identity and Culture, and is used extensively as an internet-based contact language by people all around the world (Coluzzi, 2022). Having one of the largest online conlanging communities, it's hard to refute Toki Pona's growing cultural significance. Toki Pona also has no issues with Linguistic Diversity, having no bias towards itself nor suggesting it should be the world's only language (Lang, 2014). Finally, Toki Pona's propaedeutic value should be considered, and will be discussed in more depth later in this paper, along with a final overview of Toki Pona's capacity to improve global communication.

Toki Ma in Comparison

Analysing Toki Pona as an IAL should not be done without also considering Toki Ma, (2020)¹ a Tokiponido - an offspring of Toki Pona - which attempts to serve as a fully fledged IAL while still retaining the simplicity of the original language. Toki Ma's ("Toki Ma", 2020) grammar is very similar to Toki Pona, with a few minor additions, including verbal aspect, relative clauses, and comparatives. The vocabulary is altered from the original language by restricting the semantic meaning (and thus, vagueness) of many words and by adding ca. 100 new words, which include both an

¹While hard to ascertain the exact identity of Toki Ma's original creator, Reddit user u/ShevekUrrasti appears to be the one to have first shared the language publicly in a 2020 blog post (2020).

extended number system and an intuitive date system based on the words sun and moon, used to represent days and months respectively (ShevekUrrasti, 2020). As an IAL needs to be able to express anything that a natural language can, both of these systems are important additions to Toki Ma, as the original only contains an extremely basic number system with words for “one”, “two”, and “many” (Lang, 2014). Much of the new vocabulary is based on Minimal English, which attempts to be “a highly reduced version of English which can ensure maximum translatability without compromising intelligibility” (Goddard and Wierzbicka, 2017). This new vocabulary (minimally) increases Toki Ma’s immediate intelligibility to speakers of English (“Toki Ma”, 2020) Overall, Toki Ma does well to improve Toki Pona’s standing as an IAL. By slightly reducing the inherent vagueness and by expanding the vocabulary, it increases both the specificity and the expressive power of the language, while retaining its simplicity. If Toki Pona were to be adopted as a full IAL, the alterations made by Toki Ma should be incorporated. From this point forward, when discussing Toki Pona, I include Toki Ma’s changes in its scope.

Subjectivity and Ambiguity

As a side note, understanding how to communicate about something in Toki Pona involves determining one’s own personal beliefs about the concept. Therefore, the word *pona* does not just mean *good*, but rather *good* as perceived subjectively. Describing something as *pona* conveys that it is something one personally likes. Previously, the issue that speakers might find Toki Pona too ambiguous has been discussed, but as Youtuber jan Misali (2021) discusses in their introductory video to Toki Pona, the language is vague, rather than ambiguous. It is not that a given sentence could correspond to only one of many individual translations and there is no way to determine which is intended, but rather that the meaning of a sentence in Toki Pona is almost always broader than any possible translation.

Second Language Acquisition

Language and Thought

The Sapir-Whorf hypothesis is a linguistic theory which suggests that the language a person speaks can influence their thoughts and perceptions of the world. As such, according to this theory, the structure and vocabulary of a language can shape how a person understands reality (Kay and Kempton, 1984). In the context of learning Toki Pona, because it has a limited vocabulary and focuses on fundamental concepts, learning it may encourage speakers to think in a more simple and direct way. Lang (2014) reports that this was one of the motivations behind creating Toki Pona, to help herself deal with negative thoughts by linguistically reframing them in her mind.

Propaedeutic Value of Constructed Languages

Using IALs to assist the process of learning natural languages is not a new idea, and it has long been shown that learning one second language will help you learn another (Reagan, 2010). The most obvious factor at play here is that if two languages are similar, either in vocabulary or grammar, knowing one will make learning the second simpler, as less unfamiliarity has to be overcome (Reagan, 2010). In addition, the process of learning a second language can also be optimised, and by learning a second language, one can familiarise themselves with techniques that suit their own particular learning style. Learning a second language also increases brain plasticity, which helps to associate new words with known concepts, aiding one to understand the inherent flexibility of language (Reagan, 2010). All of these traits are considered propaedeutic values, and have long been studied, especially in regard to Esperanto.

Esperanto's propaedeutic value

According to Dr. Timothy Reagan (2010), Esperanto has a wide variety of propaedeutic values which lend it to be worth using as a tool to learn natural languages.

1. Esperanto is both easier and faster to learn than most natural languages, meaning learning it doesn't take up too much time that could be spent learning the target language.
2. As Esperanto strives to avoid the "irregularities, inconsistencies, and complexities" (Reagan, 2010) which plague natural languages, it can be taught more efficiently and explicitly, allowing non-inductive teaching methods which focus on learning linguistics as well as the language, helping students to better understand languages in general.
3. As learning Esperanto is easier than most languages, students can quickly begin to feel more competent and empowered, resulting in more self-confidence, which can be channelled into overcoming the struggle of learning more challenging languages. In addition, it has been shown that students with learning disabilities retain greater interest and find greater success with learning Esperanto than with other subjects (Reagan, 2010)

Paderborn method

The Paderborn method is a proposed technique designed to improve second language learning, which involves learning a bridge language which facilitates simpler learning of the target language. By learning the bridge language first, students can develop basic language skills and gain a more intuitive understanding of language structure, which can then be applied when learning the target second language. There was historically some debate about the effectiveness of the Paderborn method, but in the late 1970s Dr. Helmar Frank, professor at the Paderborn Institute of Cybernetics,

successfully proved its effectiveness, by teaching Esperanto to German speakers as the bridge to learn English, demonstrating that the Esperanto learners gained higher proficiency in English than those who only studied the target language (Frank, n.d.). Due to Esperanto's simplicity, students were able to learn it faster than any natural language, providing them with a positive attitude toward language learning in a short timespan (Frank, n.d.).

Toki Pona shares many of these advantages with Esperanto and, as it can be quickly and easily learnt, with regular grammar and minimal vocabulary, it could provide the student with both more linguistic understanding and higher self-confidence in a short span of time (Coluzzi, 2022).

Toki Pona as a Language Learning Tool

Dr. Paolo Coluzzi (2022) believed that learning Toki Pona would help his students who were learning Italian gain more confidence in their speech, as well as teach them to simplify unknown words into their constituent parts, allowing them to avoid complete breakdown in communication. Coluzzi's (2022) research focused on testing the ability of six of his students to make circumlocutions in Italian when a word was unknown to them, before and after four classes on Toki Pona, which they took alongside their regular Italian classes. In these classes, basic Toki Pona grammar was introduced, and extensive time was spent discussing the vocabulary and the unique way in which Toki Pona creates noun phrases. Before starting the Toki Pona classes, each student was given ten sentences in English to translate into Italian. The sentences each included two or three "difficult" lexical items which Coluzzi thought the students shouldn't know, given their level. The words were chosen to be relatively easily paraphrased, and the students were instructed that they should do their best to get the meaning across no matter what.

Difficulties in L2 Communication

Based on Coluzzi's (2022) research, I have identified three core facets of language which I believe are likely to cause issues for second language learners.

1. **Vocabulary.** One of the main problems faced when to learning natural languages is the sheer amount of vocabulary which must be memorised (Morin, 2015). Different IALs address solving this issue in various ways. Esperanto reduces the vocabularic burden by regularising many parts of speech; for example, adjectives can be created from nouns with a standard suffix-appending rule (Gobbo, 2020). Interlingua takes a different approach; by being comprised of vocabulary taken directly from Romance language roots, most of the lexicon should be instantly recognisable to speakers of these languages, meaning they have less to learn in order to recognise a piece of text (Gobbo, 2020). It can be seen from this that Esperanto prioritises learnability and Interlingua prioritises intelligibility, but both languages aim to reduce the amount of vocabulary needed to be learnt (Carlevaro, 1987). Toki Pona, of course, takes this to the extreme, reducing the vocabulary enough to make memorisation almost trivial (Morin, 2015).
2. **Grammar.** Accurately applying numerous grammatical rules during speech production is one of the main problems which L2 speakers face (Blahuš, 2011). Toki Pona aims to reduce this by regularising all of its grammar, reducing its complexity by a large factor (Coluzzi, 2022). Dr. Paolo Coluzzi does not explore in much depth how Toki Pona's simplified grammar may also help L2 learners construct more accurate sentences, but this is a significant research gap which could be covered in the future.
3. **Pronunciation.** The further a language's phonemic inventory is from one's own native language, the harder it will be to speak. As an example, English

speakers regularly struggle with the rhotic sounds of many other languages, like the Italian [r] and the French [ʁ]. One of the main criticisms of Esperanto is its phonemic inventory, which contains all the sounds of Polish, but requires speakers of some of the world's most spoken languages to learn how to pronounce new sounds, like [t͡s], [h], or [x] (now archaic). In addition, languages with open phonotactic rules, like English, which allow large consonant clusters due to extensive syllable structure (e.g. "strengths" [streŋkθs]) can be difficult to pronounce. In comparison, Toki Pona has simple phonotactic rules and a small phonemic inventory comprised of common sounds, making it easy to learn and hard to mispronounce.

Potential Solutions

Coluzzi (2022) also provides examples of the variety of ways his students dealt with the communication issues listed above.

1. **Paraphrase:** Use of an alternative word or structure which shares enough semantic features with the intended idea to convey a similar meaning.
2. **Coinage:** Creating new words spontaneously, often amalgamations of existing words or application of known grammatical rules in an attempt to guess the correct form of a word (e.g. transforming a noun into an adjective).
3. **Borrowing:** Taking vocabulary from another language which may be partially known to the listener in order to convey the intended idea.
4. **Circumlocution:** Simplification of complex ideas into longer noun phrases describing their constituent parts or characteristics. This was the main research area of Coluzzi's work – does Toki Pona's inherent reliance on circumlocution to describe complex ideas help prevent communication breakdown in a second language when a requisite word is unknown to the speaker?

Results of Coluzzi's Research

Unfortunately, the results of Coluzzi's research were ultimately inconclusive, with minimal change in the amount of circumlocutions used between the two translation tasks. There were, however, more attempts made to avoid leaving the words in English in the second task. Coluzzi (2022) hypothesises that this may have been a result of learning Toki Pona, by raising the students' confidence in the possibility of completing the task using only the available resources. The rate of dictionary-accurate translations was also higher, perhaps due to the students own interest in learning the words they didn't know or solely the extra month of Italian study (Coluzzi, 2022). In addition, some of the circumlocutions were improved in the second task, and others were simply replaced by a dictionary form as noted above, meaning that if only the cases when a circumlocution was used the second time but not the first, or was improved upon are considered, a slight increase in circumlocution use and ability can be found (Coluzzi, 2022). As Coluzzi (2022) concludes, although the results of this initial study are inconclusive, they do suggest that teaching Toki Pona to second language learners may enhance their ability to use circumlocutions, and improve their communication skills in general - especially useful for beginner students, allowing them to start communicating more easily before they gain a complete vocabulary.

Conclusion

Toki Pona has demonstrated potential as an IAL, due to its simplicity, international neutrality, and propaedeutic value. Its small vocabulary and regular grammar make it easy to learn and use, and it has already developed the beginnings of a unique culture and identity among its speakers. It must be addressed, however, that its recognition as a useful IAL is a subjective matter, where some will always praise its strengths while others lament its weaknesses.

Nevertheless, I believe that it may be worthwhile for individuals interested in learning an IAL to consider Toki Pona as a good introductory option. The language serves as an easy way to dip one's toe into the wider world of IALs and the ever-growing field of interlinguistics, providing speakers with linguistic insights and knowledge, gained through overcoming the mental challenges which come with learning any language. Toki Pona allows learners to quickly gain both knowledge and confidence in its use, which acts as an invaluable source of both entertainment and education.

It must be acknowledged that Toki Pona may not, of course, be a perfect solution for achieving widespread use as a global communication tool - but as previously mentioned, the goals for modern IALs are far less lofty and idealistic than those of the past (Gobbo, 2020). These days, it is key for IALs to be useful, useable, easy to learn, and to facilitate international communication, nonetheless, it is becoming more important than ever that IALs are learnt for enjoyment, self-expression, and personal development, rather than as universal, perfect forms of communication.

Future Work

In addition to achieving many of the qualities of a modern IAL, the minor success of Coluzzi's (2022) research provides enough evidence to warrant a study on Toki Pona's transferable circumlocution skills being repeated on a larger scale. Expanding the sample size and conducting the experiment in accordance with the Paderborn method discussed above should provide more robust and conclusive results. Based on the success of Esperanto, which was learnt over the course of two years in Dr. Helmar Frank's (n.d.) original experiment, I posit that Toki Pona could have great success in a shorter amount of time, as it is a much simpler language to learn.

A focus should be put on the unique linguistic aspects of Toki Pona in comparison with the students' native language, in order to display the great differences that languages can have, as well as to focus on how important its constructed noun phrases are. Additionally, it would be interesting to study the effects of learning Toki Pona on students' communication skills in general, as well as the potential cognitive benefits of learning a constructed language like Toki Pona. Research has shown that learning a second language can have positive effects on executive function and problem-solving skills (Bialystok, 2002), and it is possible that the simplicity of Toki Pona may make it particularly well-suited for this purpose. Further research is certainly needed to fully understand the potential benefits of learning Toki Pona and IALs in general.

Discussion

In summary, Toki Pona does meet many of the goals and requirements of a modern IAL, and appears to have significant propaedeutic value. Learning a second language is usually positive for one's personal development, and Toki Pona is no exception (Coluzzi, 2022). Learning Toki Pona is both interesting and relatively easy, especially compared to any natural language, and both the self-confidence and the linguistic insight gained by studying it could be beneficial for the study of other languages, increasing learners global communication skills either way (Reagan, 2010).

As discussed by Dr. Federico Gobbo (2020) in the final chapter of his book, *Introduction to Interlinguistics*, the aftermath of the Second World War saw the victory of English as an international non-auxiliary language and the rise of linguistic descriptivism. The glory days of the classical ideological interlinguistics period have now passed, with most IALs being used for artistic expression or communication between small groups of dedicated fans, rather than by a grand international community (Gobbo, 2020). The new generation of interlinguists is no longer interested in creating an perfect ideological linguistic landscape, but in the pragmatic function, utility, and pure enjoyment of studying both IALs and all the other methods by which we communicate on an international scale. The recent prevalence of languages planned for media, like Game of Thrones' Dothraki and High Valyrian (which is now on Duolingo) has also greatly contributed to the normalization of constructed languages, and, as time goes on, more and more people are becoming acquainted with and interested in interlinguistics (Gobbo, 2020). Toki Pona is a subjective language, and whether or not it should be considered a good IAL is subjective too, but no matter what, learning and using the language is positive for both one's own development and the field of interlinguistics at large. *sona toki li musi!*

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