

So toki pona sentence structure generally follows this basic template:

"[(context) **la**, (subject) **li** verb [**e** (object)]]"

Additions can be made (e.g. prepositions), but they're not relevant right now.

la, li, and e are grammatical particles marking specific parts of a sentence. These are necessary in toki pona because most words can be nouns, adjectives, or verbs, so you can't use the words themselves to distinguish between parts of speech. You can't tell the difference between "sina mute" meaning "you all" (sina being a noun meaning "you", mute being an adjective meaning "many"), and "sina mute" meaning "you multiply" (sina still being a noun, "mute" being a verb meaning "become many", or "multiply").

Enter the word "li", which is used after the subject of a sentence (as long as that subject is not "mi" or "sina" alone) to mark whatever comes next as the verb. It's omitted in this particular case because the sentence's subject is just "mi".

"e" here serves a similar function to mark the object of the sentence, the thing the verb applies to. An object is optional - the example "sina mute" lacks one, meaning just "you multiply", but you can add one. "sina mute e kasi" means "you multiply the plants", or "you increase the number of the plants".

"la" is a very flexible particle that doesn't always have a direct English translation. It marks the preceding sentence as *context* for the next. This can be used to indicate when something happened, as toki pona doesn't have tense by default, location, an if/when conditional, or that something is a speaker's opinion or own experience ("mi la, (x)"), among other things.

Going back to this specific sentence, we can use our knowledge of particles to see that "tenpo ni" is the context, "mi" is the subject, "wile unpa" is the verb, and "kala suli lipu" is the object. Now, what do all those words mean?

"tenpo ni" is simple - tenpo means "time", ni means "this". Adjectives come after the noun in toki pona. "This time", or with la, "in the context of this time". Marking tense is optional in toki pona, so a speaker has to go out of their way to indicate tense if and only if it is important. (This philosophy of only communicating relevant information is present everywhere in toki pona, and is essential to speaking the language effectively). It's not entirely clear why Jake has chosen to indicate this sentence specifically takes place in the present - maybe it indicates that the following statement is a new development, or that it's urgent. It's open to interpretation.

"mi" is a simple subject. It means "me" or "I". The speaker. Jake.

"wile unpa" is the verb here, but you'll notice it's two words. To fully understand it requires another toki pona concept called **preverbs**, words that go ahead of verbs to provide additional context. These are optional, can also be used to mark things like tense or mood. "wile" is the preverb here, and in this context, it means the thing to follow is a desire or wish, not

a reality. “unpa” is the verb, meaning “to have sexual or marital relations with”, and requires no elaboration.

Now, the object, “kala suli lipu”. “kala” is translated as “fish”, a concept that is notoriously vague as a taxonomic term in English. It’s similarly vague in toki pona, but on purpose this time! All toki pona words for categories of animals, and, in fact, all toki pona words in general, refer to categories of things. General shape and vibes. “kala” is anything that is kinda fish-like. A dolphin is a kala, despite technically being a mammal and not a fish. toki pona embraces words as being descriptive of individual perception, not objective reflections of reality. Even “pona”, the word for “good”, specifically means “good, *in the speaker’s opinion”, and has extended to also generally mean “simple”, because most speakers of a very minimalistic language would agree that which is simple is inherently good.

So, the object of this sentence is something fishy. Let’s take a look at the adjectives.

“suli” means big and/or important. It’s not like an English homonym, where it can mean either thing and you have to guess which one it is - they are one concept, just with a flexible word. The object of this sentence is *both* famously big and very important, both in-universe and out of it.

“lipu” is an interesting one. As a noun, it means a book or document, or metaphorically, a website, but it can also mean book-like. Paper-like. Something shaped like a sheet; something flat.

What kind of fish is flat, big, and important? Big Man from Splatoon. Jake wants to fuck Big Man from Splatoon *right now*. Q.E.D.