

List of Languages by Total Numbers of Speakers. Retrieved from

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_languages_by_total_number_of_speakers on January 17, 2018.

Ethnologue (2017 20th edition)

The following 26 languages are listed as having 50 million or more total speakers in the 2017 edition of *Ethnologue*, a language reference published by SIL International based in the United States^[2] (although *Ethnologue* also lists more than only these 26 languages as having 50 million or more total speakers, e.g., the Wikipedia page for the Tagalog language reports 70+ million speakers by as early as 2000 and 73+ million speakers by 2013: 28 million L1 speakers as of 2007 and 45 million L2 speakers as of 2013; these are largely based on *Ethnologue* reports and would, e.g., unless further updated, rank it as the language with the 26th most L1 speakers, the 13th most L2 speakers, and the 23rd most speakers in total). Speaker totals are generally not reliable, as they add together estimates from different dates and (usually uncited) sources; language information is not collected on most national censuses.

Rank	Language	Family	L1 speakers	L1 Rank	L2 speakers	L2 Rank	Total
1	Mandarin Chinese (incl. Standard Chinese)	Sino-Tibetan, Sinitic	897 million	1	193 million	4	1.09 billion
2	English	Indo-European, Germanic	371 million	3	611 million	1	983 million
3	Hindustani (Hindi/Urdu) ^[Note 1]	Indo-European, Indo-Aryan	329 million	4	215 million	2	544 million
4	Spanish	Indo-European, Romance	436 million	2	91 million	8	527 million
5	Arabic	Afro-Asiatic, Semitic	290 million (2017)	5	132 million	6	422 million ^{[5][6]}

Rank	Language	Family	L1 speakers	L1 Rank	L2 speakers	L2 Rank	Total
6	Malay (incl. Indonesian and Malaysia n)	Austronesian, Malayo-Polynesian	77 million (2007)	15	204 million	3	281 million ^[7]
7	Russian	Indo-European, Slavic	153 million	8	113 million (2010)	7	267 million
8	Bengali	Indo-European, Indo-Aryan	242 million	6	19 million in Bangladesh (2011)	13	261 million
9	Portuguese	Indo-European, Romance	218 million	7	11 million	15	229 million
10	French	Indo-European, Romance	76 million	17	153 million	5	229 million
11	Hausa	Afro-Asiatic, Chadic	85 million	11	65 million	10	150 million ^[8]
12	Punjabi	Indo-European, Indo-Aryan	148 million ^[9]	9	?	?	148 million
13	Japanese	Japonic	128 million	10	1 million (2010) ^[10]	19	129 million

Rank	Language	Family	L1 speakers	L1 Rank	L2 speakers	L2 Rank	Total
14	German	Indo-European, Germanic	76 million	18	52 million	12	129 million
15	Persian	Indo-European, Iranian	60 million (2009)	25	61 million ^[11]	11	121 million^[11]
16	Swahili	Niger–Congo language, Coastal Tanzanian, Bantu	16 million	26	91 million	8	107 million
17	Telugu	Dravidian	80 million (2011)	13	12 million in India (2011)	14	92 million
18	Javanese	Austronesian, Malayo- Polynesian	84 million (2000)	12	?	?	84 million
19	Wu Chinese (incl. Shanghainese)	Sino-Tibetan, Chinese	80 million (2013)	14	?	?	80 million
20	Korean	Koreanic	77 million (2008– 2010)	16	?	?	77 million
21	Tamil	Dravidian	67 million (2001)	23	8 million in India	16	75 million

Rank	Language	Family	L1 speakers	L1 Rank	L2 speakers	L2 Rank	Total
22	Marathi	Indo-European, Indo-Aryan	71 million (2001)	20	3 million in India	17	74 million
23	Yue Chinese (incl. Cantonese)	Sino-Tibetan, Chinese	72 million	19	?	?	72 million
24	Turkish	Turkic, Oghuz	71 million	21	<1 million	20	71 million
25	Vietnamese	Austroasiatic, Viet–Muong	68 million	22	?	?	68 million
26	Italian	Indo-European, Romance	63 million	24	3 million	17	66 million

Notes

1. Refers to *Modern Standard Hindi* and *Modern Standard Urdu*. Modern Hindi and Urdu are mutually intelligible and are considered by linguists to be dialects of the same language; the two distinct registers are the outcome of nationalist tendencies.^[3] The Census of India defines Hindi on a loose and broad basis. In addition to Standard Hindi, it incorporates a set of other Indo-Aryan languages written in Devanagari script including Awadhi, Bhojpuri, Haryanvi, Dhundhari etc. under Hindi group which have more than 422 million native speakers as on 2001.^[4] However, the census also acknowledges Standard Hindi, the above mentioned languages and others as separate mother tongues of Hindi language and provides individual figures for all these languages.^[4]

References

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