


IDENTIFYING MINORITY LANGUAGE RESOURCE NEEDS IN A HEALTHCARE CRISIS

YCMI/VA Informatics Works-in-Progress

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Һаран уһатн!

Naaba mu ngalo

Chibbak achifah

သင့်လက်ကိုဆေးပါ

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makiykita maqchikuy

خپل لاسونه ومينحه

Wasim han bilong yu

Lave men-w

Focus on the “In-Progress” ...

- In collaboration with Claire Bower in the Department of Linguistics
- Conversations with YNHH resident Alban Holyoke
- Would appreciate your input!

The question

- What
 - What languages are spoken by the YNHH population?
 - Which populations are less likely to be fluent in English?
 - What services are available for hospital interpretation and translation?

American Community Survey (ACS)

Question from the “Person” section:

14)

- a. Does this person speak a language other than English at home?
- b. What is this language?
- c. How well does this person speak English?
(Very well, Well, Not well, Not at all)

American Community Survey (ACS)

- Data from the ACS 5-year Estimates (2013-2018)
- <https://data.census.gov>
- Three levels:
 - Country: United States
 - State: Connecticut
 - PUMA (area with ~100,000 speakers): New Haven Town

Most Spoken Languages: United States

Language	Respondents
Spanish	40,321,868
Chinese	2,100,536
Vietnamese	1,502,360
Tagalog	1,312,337
Arabic	1,196,676
French	1,186,808
Korean	1,104,941
Russian	911,966
German	899,430
Haitian	843,929
Hindi	808,187

Most Spoken Languages: Connecticut

Language	Respondents
Spanish	399,576
Portuguese	36,540
Polish	33,830
Italian	28,175
French	24,275
Chinese	21,165
Haitian	17,202
Arabic	12,153
Hindi	11,867
Russian	9,253
German	9,210

Most Spoken Languages: Connecticut

Language	Respondents
Spanish	399,576
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Russian	9,253
German	9,210

Most Spoken Languages: New Haven

Language	Respondents
Spanish	31,761
Chinese	1,682
French	983
Arabic	808
Haitian	680
Russian	523
Portuguese	472
Italian	388
Turkish	382
Korean	348
Urdu	345

Most Spoken Languages: New Haven

Language	Respondents
Spanish	31,761
Chinese	1,682
French	983
Arabic	808
Haitian	680
Russian	523
Portuguese	472
Italian	388
Turkish	382
Korean	348
Urdu	345

Languages with Least Fluent English Speakers

- “How well does this person speak English?”
 - More Fluent: “Very well” or “Well”
 - Less Fluent: “Not well” or “Not at all”

Languages with Least Fluent English Speakers: United States

Language	Total Respondents	English Fluency
Other Central and South American languages	24,868	39.19%
Karen languages	46,740	52.82%
Chin languages	25,173	56.97%
Burmese	86,263	59.76%
Cantonese	532,099	63.26%
Other languages of Asia	42,622	68.35%
Vietnamese	1,502,360	68.43%
Chinese	2,100,536	72.37%
Khmer	204,107	72.60%
Nepali	178,813	73.68%

Languages with Least Fluent English Speakers: United States

- Many of these languages are spoken by **recently resettled Refugee Populations**:
 - Myanmar: (Karen languages, Burmese)
 - Bhutan: (Nepali)
 - Somalia: (Somali)
 - Afghanistan: (Pashto, Dari)
 - Iraq, Iran, and Syria: (Chaldean and Assyrian Neo-Aramaic)
- “Other Central or South American Languages”
 - Both vague and substantially lower
 - due to census-taking limitations?

Languages with Most Fluent English Speakers: United States

Language	Total Respondents	English Fluency
Danish	27,413	98.57%
Afrikaans	28,998	98.29%
Swedish	54,062	98.27%
Norwegian	30,647	98.03%
Konkani	13,258	97.81%
Hawaiian	32,091	97.73%
Kannada	66,765	97.50%
Aleut languages	27,268	97.48%
Edoid languages	13,573	97.47%
Marathi	87,188	97.24%

Languages with Most Fluent English Speakers: United States

- Germanic: Danish, Afrikaans, Swedish, Norwegian
- Languages of India (Indo-Aryan and Dravidian): Konkani, Kannada, Marathi
- Native American Languages (Hawaiian, Aleut Languages)

Languages with Least Fluent English Speakers: Connecticut

Language	Total Respondents	English Fluency
Karen languages	759	39.92%
Hmong	17	47.06%
Dari	167	52.10%
Tibetan	154	57.14%
Other Central and South American languages	85	60.00%
Khmer	2,278	65.28%
Macedonian	71	71.83%
Other languages of Asia	419	73.03%
Other languages of Africa	265	73.58%
Vietnamese	7,552	75.01%

Languages with Least Fluent English Speakers: New Haven

Language	Total Respondents	English Fluency
Karen languages	47	0.0%
Lao	43	0.0%
Dari	141	43.3%
Pashto	236	47.9%
Russian	523	50.9%
Arabic	808	67.9%
Khmer	42	69.0%
Haitian	680	71.3%
Tamil	42	73.8%
Filipino	21	76.2%

Interpretation Requirements in YNHH (anecdotal)

- 95% Spanish
- Portuguese, Arabic, Chinese
- Less Frequently: Hindi, Jamaican Creole, Vietnamese
- Intermittent need for interpretation of African and Asian spoken languages
- Speakers of European languages invariably communicate in English

Language and the Census

- Particular difficulty of Language Estimation with Non-fluent Speakers
 - Non-English Speakers are less likely to be accurate/respond to the Census
 - Census Enumerators have limited interpretation resources

Language and the Census

- Language Specificity on the Census:
 - 137 possible categories (out of 6,000+ living languages)
 - Arabic: many varieties, one choice
 - Chinese: Chinese, Mandarin, Min Nan, Cantonese
 - Does "Chinese" mean "Mandarin" or "Other Chinese language"?
 - Creoles: Jamaican Creole English, Haitian, Cajun French, Kabuverdianu
 - Others: "Other Indo-European", "Other Languages of Asia", "Other Central and South American Languages"

Language and the Census

- Complete Lack of Sign Languages:
 - US, Canada: (ASL, LSQ); Mexico: (LSM)
 - Not simply signed forms of English, French and Spanish

YNHH Interpretation Resources

- (Not my expertise so correct my misunderstandings)
- Three levels of resources:
 - On-staff Interpreters
 - Only Spanish (and Portuguese?)
 - Limited manpower, time availability

YNHH Interpretation Resources

- (Not my expertise so correct my misunderstandings)
- Three levels of resources:
 - Online Video Translation Service (Stratus)
 - Moveable iPads with video support
 - More languages, but many only with audio support
 - Website lists 146 languages, 67 have lesser support
 - New Haven's languages are listed with full support

YNHH Interpretation Resources

- (Not my expertise so correct my misunderstandings)
- Three levels of resources:
 - Phone Translation service
 - More languages
 - Can help you find a speaker of a particular dialect

Difficulties in Interpreting underserved languages

- Interpreter knowledge of medical terminology
 - an issue for interpretation in all languages
- Available knowledge of a particular variety
 - Many “languages” contain mutually unintelligible varieties
 - Spectrum of intelligibility/communicability
- Communicative ability
 - On-site > video > audio
 - Medical issues (particular mental health) that require a lot of context and nuance
 - “It’s inhumane to have to give bad news to a patient over speakerphone.”

Difficulties in Interpreting underserved languages

- Important to have a very good understanding of the linguistic diversity of the community for the proper allocation of interpretation resources

Particular issues during the current healthcare crisis

- Hospital resources stretched
- Informal translation by English-speaking friends/family members
 - Advocate, navigation through healthcare system
 - COVID-19 distancing has made this more difficult
- Getting information out to communities

Particular issues during the current healthcare crisis



The screenshot shows the Ethnologue website interface. At the top, there is a navigation bar with the logo 'Ethnologue Languages of the World' on the left, and links for 'Login', 'Shopping Cart', and a search bar 'Find a language or country...'. Below the search bar are links for 'Languages', 'Countries', 'Guides', 'About', and a highlighted 'Plans & Pricing' button. A secondary navigation bar contains a link '« Back to all Guides'. The main content area features a title 'Coronavirus and Local Languages: How do you say, "wash your hands"?' followed by a sub-headline 'COVID-19 doesn't care what language you speak.' and a paragraph explaining the information gap for lesser-known languages. A call to action asks 'Are you multilingual?' with an image of a globe and a request for help translating guidelines. At the bottom, there is a section titled 'Spread the word, not the virus.' and a partial view of a map with a dropdown menu showing '"Wash Your Hands"'.

Ethnologue
Languages of the World

Login | Shopping Cart

Languages Countries Guides About **Plans & Pricing**

« Back to all Guides

Coronavirus and Local Languages: How do you say, "wash your hands"?

COVID-19 doesn't care what language you speak.

*All of us are at risk. But millions of people who speak lesser-known languages don't have a *single* resource on COVID-19 yet. The information gap is enormous – and lives are at stake.*

"Wash your hands" isn't enough to combat this pandemic, but it's already more than some communities are hearing. Below you can learn how to say it in **523 different languages** and counting. You can also download our hand-washing posters to share in print or on social media.

Spread the word, not the virus.

Are you multilingual?



Help us translate key guidelines into as many languages as possible! [See current translations of COVID-19 materials.](#)

"Wash Your Hands"

Particular issues during the current healthcare crisis

- Clearly more information needs to be disseminated
- Questions, Comments, Suggestions for next steps?