

Te Gagana Tokelau

— Orthography Guidelines

Acknowledgements

The Ministry is grateful for the support provided by academic and community language experts that contributed to the development of these guidelines. In particular, we would like to thank Reverend Iutana Pue, Tiso Fiaola, and Dr Melenaita Taumoefolau – this work would not have been possible without your knowledge and expertise – *fakafetai lahi lele*.

We apologise for any errors or omissions that may remain despite our best efforts and urge readers to bring any issues to our attention by contacting us at languages@mpp.govt.nz.

Suggested Citation

When citing the te gagana Tokelau orthography guidelines, you may wish to use the following convention:

Ministry for Pacific Peoples (2024). *Te Gagana Tokelau Orthography Guidelines*. Wellington, New Zealand: Ministry for Pacific Peoples.

Contents

Introduction	4
Linguistic classification of te gagana Tokelau	5
Timeline of key texts on te gagana Tokelau	5
Section 1 – Dialects and Registers	6
Dialects	6
Registers	6
Section 2 – Vowels and Consonants	6
Alphabet	6
Vowels	6
Consonants	7
Section 3 – Word Division	8
Affixes	8
Compound Words	10
Loanwords and Word Creation	11
Section 4 – Capitalisation	13
References	15
Appendices	15

Introduction

Due to a range of historical and contemporary factors including migration, population growth, and climate change, there are now more tagata Tokelau living in the diaspora, predominantly New Zealand, than Tokelau.

The future of te gagana Tokelau in New Zealand, and indeed other languages of the Pacific, is uncertain, and it is for this reason that the Ministry for Pacific Peoples, in collaboration with Pacific communities across the motu and abroad, published the Pacific Languages Strategy 2022-2032 in September 2022. The Strategy, in line with current research on language policy and planning, highlighted *corpus*¹ as a key element of successful language revitalisation, and it is in this context that these orthography guidelines have been developed.

These guidelines outline what the Ministry for Pacific Peoples, in consultation with language experts, consider to be best practice for writing te gagana Tokelau *in New Zealand*. They are intended as an accessible and easy-to-reference guide that we hope will be useful to beginners and experts alike. They are part of a series, which also includes guidelines on Niuean, Cook Islands Māori, Tongan, and Samoan.

These guidelines were developed using widely accepted conventions and literature on the orthography of te gagana Tokelau to promote accessibility, consistency, and clarity of meaning and pronunciation, especially for language learners

in New Zealand. Given this, there may be instances where the advice in this publication contradicts that of other authoritative texts. For example, there are mixed opinions around marking vowel length in te gagana Tokelau – while some authorities support macrons under certain circumstances only, this document recommends they always be used where long vowels are present. In cases such as this, it is recommended that these guidelines supersede those in other (especially older) literature.

The Ministry for Pacific Peoples recommends the *Tokelau Dictionary* and supplementary *English – Tokelauan Word List* as primary references for checking how words should be spelled. These were originally compiled by educator and translator Ropati Simona at the behest of, and in collaboration with, Tokelauan communities across the Pacific. They were published by the Office of Tokelau Affairs in 1987 with the assistance of funds from the United Nations Development Programme. Both documents are available to view digitally on the Matauala Cultural Centre & Hub website at www.matauala.org.nz/dictionary. Many of the examples used in these guidelines come from these documents.

¹ *Corpus* refers to the creation and maintenance of a language's oral and written resources e.g., dictionaries, grammars, orthography guidelines, and pronunciation guides.

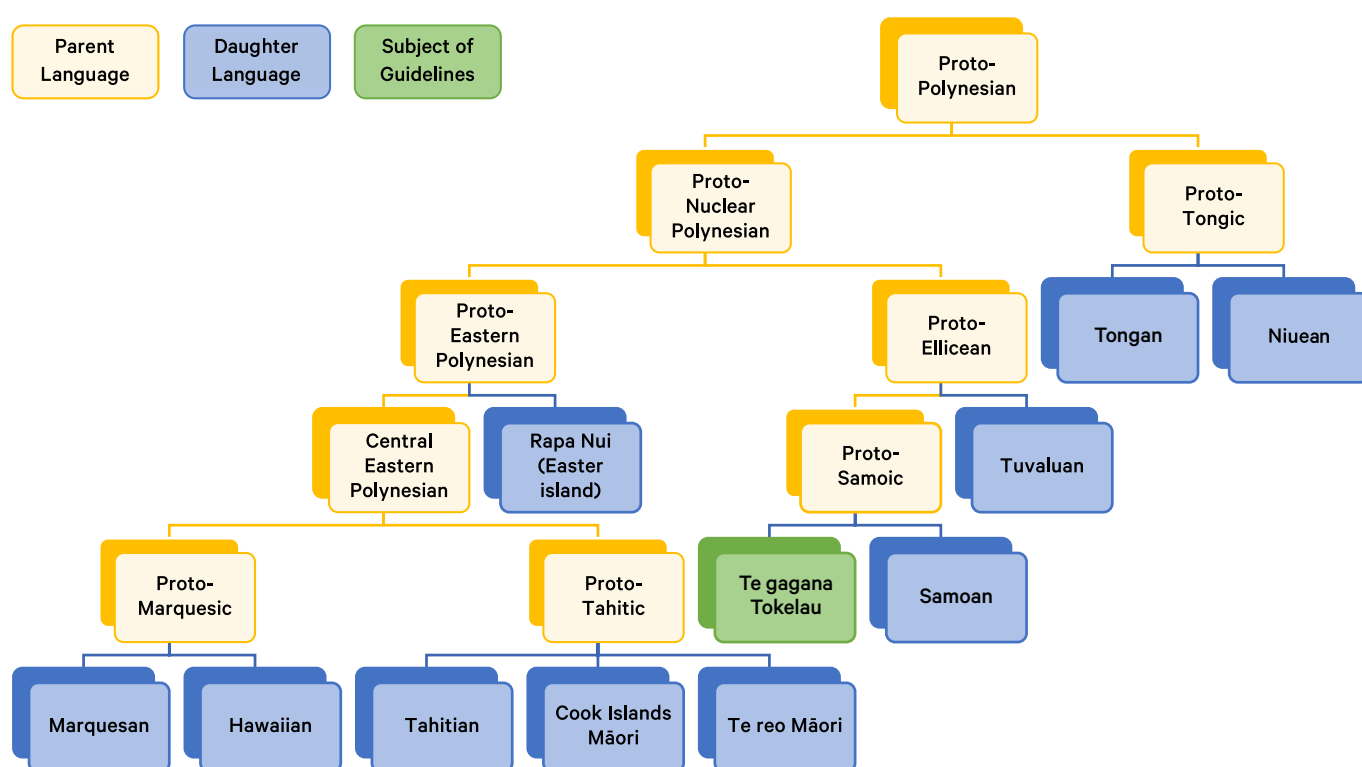
Linguistic classification of te gagana Tokelau

Te gagana Tokelau is a Polynesian language that belongs to the Samoic subgroup alongside Samoan. As a nuclear offshoot of the Polynesian language family, te gagana Tokelau is strongly influenced by its sister language Samoan and, to a lesser extent, other Polynesian languages due to the economic and religious connections between the islands prior to and during the 19th and 20th centuries. This influence can be seen morphologically (as in *akalava* ‘scorpion’ from Samoan *akarava*), orthographically (as in the

/ŋ/ phoneme being represented with /g/, rather than /ng/ as in other Polynesian languages), and grammatically.

A visual representation of the Polynesian language family tree is included for reference with an accompanying legend below. Note the diagram is not exhaustive, and that many other languages not included are also part of the Polynesian language family.

Figure 1 – Polynesian Language Family Tree



Timeline of key texts on te gagana Tokelau

There are several texts of historical and linguistic significance written on and in te gagana Tokelau that these guidelines draw on directly – many descriptions from Ropati Simona’s 1986 *Tokelau Dictionary*, for example, are referenced throughout. Conversely, other texts merely contextualise the journey of the written language since the publication of Horatio Hale’s Tokelauan ‘dictionary’ nearly 200 years ago.

All mark important inflection points in the history and study of te gagana Tokelau. These key texts are detailed in Appendix 1, noting the timeline is not exhaustive. For a more detailed account of the history of linguistic texts in particular, we recommend the Introduction of the *Tokelau Dictionary*.²

² Simona 1986: vii

Section 1 – Dialects and Registers

Dialects

There are three dialects of te gagana Tokelau that correspond to the three atolls that comprise the territory – Atafu, Nukunonu, and Fakaofu. While spoken and written gagana Tokelau can reflect vocabulary and intonation differences between these dialects, variation is becoming less apparent over time: “from listening to the spoken language of a young person, for example, it is no longer always easy to tell which atoll they come from”.³

Registers

Te gagana Tokelau also has distinct formal and informal registers. The formal register *gagana fakaaloalo* is spoken in settings such as *fono* (official meetings), church sermons, ceremonial gatherings (e.g., funerals), and cultural gatherings (e.g., performing-arts festivals). Conversely, *gagana tautala* is used for casual conversation between friends and family.

Section 2 – Vowels and Consonants

Alphabet

Te gagana Tokelau is written with an alphabet of fifteen letters. Note all future references to ‘the alphabet’ relate to (1).

(1) Te gagana Tokelau alphabet⁴

a, e, i, o, u, f, g, k, l, m, n, p, h, t, v

Vowels

Like most Polynesian languages, te gagana Tokelau has five basic vowels.

(2) Vowels in te gagana Tokelau⁵

	FRONT	CENTRAL	BACK
High	i		u
Mid	e		o
Low		a	

3 Tokelau Department of Education 2022: <https://gagana-tokelau.org.nz/en/language-standards>

4 Simona 1986: xiii

These vowels come in two distinct types – **short** and **long** – and can be combined to create diphthongs.

- **Short** vowels are unmarked – a, e, i, o, u
- **Long** vowels are marked with a macron – ā, ē, ī, ō, ū
- Diphthongs, which combine two vowels and are pronounced as one syllable, are unmarked sequences – ae, ai, ao, au, etc.,

It is worth noting that marking vowel length with macrons is still debated in official circles, with the Tokelau Language Committee in New Zealand supporting their use to help language learners with pronunciation, and the Tokelau Department of Education arguing against their use in schools across the atolls⁶ (though this view has softened in recent years with their publication of language standards that allow macrons in some circumstances, subject to a list of conditions).⁷ Generally speaking, support for and against consistent macron use is broadly divided along diaspora and Tokelau lines respectively.⁸

The position of these guidelines, in line with those of the *Tokelau Language Guidelines* for the New Zealand Curriculum published by the Ministry of Education, is that macrons should always be used to indicate vowel length as they “assist learners to develop accurate pronunciation” and “communicate more effectively”, ultimately improving “their reading accuracy and fluency”.⁹

Macrons not only guide language learners’ pronunciation, they also critically distinguish the meaning of words that would otherwise share the same spelling i.e., “difference in vowel length is distinctive [...] in meaning”.¹⁰ The importance of this is illustrated below:

(3) Contrastive word set¹¹

VOWEL TYPE	WORD/SPELLING	MEANING
Short	<i>aka</i>	‘root, kick, heel’
Long	<i>akā</i>	‘tree with many roots’

Consonants

There are fourteen consonant sounds in te gagana Tokelau (though /s/ and /l/ only occur in Samoan and English loanwords respectively).

(4) Consonants in te gagana Tokelau¹²

	BILABIAL	LABIO-DENTAL	ALVEOLAR/ DENTAL	VELAR	GLOTTAL
STOP/PLOSIVE	p		t		k
FRICATIVE		f v	[s]		h h ^y h ^w
NASAL	m		n	ŋ	
LATERAL			l		
APPROXIMANT			[ɹ]		

5 Simona 1986: xiii

6 Hooper, Huntsman, and Kalolo 1992: 367

7 Tokelau Department of Education 2022: <https://gagana-tokelau.org.nz/en/language-standards>

8 Hooper 1993: 12

9 Ministry of Education 2009: 14

10 Simona 1986: xii

11 Simona 1986: 9

12 Hooper 1993: 9

All consonant sounds in te gagana Tokelau are represented in spelling as they are in the above table, with the following exceptions:

- /f/ can represent one of two sounds:
 - /h/ – more so before /i/ and /e/, the same as /h/ in English e.g., **hat**, **horse**, and **hand**.
 - /hʷ/ – more so before /a/, /o/, and /u/, with /hw/ corresponding to /wh/ in (some varieties of) English e.g., **white**, **when**, and **where**.
- /ɹ/ is represented as /r/, as in English **rank**, **rest**, and **scoring**
- /ŋ/ is represented as /g/, and corresponds to /ng/ as in English **sing**, **sang**, and **running**
- /h/ can correspond to one of two sounds:
 - /h/ – before /i/ and /e/, the same as /h/ in English e.g., **hat**, **horse**, and **hand**.
 - /hʷ/ – before /a/, /o/, and /u/.

Section 3 – Word Division

Affixes

Te gagana Tokelau has three types of affixes: prefixes, suffixes, and circumfixes. Reduplication is not considered a type of affix by these guidelines. Affixes are *directly attached to the root words they modify*.

The exception to this is where there are directional particles, which can split verbs from their suffixes. In such cases the directional particle and suffix are combined into a new word that is written separately from the root verb. More detail on this phenomenon is provided in the dedicated *Suffixes* section below.

Prefixes

Te gagana Tokelau has many prefixes. Many of these are numeral prefixes that attach to numbers to indicate larger units (i.e., tens or hundreds) of specific, usually living, things including people, birds, crabs, skipjack tuna, and/or other fish.

Some examples of common prefixes, including numeral prefixes, are described in the table below.

(5) Prefixes¹³

PREFIX	FUNCTION	EXAMPLE
<i>ana-</i>	Forms adverbs referring to past time.	<i>ana</i> + <i>pō</i> 'night' = <i>anapō</i> 'last night'
<i>oge-</i>	Denotes a shortage/lack of something.	<i>oge</i> + <i>meakai</i> 'food' = <i>ogemeakai</i> 'famine'
<i>taki-</i>	Denotes distribution.	<i>taki</i> + <i>lua</i> 'two' = <i>takilua</i> 'two each'
<i>tua-</i>	Denotes a unit of ten crabs or crayfish.	<i>tua</i> + <i>lima</i> 'five' = <i>tualima</i> 'fifty crabs/crayfish'

¹³ Simona 1986: 16, 35, 360, 401

Suffixes

Te gagana Tokelau has many suffixes also, some of which are listed in the table below:

(6) Suffixes¹⁴

SUFFIX	FUNCTION	EXAMPLE
-ga	Combines with verbs to form related nouns.	<i>fano</i> 'to go' + <i>ga</i> = <i>fanoga</i> 'departure'
-gia	Combines with verbs to form related adjectives.	<i>pepelo</i> 'to lie' + <i>gia</i> = <i>pelogia</i> 'to be deceived'
-gōfie	Denotes an action that is done easily or willingly.	<i>fai</i> 'to do' + <i>gōfie</i> = <i>faigōfie</i> 'to be easy to do'

It is important to note that while some suffixes in te gagana Tokelau may initially appear discrete, they can actually be variants of one another that denote same meaning. For example, -a is a non-productive suffix that can be added to certain verbs to form other words of related meaning that can also take the form of -fia, -gia, -kia, -lia, -mia, -hia, and -tia:

(7) -a/fia/gia/kia/lia/mia/hia/tia suffix¹⁵

SUFFIX	FUNCTION	EXAMPLE
-a	kati 'bite' + a	= <i>katia</i> 'eroded' or 'be eroded'
-fia	ulu 'enter' + fia	= <i>ulufia</i> 'possessed by a spirit' or 'be possessed by a spirit'
-gia	ita 'be angry' + gia	= <i>itagia</i> 'hated' or 'be hated'
-kia	fiti 'flick, jump up' + kia	= <i>fitikia</i> 'hit by a stone (that has jumped up, accidentally)'
-lia	tū 'stand' + lia	= <i>tūlia</i> (of certain trees) 'used (stood upon) by birds for nesting'
-mia	inu 'drink' + mia	= <i>inumia</i> 'drinkable' or 'be drinkable'
-hia	fakatagi 'request' + hia	= <i>fakatagihia</i> 'be requested'
-tia	malu 'shelter, shade' + tia	= <i>malutia</i> 'sheltered' or 'be sheltered'

Suffixes in te gagana Tokelau attach directly to the root words they modify except where directional particles are present. In these cases, suffixes attach to the directional particle instead of the root word. Take the following sentence meaning 'the complete disappearance of Lata' for example:

(8) Suffix attachment in sentences with directional particles¹⁶

te 'the'	<i>galo</i> 'disappear'	<i>atuga</i> '(away from speaker)'	<i>lava</i> 'complete'	<i>tēnā</i> '(that)'	<i>o</i> 'of'	<i>Lata</i> Lata
Definite article	Verb	Directional particle + Nominative suffix	Adjective	Demonstrative particle	Preposition	Proper noun

In short, the -ga suffix (which turns the verb *galo* 'disappear' into a noun 'disappearance') is attached to the directional particle *atu* to form *atuga*, rather than to *galo* itself.

¹⁴ Simona 1986: 133, xxxv, 139

¹⁵ Simona 1986: xxxvi

¹⁶ Hooper 1993: 84

Circumfixes

Te gagana Tokelau has one circumfix, *fe-* *-aki* (though the latter component is sometimes realised as *-naki*), which is used to form reciprocal verbs.

(9) Circumfixes¹⁷

CIRCUMFIX	FUNCTION	EXAMPLE
<i>fe-</i> <i>-aki/naki</i>	Forms plural, reciprocal verbs.	<i>fe + fakaali</i> 'tell, show' + <i>aki</i> = <i>fefakaaliaki</i> 'to tell one another' <i>fe + tuhi</i> 'write' + <i>aki</i> = <i>fetuhiaki</i> 'to write to each other'

Compound words

Orthographic convention around compound words in te gagana Tokelau is inconsistent. They are *generally* written as single words without spaces or hyphens, though there are many exceptions, sometimes even within a group of compounds formed from the same root word.

For example, there is variation between the compounds formed from the verb *hakiliga* 'search for something':

(10) Compounds formed from *hakiliga*¹⁸

WORD COMPONENTS	COMPOUND WORD
Written as single words	
<i>hakiliga + meakai</i> 'food'	= <i>hakiligāmeakai</i> 'search, ask, or beg for food'
<i>hakiliga + tupe</i> 'money, cash'	= <i>hakiligātupe</i> 'fundraise'
Written as separate words	
<i>hakiliga + vai</i> 'water'	= <i>hakiligā vai</i> 'search for water'
<i>hakiliga + mālamalama</i> 'knowledge'	= <i>hakiligā mālamalama</i> 'search for information'

The length of each component of a compound does not predict whether it will be written as one word. For example, *paega* and *fakaputuga* both mean 'heap' and can be added to other nouns to mean 'heap of something'. Inexplicably, however, while *fakaputuga* always attaches to the noun it forms a compound with, *paega* never does:

(11) Compounds formed from *fakaputuga* and *paega*¹⁹

WORD COMPONENTS	COMPOUND WORD
Written as single words	
<i>paega</i> 'heap' + <i>oneone</i> 'sand'	= <i>paegā oneone</i> 'heap of sand'
<i>paega</i> 'heap' + <i>otaota</i> 'rubbish'	= <i>paegā otaota</i> 'heap of rubbish'
Written as separate words	
<i>fakaputuga</i> 'heap' + <i>fatu</i> 'stones'	= <i>fakaputugafatu</i> 'heap of stones'
<i>fakaputuga</i> 'heap' + <i>laupapa</i> 'timber'	= <i>fakaputugalaupapa</i> 'heap/stack of timber'

Compounds separated by hyphens are rare, but several do exist. Specifically, compounds related to periods of the day stemming from *afiafi* 'afternoon':

¹⁷ Simona 1996: 116, 121

¹⁸ Simona 1996: 294

¹⁹ Paega examples provided by native speaker; fakaputuga examples source from Simona 1996: 92

(12) Compounds formed from *afiafi*²⁰

WORD COMPONENTS	COMPOUND WORD
<i>afiafi</i> 'afternoon' + <i>ao</i> 'day, daylight'	= <i>afiafi-ao</i> 'late afternoon (before sunset)'
<i>afiafi</i> 'afternoon' + <i>pō</i> 'night'	= <i>afiafi-pō</i> 'evening, dusk'
<i>afiafi</i> 'afternoon' + <i>popogi</i> 'twilight'	= <i>afiafi-popogi</i> 'evening, dusk'

While the above examples would suggest that compounds remain the same type of word as their root (i.e., as *hakiliga* 'to search for' is a verb it follows that *hakiligāmeakai* and *hakiligātupe* are verbs also), this is not always the case.

For example, *oge* 'famine' can be combined to form either compound nouns denoting 'a shortage/lack of something' or compound verbs meaning 'to be short of/not have enough of something'. In such cases, context is the best guide.

(13) Compounds formed from *oge*²¹

WORD COMPONENTS	COMPOUND WORD
<i>oge</i> + <i>lau</i> 'thatching'	= <i>ogelau</i> 'shortage of thatching' or 'to be short of thatching'
<i>oge</i> + <i>utufaga</i> 'tobacco'	= <i>ogeutufaga</i> 'shortage of tobacco' or 'to be short of tobacco'

In short, while many compounds in te gagana Tokelau are written as one word, there is no way to determine where there are exceptions in the form of separation by space or hyphen without consulting a dictionary or native speaker.

This being the case, it is the position of these guidelines that *compounds should always be written as one word*, unless doing so would impact clarity of meaning, or strongly established practice dictates otherwise.

Loanwords and word creation

Te gagana Tokelau has many loanwords, mainly from Samoan and English. As they are closely linguistically related, Samoan loanwords integrate seamlessly into te gagana Tokelau. Loanwords from English and other languages less closely related to te gagana Tokelau, on the other hand, integrate variably, and can become part of the language in a number of different ways.

While most early loanwords from English into te gagana Tokelau underwent transliteration and easily combined with existing prefixes into compounds still used today, newer terms, especially those relating to science and technology, have to be intentionally incorporated into the language through *word creation*.

(14) Compounds formed with loanwords *leona* and *puhi*²²

WORD COMPONENTS	COMPOUND WORD
<i>punua</i> 'young of animal' + <i>leona</i> 'lion'	= <i>punuāleona</i> 'lion cub'
<i>punua</i> 'young of animal' + <i>puhi</i> 'cat'	= <i>punuāpuhi</i> 'kitten'

²⁰ Simona 1986: 7

²¹ Simona 1986: 35

²² Simona 1986: 283

A number of strategies (including transliteration) can be employed to support word creation. These are outlined below:

(15) Word creation strategies²³

STRATEGY	FUNCTION	EXAMPLE
<i>Borrowing</i>	The most basic strategy – simply use a word from another language as-is, same spelling, same pronunciation.	‘Microwave’, as in <i>fakavevela tau meakai i te microwave</i> ‘heat your food in the microwave’. ‘TV’, as in <i>ko kimatou e TV</i> ‘we are watching TV’.
<i>Transliteration</i>	Changing the spelling (and pronunciation) of a word in another language to conform to the spelling conventions in te gagana Tokelau.	‘Electricity’ is realised as <i>eletihe</i> ‘Insect’ is realised as <i>iniheti</i> ‘October’ is realised as <i>Oketopa</i>
<i>Meaning Extension</i>	Extending the meaning of an existing word in te gagana Tokelau to encompass the meaning of a new word from another language.	The meaning of <i>uila</i> ‘lightning’ is extended to include ‘electricity’. The meaning of <i>tāvale</i> ‘cart’ is extended to include ‘car’.
<i>Phrase Formation</i>	Using a group of words in te gagana Tokelau to capture the meaning of a word from another language.	‘Spring’ is realised as <i>tau tuputupu</i> , literally ‘season during which things grow steadily’. ‘Windmill’ is realised as <i>pekapeka matagi</i> , literally ‘wind propeller’.
<i>Compounding</i>	Combining existing words in te gagana Tokelau to form new words.	‘Fundraise’ is realised as <i>hakiligātupe</i> , literally ‘to search for money’. ‘(Electric) light’ is realised as <i>mōlieletihe</i> , literally ‘electricity lamp’.

The above strategies can be employed individually or combined with one another. For example, *mōlieletihe* is a compound of *mōli* ‘lamp’ and English transliteration *eletihe* ‘electricity’.

The following factors should be considered (in the order they are presented) when determining which word creation strategies to employ:

- **Precedent** – If there is already an established word or phrase that conveys the meaning you are trying to capture, use it! Don’t create something new if there is no need to.
- **Language Status** – Think about how the word creation strategy might affect people’s view of the language. For example, don’t resort to borrowing or transliteration just because it’s easier, as this can send the message that te gagana Tokelau is not sophisticated enough to capture meaning in the modern world.
- **Effectiveness** – How well does the new word or phrase capture the meaning of the original word, and how obvious would that meaning be at first glance?
- **Workability** – How efficient is the strategy? For example, while phrase formation might initially seem like the best way to capture meaning, if the phrase in question would be ten or more words long, it’s unlikely to catch on and be used widely and frequently as intended.

²³ Tokelau Department of Education 2022: <https://gagana-tokelau.org.nz/en/language-standards>

Section 4 – Capitalisation

Proper nouns

Proper nouns – including personal names, religious titles (i.e., Father, God etc.), days of the week, months of the year, place names, country names, demonyms, and language names – are subject to variable capitalisation in te gagana Tokelau. Guidance around what should be capitalised specifically is provided in the sections below.

Personal names

All components of personal names – i.e., first names, any middle names, and surnames – are capitalised in the gagana Tokelau.

(16) Personal names

TE GAGANA TOKELAU	ENGLISH
<i>Kelihiano Kalolo</i>	Ulu-o-Tokelau (as of writing)
<i>Foua Toloa</i>	Ulu-o-Tokelau (former)

Place names

Place names, including geographic features, are generally separated by spaces with all words capitalised except prepositions e.g., *Fogalaki i Matagii*. There are exceptions to this, however, and digital maps do not always align with traditional maps. This being the case, traditional maps should be considered authoritative in the first instance. However, if you do not have access to traditional maps, or someone with knowledge of the place names contained therein, a digital resource such as Google Maps is acceptable – just be consistent, and reference sources where appropriate.

(17) Place names

LEA FAKA-TONGA
<i>Te Fakanava</i>
<i>Te Kau Afua o Humu</i>
<i>Kauahua o Tanifa</i>

Religious titles

As in English, religious titles are capitalised when they refer to a specific person and lowercase when used generally – e.g., *Pātele Ioane* ‘Father John’ as opposed to *ko te ahiahiga pātele* ‘the visitation of the priest’.

The above rule also applies to references to the Christian God as opposed to other gods – e.g., *ke fakamanuia atu te Atua* ‘may God bless you’ versus *ko Tui Tokelau te atua i nā aho kua loa* ‘Tui Tokelau was the god in the olden days’.

Country names

Country names are separated by spaces with all words capitalised.

(18) Country and continent names

TE GAGANA TOKELAU	ENGLISH
<i>Niu Hila</i>	‘New Zealand’
<i>Afelika Haute</i>	‘South Africa’
<i>Kuki Ailani</i>	‘Cook Islands’

Demonyms

Demonyms are the words used to denote the inhabitants of a particular country, state, city, region etc. In English, demonyms are formed with a number of suffixes, most notably /-n/ or /-an/ e.g., Samoan, Niuean. In te gagana Tokelau, lowercase *tamaloa* ‘man’, *fafine* ‘woman’, or *tagata* ‘person’ is combined with the relevant capitalised country name:

(19) Demonyms

TE GAGANA TOKELAU	ENGLISH
<i>tamaloa / fafine / tagata Niu Hila</i>	‘New Zealand man / woman / people’
<i>tamaloa / fafine / tagata Hamoa</i>	‘Samoan man / woman / people’
<i>tamaloa / fafine / tagata Kuki Ailani</i>	‘Cook Islands man / woman / people’

Language names

Language names are always formed with *te gagana* ('the language [of]') and the name of the country where the language originates (generally speaking). *Te* is only capitalised if it is at the beginning of a sentence, while *gagana* is always lowercase and the country name is always capitalised.

(20) Language names

TE GAGANA TOKELAU	ENGLISH
<i>te gagana Tokelau</i>	the Tokelauan language
<i>te gagana Hamoa</i>	the Samoan language
<i>te gagana Peletānia</i>	the English language

Days of the week

The days of the week are constructed by pairing *Aho* 'day' with certain other words. Both components are capitalised e.g., *Aho Gafua* 'Monday'.

(21) Days of the week

TE GAGANA TOKELAU	ENGLISH
<i>Aho Gafua</i>	'Monday'
<i>Aho Lua</i>	'Tuesday'
<i>Aho Lulu</i>	'Wednesday'
<i>Aho Tofi</i>	'Thursday'
<i>Aho Falaile</i>	'Friday'
<i>Aho Tōnai</i>	'Saturday'
<i>Aho Hā</i>	'Sunday'

Months of the year

Tokelau has two calendars – one is the Gregorian calendar with each month's name transliterated from English into *te gagana Tokelau*, and the other is the traditional lunar calendar. All months are capitalised.

(22) Months of the year

TOKELAUAN MONTHS (ANGLICISED)	ENGLISH	TOKELAUAN MONTHS (TRADITIONAL)	ENGLISH
<i>Ianuali</i>	'January'	<i>Palolomua</i>	Mid-Dec – Mid-Jan
<i>Febuali</i>	'February'	<i>Toepalolo</i>	Mid-Jan – Mid-Feb
<i>Māti</i>	'March'	<i>Mulifā</i>	Mid-Feb – Mid-Mar
<i>Apelila</i>	'April'	<i>Takaoga</i>	Mid-Mar – Mid-Apr
<i>Me</i>	'May'	<i>Uluakihiliga</i>	Mid Apr – Mid-May
<i>Iuni</i>	'June'	<i>Toehiliga</i>	Mid-May – Mid-June
<i>Iulai</i>	'July'	<i>Uluakiutuā</i>	Mid-June – Mid July
<i>Aukuho</i>	'August'	<i>Toeutuā</i>	Mid-July – Mid-Aug
<i>Hetema</i>	'September'	<i>Vainoa</i>	Mid-Aug – Mid-Sep
<i>Oketopa</i>	'October'	<i>Fakaafu</i>	Mid-Sep – Mid-Oct
<i>Novema</i>	'November'	<i>Kaununu</i>	Mid-Oct – Mid-Nov
<i>Tehema</i>	'December'	<i>Oloāmanu</i>	Mid-Nov – Mid-Dec

References

Hooper, A., Huntsman, J., Kalolo, K. (1992) *The Tokelau Language 1841 – 1991*. Auckland, New Zealand. Polynesian Press.

Hooper, R. (1993) *Studies in Tokelaun Syntax*. Auckland, New Zealand: University of Auckland Press.

New Zealand Ministry of Education (2009) *Gagana Tokelau/The Tokelau Language Guidelines*. Wellington, New Zealand: Learning Media Wellington Press.

Simona, R. (1986). *Tokelau Dictionary*. Accessed Online through the Matauala Cultural Centre & Hub website.

Tokelau Department of Education (2022). *Gagana Tokelau – Language Standards*. Published Online by the Government of Tokelau.

Appendices

Appendix 1 — Timeline of key texts on and in te gagana Tokelau

YEAR(S)	TEXT	SIGNIFICANCE
1846	‘Tokelaun Dictionary’	<p>Horatio Hale compiled a collection of 214 pieces of Tokelaun vocabulary together with a brief description of the language’s grammar and sound system in 1846. This remained the only linguistic reference text for Tokelaun until 1969.</p> <p>Hale’s descriptions were accurate and enduring such that his work maintains a considerable degree of historical continuity to this day – only 8 of the 214 items recorded in 1841 are no longer in common use.</p>
1969	First Tokelau-English Vocabulary	Over 120 years after Hale’s dictionary, D. W. Boardman compiled the <i>Tokelau-English Vocabulary</i> as part of his sociological research on Tokelau migrants to New Zealand. This detailed account of ≈1200 vocabulary items was published by the then-Department of Education in 1969.
1975	Second Tokelau-English Dictionary	<p>A short six years later, Hosea Kirifi and J.H. Webster completed the even larger <i>Tokelau-English Dictionary</i>. The text contained ≈3000 items and was published in Tokelau on a school duplicating machine.</p> <p>Though it was the most comprehensive linguistic text of its time, the <i>Tokelau-English Dictionary</i> was considered only a stepping-stone, with Kirifi and Webster expressing in its introduction the hope that others “would soon accept the task of producing an even better dictionary”.</p> <p>Shortly after the publication, Kirifi became the first Tokelau Director of Education and, in turn, came to play a key role in developing that very same “even better dictionary”.</p>
1986	Tokelau Dictionary & English – Tokelaun Wordlist	<p>Over the following decade, the New Zealand Government funded educator and translator Ropati Simona to work as a Research Associate at the University of Auckland to develop the <i>Tokelau Dictionary</i>.</p> <p>This work was undertaken in collaboration with the Department of Anthropology and three Dictionary Committees in Tokelau and was published by the Office of Tokelau Affairs in Apia, Samoa, in 1986.</p> <p><i>Tokelau Dictionary</i> remains the most comprehensive and authoritative text on te gagana Tokelau to date. It was recently reprinted in 2022.</p>
2020	Tokelau Education Strategic Plan 2020 – 2025	Published by the Tokelau Department of Education in 2020, the <i>Tokelau Strategic Plan 2020 – 2025</i> outlines the vision, strategic direction, and goals for education in Tokelau over a five-year period. It is relevant to these guidelines because it provided for the development of a wide range of language learning resources including new audio-supported student texts, eBooks, and a language website.