

Ethnologue: Languages of Bahrain

Twenty-sixth edition data

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List of Abbreviations

A	Agent in constituent word order
<i>alt.</i>	alternate name for
<i>alt. dial.</i>	alternate dialect name for
AOV	Agent-Object-Verb
C	Consonant in canonical syllable patterns
<i>Class</i>	Language classification
CSICH	Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage (2003)
<i>dial.</i>	primary dialect name for
ICCPR	International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (1966)
km	kilometer(s)
L1 / L2	first language / second (or other additional) language
<i>Lg Dev</i>	Language development
<i>Lg Use</i>	Language use
m	meter(s)
P	Patient in constituent word order
PARADISEC	Pacific And Regional Archive for Digital Sources In Endangered Cultures
<i>pej.</i>	pejorative
pl.	plural
S	Subject in constituent word order
sg.	singular
SIL	SIL International
<i>Type</i>	Typological information
UNCRPD	United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2006)
UNDRIP	United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (2007)
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization
V	Vowel in canonical syllable patterns

How to Use This Digest

This *Ethnologue* country digest provides an extract of the information about the language situation in Bahrain that is published in the 26th edition of *Ethnologue: Languages of the World* (see <http://www.ethnologue.com>), including some ways of presenting the information that are not available in the online version. The digest begins with a “Country Overview” (page 6) and “Statistical Summaries” (page 8) of languages and number of speakers by language size, by language status, and by language family.

The “Alphabetical Listing of Languages” (page 10) provides detailed information on the 15 languages listed in the *Ethnologue* for the country of Bahrain. This includes languages that are indigenous to the country, languages that have developed well-established multigenerational speaker communities after immigrating in the past, and languages that have a significant presence in the country but are not established (that is, not being transmitted to the next generation within the country). A complete language entry has the following form and content:

Primary language name [ISO 639-3 code] (Alternate names). Autonym. *Users*: Country user population. Population stability comment. Population remarks. Monolingual population. Ethnic population. *Location*: Location. *Status*: EGIDS level. Special cases. Language function in country. *Class*: Linguistic classification. Macrolanguage membership. *Dialects*: Dialect names. Intelligibility and dialect relations. Lexical similarity. *Type*: Linguistic typology information. *Lg Use*: Remarks on use of the language. Domains of use. User age range. Language attitudes. Bilingualism remarks. Use as second language. *Lg Dev*: Literacy rates. Literacy remarks. Use in education. Publications and use in media. Revitalization efforts. Language development agencies. *DLS*: Digital support. *Writing*: Scripts used. *Other*: Non-indigenous. General remarks. Religion. *Worldwide*: Total population in all countries. Other countries where used.

See <http://www.ethnologue.com/methodology/#languagePages> for a full description of these information elements. If the autonym contains the “?” character, this indicates a complex non-Roman character that the PDF-creating software we are using is not able to render. We regret the inconvenience.

Many ways of finding languages are provided. “Languages by Population” (page 16) lists the languages in order of their first-language speaker populations. “Languages by Status” (page 18) lists the languages by their level of development or endangerment as measured on EGIDS, the Expanded Graded Intergenerational Disruption Scale (Lewis and Simons 2010). “Languages by Family” (page 20) lists the languages by their linguistic classifications. “Language Code Index” (page 21) gives an alphabetical listing of all the three-letter codes from ISO 639-3 that are used in this digest to uniquely identify languages. “Language Name Index” (page 22) lists every name that appears in the language listings as a primary or alternate name of a language or dialect. A total of 22 unique names are associated with the 15 languages described in this digest.

Finally, a listing of all the published sources cited within this digest is found in “Bibliography”

(page 23). The published sources are cited using standard in-text citations enclosed in parentheses, consisting of the author's or editor's surname followed by the year of publication. Unpublished sources including personal communications and unpublished reports are also acknowledged when specific statements or facts are attributed to them. They are identified using in-text citations enclosed in parentheses in which the year of the communication is given first, followed by the source's first initial and surname. In such a case, there is no corresponding entry in the bibliography.

This digest is designed for use in both digital and print formats. The cross-references are thus rendered as page numbers that are hyperlinks. When using the document in printed form, simply turn to the referenced page by number. When using it in digital form, click on the blue text to jump to the cross-referenced location.

If you believe any of the information about a language in this digest is in error or if you are able to supply missing information, please send your proposed change to the editor using one of the means given below. Provide as much information as possible about the source of your information. Full bibliographic details of published sources are especially helpful.

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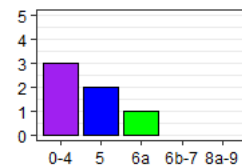
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Country Overview

Name of country	Bahrain
Other names	Kingdom of Bahrain
Population	1,702,000 (2020 World Bank)
Comments	Bahrain consists entirely of islands in the Gulf of Bahrain, part of the Persian Gulf. The largest island is Bahrain itself.
Principal languages	Baharna Spoken Arabic, English, Standard Arabic
Literacy rate	98% (2018 UNESCO)
Deaf population	600
International conventions	CSICH (2014), ICCPR (2006), UNCRPD (2011), UNDRIP (2007)
General references	Al-Tajir 1982, Fischer and Jastrow 1980, Holes 1990, Johnstone 1967

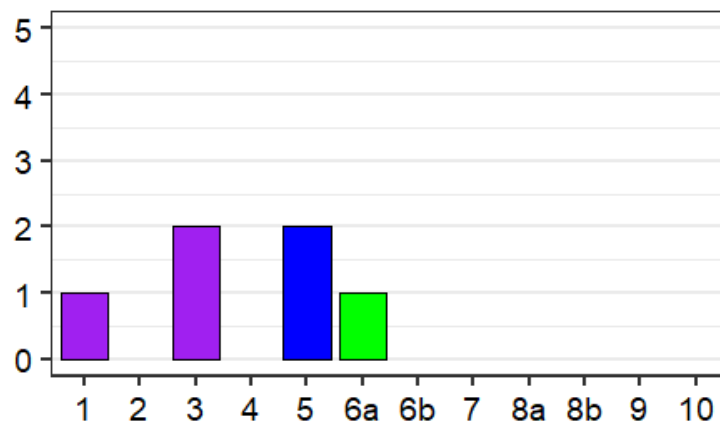
Language counts The number of established languages listed for Bahrain is 6. All are living languages. Of these, 1 is indigenous and 5 are non-indigenous. Furthermore, 3 are institutional, 2 are developing, and 1 is vigorous. Also listed are 9 unestablished languages.



See the next page for an explanation of the summary categories for language vitality used in the above counts and graph.

Language Status Profile

The following histogram gives a graphic profile of the established languages in Bahrain with respect to their status of language development versus language endangerment. This includes all of the languages appearing in the “Alphabetical Listing of Languages” (page 10) that report an EGIDS level after *Status*; macrolanguages and unestablished languages are not included in the profile. The horizontal axis plots the estimated level of development or endangerment as measured on the EGIDS scale (Lewis and Simons 2010). The height of each bar indicates the number of languages that are estimated to be at the given level. Consult “Languages by Status” (page 18) in order to see the specific languages for each level.



The color coding of the bars in the histogram above matches the color scheme used in the summary profile graph on the preceding page. In this scheme, the EGIDS levels are grouped as follows:

- Purple = Institutional (EGIDS 0–4) — The language has been developed to the point that it is used and sustained by institutions beyond the home and community.
- Blue = Developing (EGIDS 5) — The language is in vigorous use, with literature in a standardized form being used by some though this is not yet widespread or sustainable.
- Green = Vigorous (EGIDS 6a) — The language is in vigorous use among all generations and remains unstandardized.
- Yellow = In trouble (EGIDS 6b–7) — Intergenerational transmission is in the process of being broken, but the child-bearing generation can still use the language so it is possible that revitalization efforts could restore transmission of the language in the home.
- Red = Dying (EGIDS 8a–9) — The only fluent users (if any) are older than child-bearing age, so it is too late to restore natural intergenerational transmission through the home; a mechanism outside the home would need to be developed.
- Black = Extinct (EGIDS 10) — The language is no longer used and no one retains a sense of ethnic identity associated with the language.

Statistical Summaries

The “Alphabetical Listing of Languages” (page 10) provides a detailed listing of all the languages of Bahrain. This section steps back from the detail to offer a summary view of the language situation in the country. Specifically, it offers three numerical tabulations of the living established languages of Bahrain and their users: by language size, by language status, and by language family.

Summary by language size

Table 1 summarizes the distribution of living established languages in Bahrain by number of L1 speakers. The *Population range* column categorizes the sizes of the languages by order of magnitude (in terms of the number of digits in the population of first-language speakers). Consult “Languages by Population” (page 16) for a listing of the specific languages in each range category.

The *Count* column gives the number of living established languages within the specified population range. The *Percent* column gives the share of the count for that population range as a percentage of the total number of languages given at the bottom of the Count column. The *Cumulative* column gives the cumulative sum of the percentage of languages going from top to bottom in the column.

The *Total* column gives the total L1 population of all the languages in the given range category. The second *Percent* column gives the percentage of the total country population as estimated at the bottom of the Total column. Note that if the table has a row for Unknown, representing languages for which the *Ethnologue* does not have a population estimate, the calculation of population percentage is not able to take those languages into account. The final *Cumulative* column gives the cumulative sums of the population percentages going from top to bottom in the column.

Table 1: Distribution of languages by number of first-language speakers

Population range	Living languages			Number of speakers		
	Count	Percent	Cumulative	Total	Percent	Cumulative
100,000 to 999,999	2	33.3	33.3%	964,000	87.87603	87.87603%
10,000 to 99,999	3	50.0	83.3%	133,000	12.12397	100.00000%
Unknown	1	16.7	100.0%			
<i>Totals</i>	6	100.0		1,097,000	100.00000	

Summary by language status

Table 2 summarizes the distribution of living established languages in Bahrain by their status in terms of language development or language endangerment. The *EGIDS* column categorizes the languages by their level on the EGIDS scale. Consult “Languages by Status” (page 18) for a listing of the specific languages that have been assigned to each level. Note that the EGIDS level

reported here is for the status of the language in Bahrain. Languages that are also used in other countries may be assigned to a different EGIDS level in those countries.

The next six columns are as in Table 1. In addition, the *Mean* column gives the average L1 population of all the languages with the given EGIDS level and the *Median* column gives the median L1 population for the languages at that level, that is, half of the languages at that level have a higher population and half have a lower population. If there are any languages with an unknown population, these are ignored in the calculation of the mean and the median.

Table 2: Distribution of languages by vitality status

EGIDS	Living languages			Number of speakers				
	<i>Count</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Cumulative</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Cumulative</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Median</i>
1	1	16.7	16.7%	Unknown				
3	2	33.3	50.0%	733,100	66.8277	66.8277%	366,550	366,550
5	2	33.3	83.3%	291,400	26.5634	93.3911%	145,700	145,700
6a	1	16.7	100.0%	72,500	6.6089	100.0000%	72,500	72,500
<i>Totals</i>	6	100.0		1,097,000	100.0000			

Summary by language family

The genealogical classifications given in the language entries of the “Alphabetical Listing of Languages” (page 10) name 2 different top-level groups. Table 3 summarizes the distribution of living established languages and their L1 populations within these families. The columns are as for table 2, with the exception that *Cumulative* is excluded since there is no inherent ordering of the families.

Table 3: Distribution of languages by language family

Language family	Living languages		Number of speakers			
	<i>Count</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Median</i>
Afro-Asiatic	3	50.0	782,500	71.3	260,833	391,250
Indo-European	3	50.0	314,500	28.7	104,833	37,400
<i>Totals</i>	6	100.0	1,097,000	100.0		

Alphabetical Listing of Languages

Arabic, Baharna Spoken [abv] (Baharna, Baharna Arabic, Baharnah, Bahraini Arabic, Bahraini Shi'ite Arabic, Bahrani, Bahrani Arabic). *Users:* 710,000 in Bahrain (2019). *Location:* Widespread. *Status:* 3 (Wider communication). De facto national working language. Native to Bahrain and Oman, became widespread around 1861 when Bahrain became a protectorate of Britain and under the control of the ruling Al Khalifa dynasty. Used in trade, everyday communication, popular culture, films, plays, and some literature. Also used in sea-faring and agriculture. *Class:* Afro-Asiatic, Semitic, Central, South, Arabic. A member of macrolanguage Arabic [ara] (Saudi Arabia). *Dialect:* Sunni Spoken Arabic. *Lg Use:* Negative attitudes. Also use Gulf Spoken Arabic [afb]. *Lg Dev:* Dictionary. Grammar. *DLS:* Emerging (0.01). *Writing:* Arabic script, Naskh variant. *Other:* Muslim. *Map:* 15:1. *Worldwide:* Total users in all countries: 727,900. Also indigenous in: Saudi Arabia. Also established in: Oman.

Arabic, Gulf Spoken [afb] (Gulf Arabic). *Users:* 72,500 in Bahrain (2019). *Location:* Widespread. *Status:* 6a* (Vigorous). *Class:* Afro-Asiatic, Semitic, Central, South, Arabic. *Dialect:* Bahraini Gulf Arabic. *Lg Use:* Used as L2 by Baharna Spoken Arabic [abv]. *Lg Dev:* Dictionary. Grammar. Texts. *Writing:* Arabic script, Naskh variant. *Other:* Non-indigenous. Used primarily by the Sunni population, which is largely of Bedouin descent (Bassiouney 2009). Muslim, Christian. *Map:* 15:3. *Worldwide:* Total users in all countries: 11,097,400. Global EGIDS level: 3 (Wider communication). Indigenous in: Iraq, Kuwait, Qatar, Saudi Arabia. Also established in: Egypt, Iran, Oman, United Arab Emirates, Yemen. Unestablished in: Canada, United States.

Arabic, Standard [arb]. *Users:* 612,000 in Bahrain (2013 SIL), all users. *Location:* Widespread. *Status:* 1 (National). Statutory national language (2002, Constitution, Article 2). *Class:* Afro-Asiatic, Semitic, Central, South, Arabic. *Type:* VSO; prepositions; noun head initial; gender (masculine/feminine); dual number; definite and indefinite affixes; case-marking (3 cases); verb affixes mark number, gender of subject; aspect; 28 consonant and 6 vowel phonemes; non-tonal; stress on first syllable; trilateral roots, few affixes. *Lg Use:* Education, official purposes. *Lg Dev:* Taught in all primary and secondary schools. Fully developed. Bible: 1645–2008. *Writing:* Arabic script, Naskh variant, primary usage. Braille script. *Other:* Non-indigenous. *Worldwide:* Total users in all countries: 273,989,700. Global EGIDS level: 0 (International). Indigenous in: Saudi Arabia. Also established in 30 other countries and unestablished in 1 more.

English [eng]. Autonym: English. *Users:* 23,100 in Bahrain (2019). *Location:* Widespread. *Status:* 3 (Wider communication). De facto national working language. *Class:* Indo-European, Germanic, West, English. *Type:* SVO; prepositions; genitives after noun heads; articles, adjectives, numerals before noun heads; question word initial; word order distinguishes subject, object, indirect objects, given and new information, topic and comment; active and passive; causative; comparative; consonant and vowel clusters; 24 consonants, 13 vowels, 8 diphthongs; non-tonal; free stress; phrasal verbs. *Lg Use:* Used for most business

communication. Many Bahraini children learn English before Arabic [arb] because it is easier to learn (2004). *Lg Dev*: Taught as subject in all primary and secondary schools. Fully developed. Bible: 1382–2002. *Writing*: Braille script. Deseret Alphabet, developed in 1854 with limited usage until 1877. Duployan shorthand. Latin script, primary usage. Shavian (Shaw) script, no longer in use. *Other*: Non-indigenous. *Worldwide*: Total users in all countries: 1,456,448,320 (as L1: 379,682,200; as L2: 1076,766,120). Global EGIDS level: 0 (International). Indigenous in: Ireland, United Kingdom. Also established in 167 other countries and unestablished in 16 more.

Gujarati [gʊj]. *Users*: 37,400 in Bahrain (2019). *Location*: Scattered. *Status*: 5* (Dispersed).

Class: Indo-European, Indo-Iranian, Indo-Aryan, Intermediate Divisions, Western, Gujarati. *Type*: SOV; postpositions; noun head final; gender (masculine/feminine/neuter); no articles; case-marking (6 cases); verb affixes mark person, number, gender of subject; split ergativity; passives; tense and aspect; comparatives; 31 consonants, 8 vowels, 2 diphthongs; non-tonal; stress on penultimate syllable. *Lg Dev*: Fully developed. Bible: 1823–2005. *Writing*: Braille script. Gujarati script, primary usage. Khojki script. *Other*: Non-indigenous. *Worldwide*: Total users in all countries: 62,116,220 (as L1: 57,076,220; as L2: 5,040,000). Global EGIDS level: 2 (Provincial). Indigenous in: India. Also established in: Fiji, Kenya, Pakistan, Singapore, Tanzania, Zambia. Unestablished in: Australia, Bangladesh, Botswana, Burundi, Canada, Iran, Madagascar, Malawi, Malaysia, Mauritius, New Zealand, Oman, Réunion, South Africa, Sri Lanka, United Kingdom, United States, Zimbabwe.

Kerinci [kvr]. *Users*: 25,000 in Bahrain (2004). *Status*: Unestablished. *Class*: Austronesian, Malayo-Polynesian, Malayo-Chamic, Malayic, Malay. *Lg Dev*: Grammar. Texts. *Writing*: Kaganga script. *Other*: Non-indigenous. *Worldwide*: Total users in all countries: 285,000. Global EGIDS level: 6b (Threatened). Indigenous in: Indonesia.

Korean [kor]. *Users*: 3,800 in Bahrain (2019). *Status*: Unestablished. *Class*: Koreanic. *Lg Dev*: Fully developed. Bible: 1911–1993. *Writing*: Braille script. Hangul and Han scripts, primary usage. Latin script, used for maps and signs. *Other*: Non-indigenous. *Worldwide*: Total users in all countries: 81,740,540 (as L1: 81,721,540; as L2: 19,000). Global EGIDS level: 1 (National). Indigenous in: North Korea, South Korea. Also established in: China, Japan, Russian Federation, United States, Uzbekistan. Unestablished in: Argentina, Australia, Austria, Belarus, Brazil, Brunei, Cambodia, Canada, China–Taiwan, Denmark, France, Germany, Guam, India, Indonesia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Libya, Madagascar, Malaysia, Mexico, Mongolia, Mozambique, Netherlands, New Zealand, Northern Mariana Islands, Norway, Paraguay, Philippines, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, Spain, Sweden, Tajikistan, Thailand, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom, Vietnam.

Kurdish, Northern [kmr]. Autonym: Kurdî-Kurmancî, Kurmancî. *Users*: 79,100 in Bahrain (2019). *Status*: Unestablished. *Class*: Indo-European, Indo-Iranian, Iranian, Western, Northwestern, Kurdish. *Lg Dev*: Literature. Newspapers. Periodicals. Radio. TV. Videos. Dictionary. Grammar. Bible: 2008. *Writing*: Arabic script, Naskh variant, used in Iran, Iraq, Syria, and Lebanon. Armenian script, used between 1921–1929, used in Armenia. Cyrillic

script, used in Armenia, Russia, and Azerbaijan. Latin script, developed in 1932, used in Turkey and Syria. *Other*: Non-indigenous. *Worldwide*: Total users in all countries: 15,789,810 (as L1: 15,785,010; as L2: 4,800). Global EGIDS level: 1 (National). Indigenous in: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Iran, Iraq, Syria, Turkey. Also established in: Georgia, Lebanon, Turkmenistan. Unestablished in: Australia, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Greece, Italy, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Netherlands, Norway, Russian Federation, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Ukraine, United Kingdom, United States.

Malayalam [mal]. *Users*: 20,700 in Bahrain (2019). *Status*: Unestablished. *Class*: Dravidian, Southern, Tamil-Kannada, Tamil-Kodagu, Tamil-Malayalam, Malayalam. *Type*: SOV; postpositions; noun head final; gender (masculine/feminine/neuter); case-marking (7 cases); tense; 37 consonants, 11 vowels, 2 diphthongs; non-tonal; light stress on first syllable; inclusive/exclusive pronouns. *Lg Dev*: Fully developed. Bible: 1841–2004. *Writing*: Arabic script, Naskh variant. Braille script, used since 1998. Malayalam script, primary usage. *Other*: Non-indigenous. *Worldwide*: Total users in all countries: 37,359,380 (as L1: 36,647,680; as L2: 711,700). Global EGIDS level: 2 (Provincial). Indigenous in: India. Also established in: Singapore. Unestablished in: Australia, Canada, Ireland, Israel, Malaysia, Oman, Qatar, Sri Lanka, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom, United States.

Nepali [npi]. *Users*: 18,200 in Bahrain (International Organization for Migration (IOM) 2019), based on nationality. *Status*: Unestablished. *Class*: Indo-European, Indo-Iranian, Indo-Aryan, Intermediate Divisions, Eastern, Eastern Pahari. *Type*: SOV; postpositions; noun head final; 11 noun classes or genders; no articles; content q-word in situ; 1 prefix, up to 5 suffixes; clause constituents indicated by case-marking (4 cases); verbal affixation marks person, number and gender of subject; split ergativity; both tense and aspect; passives and voice; causatives; non-tonal; 29 consonant and 11 vowel phonemes. *Lg Dev*: Fully developed. Bible: 1914–2004. *Writing*: Braille script. Devanagari script, primary usage. *Other*: Non-indigenous. *Worldwide*: Total users in all countries: 25,587,570 (as L1: 16,903,270; as L2: 8,684,300). Global EGIDS level: 1 (National). Indigenous in: Bhutan, India, Nepal. Unestablished in: Australia, Brunei, Canada, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Japan, Kuwait, Malaysia, Myanmar, New Zealand, Norway, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, South Korea, Spain, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom, United States.

Persian, Iranian [pes] (Ajamic). *Users*: 254,000 in Bahrain (2019). *Location*: Al-Manāmah and Al-Muharraq governorates. *Status*: 5* (Dispersed). *Class*: Indo-European, Indo-Iranian, Iranian, Western, Southwestern, Persian. *Type*: SOV; noun head initial; no articles; tense and aspect; causatives; 23 consonant and 6 vowel phonemes; stress on final syllable (or root). *Lg Dev*: Fully developed. Bible: 1845–1995. *Writing*: Arabic script, Naskh variant. Arabic script, Nastaliq variant, used in Iran. *Other*: Non-indigenous. Descendants of Persians of the post-Ottoman pre-British era when Bahrain belonged to Persia and later Iran. Muslim. *Worldwide*: Total users in all countries: 78,623,350 (as L1: 57,192,350; as L2: 21,431,000). Global EGIDS level: 1 (National). Indigenous in: Iran. Also established in: Iraq, Oman, Qatar, Tajikistan, United Arab Emirates. Unestablished in: Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, India, Japan, Kuwait, Netherlands, New Zealand,

Norway, Pakistan, Russian Federation, Saudi Arabia, Sweden, Syria, Turkey, Turkmenistan, United Kingdom, United States, Uzbekistan, Yemen.

Tagalog [tgl]. Autonym: Tagalog. *Users*: 70,000 in Bahrain (2019). *Status*: Unestablished. *Class*: Austronesian, Malayo-Polynesian, Greater Central Philippine, Central Philippine, Tagalog. *Type*: Prepositions; no articles; ergativity; tense and aspect; comparatives; 16 consonant and 5 vowel phonemes; non-tonal; inclusive/exclusive pronouns. *Lg Dev*: Fully developed. *Bible*: 1905. *Writing*: Braille script. Latin script, primary usage. Tagalog script, no longer in use. *Other*: Non-indigenous. *Worldwide*: Total users in all countries: 83,054,910 (as L1: 28,746,910; as L2: 54,308,000). Global EGIDS level: 3 (Wider communication). Indigenous in: Philippines. Also established in: Canada, Guam, Sweden, United States. Unestablished in: American Samoa, Australia, Austria, Brazil, Cayman Islands, China–Hong Kong, China–Macao, China–Taiwan, Cyprus, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Greece, Indonesia, Ireland, Israel, Japan, Jordan, Kuwait, Libya, Malaysia, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nigeria, Northern Mariana Islands, Norway, Oman, Palau, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, South Korea, Spain, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom.

Tamil [tam]. *Users*: 18,700 in Bahrain (2019). *Status*: Unestablished. *Class*: Dravidian, Southern, Tamil-Kannada, Tamil-Kodagu, Tamil-Malayalam, Tamil. *Type*: SOV; postpositions; gender (rational, non-rational); no articles; case-marking (8 cases); verb affixes mark person, number, gender of subject; passives (affective, effective); tense; no comparatives; 18 consonants, 10 vowels and 2 diphthongs; non-tonal; stress on first syllable; inclusive/exclusive pronouns. *Lg Dev*: Fully developed. *Bible*: 1727–2002. *Writing*: Arabic script, Naskh variant, no longer in use. Braille script. Tamil script, primary usage. *Other*: Non-indigenous. *Worldwide*: Total users in all countries: 86,640,030 (as L1: 78,587,030; as L2: 8,053,000). Global EGIDS level: 1 (National). Indigenous in: India, Sri Lanka. Also established in: Fiji, Malaysia, Martinique, Mauritius, Pakistan, Réunion, Singapore, South Africa. Unestablished in: Australia, Belize, Canada, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Guadeloupe, Ireland, Myanmar, Netherlands, New Zealand, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Thailand, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom, United States.

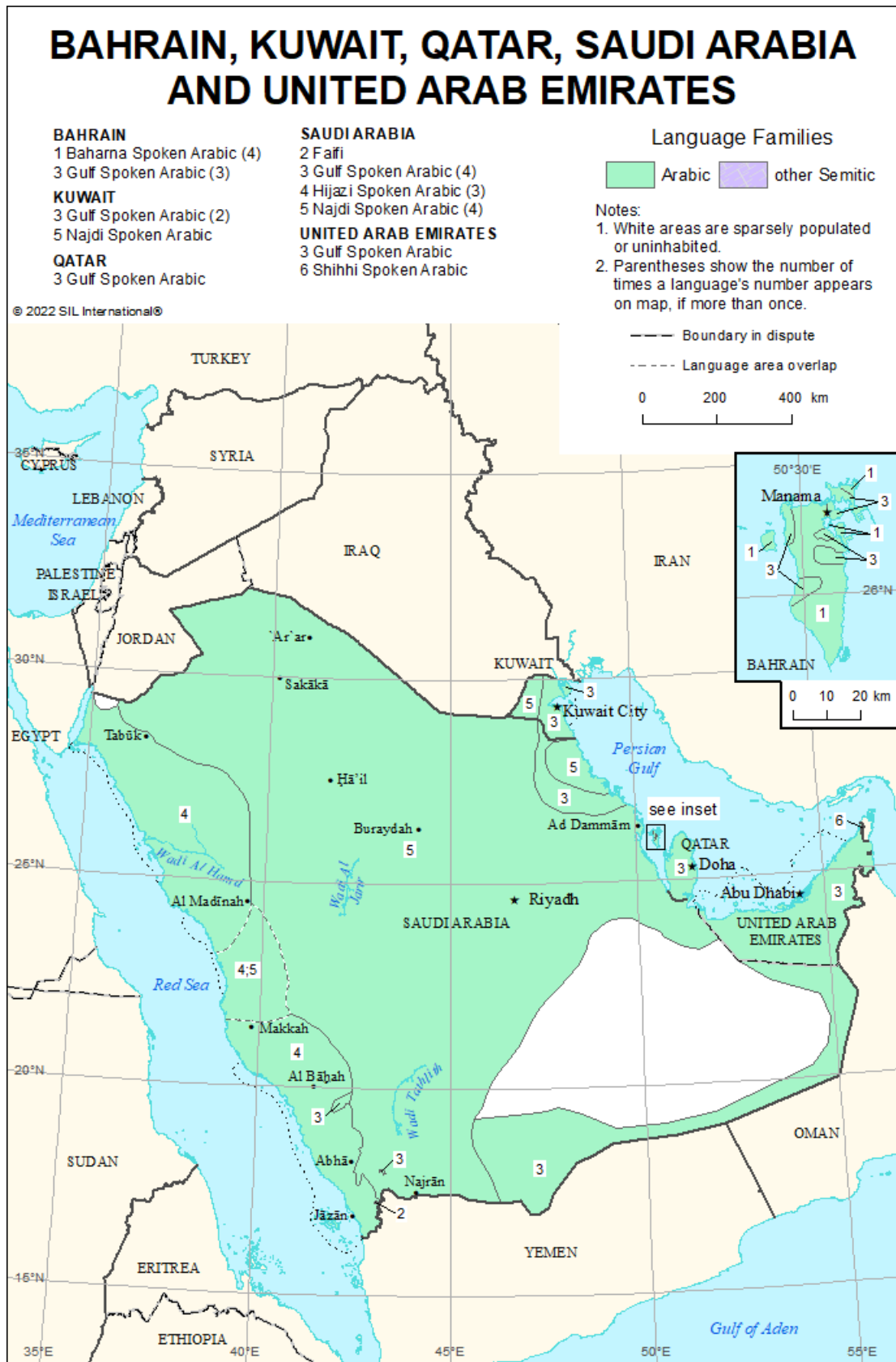
Telugu [tel]. *Users*: 18,700 in Bahrain (2019). *Status*: Unestablished. *Class*: Dravidian, South-Central, Telugu. *Type*: SOV; postpositions; noun head final; gender; no articles; case-marking (7 cases); verb affixes mark person, number gender of subject; passives; tense; causatives; 21 consonant and 11 vowel phonemes; non-tonal; stress on first syllable; inclusive/exclusive pronouns. *Lg Dev*: Fully developed. *Bible*: 1854–2002. *Writing*: Braille script. Telugu script, primary usage. *Other*: Non-indigenous. *Worldwide*: Total users in all countries: 95,981,790 (as L1: 82,966,790; as L2: 13,015,000). Global EGIDS level: 2 (Provincial). Indigenous in: India. Also established in: Fiji, Singapore, South Africa. Unestablished in: Australia, Canada, Finland, Malaysia, Mauritius, Myanmar, New Zealand, Oman, Saudi Arabia, Sri Lanka, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom, United States.

Urdu [urd]. *Users*: 95,000 in Bahrain (2019). *Status*: Unestablished. *Class*: Indo-European, Indo-Iranian, Indo-Aryan, Western Hindi, Hindustani. *Type*: SOV; postposition; noun head final;

gender (masculine/feminine); no articles; direct and oblique cases; verb affixes mark person, number, gender of subject; passives; tense and aspect; causatives; 35 consonants, 21 vowels; non-tonal; stress on penultimate syllable. *Lg Dev*: Fully developed. Bible: 1843–1998.

Writing: Arabic script, Naskh variant. Arabic script, Nastaliq variant, primary usage. Braille script. Devanagari script, used in India (Ahmad 2011). *Other*: Non-indigenous. *Worldwide*: Total users in all countries: 231,717,940 (as L1: 70,555,140; as L2: 161,162,800). Global EGIDS level: 1 (National). Indigenous in: India, Pakistan. Also established in: Bangladesh (Bihari), Fiji, Guyana, Mauritius, Nepal, South Africa. Unestablished in: Afghanistan, Australia, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Egypt, Finland, Germany, Iran, Iraq, Ireland, Malaysia, New Zealand, Norway, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, Spain, Sweden, Turkey, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom, United States.

Language Map



Languages by Population

In this section the languages of Bahrain are listed in order of their population of first-language speakers within the country, from highest to lowest. The entries report just the population and status elements.

100,000 to 999,999

Arabic, Baharna Spoken [[abv](#)] *Users*: 710,000 in Bahrain (2019). *Status*: 3 (Wider communication). De facto national working language. *Worldwide*: Total users in all countries: 727,900.

Persian, Iranian [[pes](#)] *Users*: 254,000 in Bahrain (2019). *Status*: 5* (Dispersed). *Worldwide*: Total users in all countries: 78,623,350 (as L1: 57,192,350; as L2: 21,431,000).

10,000 to 99,999

Urdu [[urd](#)] *Users*: 95,000 in Bahrain (2019). *Status*: Unestablished. *Worldwide*: Total users in all countries: 231,717,940 (as L1: 70,555,140; as L2: 161,162,800).

Kurdish, Northern [[kmr](#)] *Users*: 79,100 in Bahrain (2019). *Status*: Unestablished. *Worldwide*: Total users in all countries: 15,789,810 (as L1: 15,785,010; as L2: 4,800).

Arabic, Gulf Spoken [[afb](#)] *Users*: 72,500 in Bahrain (2019). *Status*: 6a* (Vigorous). *Worldwide*: Total users in all countries: 11,097,400.

Tagalog [[tgl](#)] *Users*: 70,000 in Bahrain (2019). *Status*: Unestablished. *Worldwide*: Total users in all countries: 83,054,910 (as L1: 28,746,910; as L2: 54,308,000).

Gujarati [[guj](#)] *Users*: 37,400 in Bahrain (2019). *Status*: 5* (Dispersed). *Worldwide*: Total users in all countries: 62,116,220 (as L1: 57,076,220; as L2: 5,040,000).

Kerinci [[kvr](#)] *Users*: 25,000 in Bahrain (2004). *Status*: Unestablished. *Worldwide*: Total users in all countries: 285,000.

English [[eng](#)] *Users*: 23,100 in Bahrain (2019). *Status*: 3 (Wider communication). De facto national working language. *Worldwide*: Total users in all countries: 1,456,448,320 (as L1: 379,682,200; as L2: 1076,766,120).

Malayalam [[mal](#)] *Users*: 20,700 in Bahrain (2019). *Status*: Unestablished. *Worldwide*: Total users in all countries: 37,359,380 (as L1: 36,647,680; as L2: 711,700).

Tamil [[tam](#)] *Users*: 18,700 in Bahrain (2019). *Status*: Unestablished. *Worldwide*: Total users in all countries: 86,640,030 (as L1: 78,587,030; as L2: 8,053,000).

Telugu [[tel](#)] *Users*: 18,700 in Bahrain (2019). *Status*: Unestablished. *Worldwide*: Total users in all countries: 95,981,790 (as L1: 82,966,790; as L2: 13,015,000).

Nepali [npi] *Users:* 18,200 in Bahrain (International Organization for Migration (IOM) 2019), based on nationality. *Status:* Unestablished. *Worldwide:* Total users in all countries: 25,587,570 (as L1: 16,903,270; as L2: 8,684,300).

1,000 to 9,999

Korean [kor] *Users:* 3,800 in Bahrain (2019). *Status:* Unestablished. *Worldwide:* Total users in all countries: 81,740,540 (as L1: 81,721,540; as L2: 19,000).

Unknown

Arabic, Standard [arb] *Users:* 612,000 in Bahrain (2013 SIL), all users. *Status:* 1 (National). Statutory national language (2002, Constitution, Article 2). *Worldwide:* Total users in all countries: 273,989,700.

Languages by Status

In this section the languages of Bahrain are listed in order of their status within the country as represented by their level on the EGIDs scale (Lewis and Simons 2010). The language entries are reduced to just the information elements that are relevant to assessing the EGIDS level: population, status, language use, language development, and writing.

1 (National)

Arabic, Standard [arb] *Users:* 612,000 in Bahrain (2013 SIL), all users. *Status:* Statutory national language (2002, Constitution, Article 2). *Lg Use:* Education, official purposes. *Writing:* Arabic script, Naskh variant, primary usage. Braille script. *Worldwide:* Total users in all countries: 273,989,700.

3 (Wider communication)

Arabic, Baharna Spoken [abv] *Users:* 710,000 in Bahrain (2019). *Status:* De facto national working language. Native to Bahrain and Oman, became widespread around 1861 when Bahrain became a protectorate of Britain and under the control of the ruling Al Khalifa dynasty. Used in trade, everyday communication, popular culture, films, plays, and some literature. Also used in sea-faring and agriculture. *Lg Use:* Negative attitudes. Also use Gulf Spoken Arabic [afb]. *Lg Dev:* Dictionary. Grammar. *Writing:* Arabic script, Naskh variant. *Worldwide:* Total users in all countries: 727,900.

English [eng] *Users:* 23,100 in Bahrain (2019). *Status:* De facto national working language. *Lg Use:* Used for most business communication. Many Bahraini children learn English before Arabic [arb] because it is easier to learn (2004). *Writing:* Braille script. Deseret Alphabet, developed in 1854 with limited usage until 1877. Duployan shorthand. Latin script, primary usage. Shavian (Shaw) script, no longer in use. *Worldwide:* Total users in all countries: 1,456,448,320 (as L1: 379,682,200; as L2: 1076,766,120).

5 (Dispersed)

Gujarati [guj] *Users:* 37,400 in Bahrain (2019). *Writing:* Braille script. Gujarati script, primary usage. Khojki script. *Worldwide:* Total users in all countries: 62,116,220 (as L1: 57,076,220; as L2: 5,040,000).

Persian, Iranian [pes] *Users:* 254,000 in Bahrain (2019). *Writing:* Arabic script, Naskh variant. Arabic script, Nastaliq variant, used in Iran. *Worldwide:* Total users in all countries: 78,623,350 (as L1: 57,192,350; as L2: 21,431,000).

6a (Vigorous)

Arabic, Gulf Spoken [afb] *Users:* 72,500 in Bahrain (2019). *Lg Use:* Used as L2 by Baharna Spoken Arabic [abv]. *Writing:* Arabic script, Naskh variant. *Worldwide:* Total users in all countries: 11,097,400.

Unestablished

Kerinci [kvr] *Users:* 25,000 in Bahrain (2004). *Writing:* Kaganga script. *Worldwide:* Total users in all countries: 285,000.

Korean [kor] *Users:* 3,800 in Bahrain (2019). *Writing:* Braille script. Hangul and Han scripts, primary usage. Latin script, used for maps and signs. *Worldwide:* Total users in all countries: 81,740,540 (as L1: 81,721,540; as L2: 19,000).

Kurdish, Northern [kmr] *Users:* 79,100 in Bahrain (2019). *Writing:* Arabic script, Naskh variant, used in Iran, Iraq, Syria, and Lebanon. Armenian script, used between 1921–1929, used in Armenia. Cyrillic script, used in Armenia, Russia, and Azerbaijan. Latin script, developed in 1932, used in Turkey and Syria. *Worldwide:* Total users in all countries: 15,789,810 (as L1: 15,785,010; as L2: 4,800).

Malayalam [mal] *Users:* 20,700 in Bahrain (2019). *Writing:* Arabic script, Naskh variant. Braille script, used since 1998. Malayalam script, primary usage. *Worldwide:* Total users in all countries: 37,359,380 (as L1: 36,647,680; as L2: 711,700).

Nepali [npi] *Users:* 18,200 in Bahrain (International Organization for Migration (IOM) 2019), based on nationality. *Writing:* Braille script. Devanagari script, primary usage. *Worldwide:* Total users in all countries: 25,587,570 (as L1: 16,903,270; as L2: 8,684,300).

Tagalog [tgl] *Users:* 70,000 in Bahrain (2019). *Writing:* Braille script. Latin script, primary usage. Tagalog script, no longer in use. *Worldwide:* Total users in all countries: 83,054,910 (as L1: 28,746,910; as L2: 54,308,000).

Tamil [tam] *Users:* 18,700 in Bahrain (2019). *Writing:* Arabic script, Naskh variant, no longer in use. Braille script. Tamil script, primary usage. *Worldwide:* Total users in all countries: 86,640,030 (as L1: 78,587,030; as L2: 8,053,000).

Telugu [tel] *Users:* 18,700 in Bahrain (2019). *Writing:* Braille script. Telugu script, primary usage. *Worldwide:* Total users in all countries: 95,981,790 (as L1: 82,966,790; as L2: 13,015,000).

Urdu [urd] *Users:* 95,000 in Bahrain (2019). *Writing:* Arabic script, Naskh variant. Arabic script, Nastaliq variant, primary usage. Braille script. Devanagari script, used in India (Ahmad 2011). *Worldwide:* Total users in all countries: 231,717,940 (as L1: 70,555,140; as L2: 161,162,800).

Languages by Family

This index gives an alphabetical listing of the linguistic classifications used for the established languages of Bahrain. The entries in this index represent the full path in the linguistic family tree from the highest level grouping down to the lowest. All the languages listed in the same entry are members of the same lowest-level subgroup. The referenced page contains the main entry that describes the language.

Afro-Asiatic, Semitic, Central, South, Arabic

Arabic, Baharna Spoken [abv], [10](#)

Arabic, Gulf Spoken [afb], [10](#)

Arabic, Standard [arb], [10](#)

Indo-European, Germanic, West, English

English [eng], [10](#)

Indo-European, Indo-Iranian, Indo-Aryan, Intermediate Divisions, Western, Gujarati

Gujarati [guj], [11](#)

Indo-European, Indo-Iranian, Iranian, Western, Southwestern, Persian

Persian, Iranian [pes], [12](#)

Language Code Index

This index gives an alphabetical listing of all 15 three-letter codes that are used in this work to uniquely identify languages. The referenced page contains the main entry that describes the language. All codes listed are part of the ISO 639-3 standard; see <http://www.sil.org/iso639-3/>.

abv	Arabic, Baharna Spoken, 10	mal	Malayalam, 12
afb	Arabic, Gulf Spoken, 10	npi	Nepali, 12
arb	Arabic, Standard, 10	pes	Persian, Iranian, 12
eng	English, 10	tam	Tamil, 13
guj	Gujarati, 11	tel	Telugu, 13
kmr	Kurdish, Northern, 11	tgl	Tagalog, 13
kor	Korean, 11	urd	Urdu, 13
kvr	Kerinci, 11		

Language Name Index

This index lists every name that appears in the language listings as a primary or alternate name of a language or dialect. The following abbreviations are used in the index entries: *alt.* ‘alternate name for’; *alt. dial.* ‘alternate name for a dialect of’; *dial.* ‘primary name for a dialect of’; *pej. alt.* ‘pejorative alternate name for’; and *pej. alt. dial.* ‘pejorative alternate name for a dialect of’. Each index entry resolves to the primary name for the language with which the indexed name is associated, followed by square brackets containing the unique three-letter language code from ISO 639-3. The referenced page contains the main entry that describes the language. If the language appears on a map, the entry for the primary name also lists page numbers for the maps on which the language occurs.

- Ajamic**, *alt.* Persian, Iranian [pes], 12
- Arabic, Baharna Spoken** [abv], 10, 15
see Arabic, Baharna Spoken [abv], 10
- Arabic, Gulf Spoken** [afb], 10, 15
see Arabic, Gulf Spoken [afb], 10
- Arabic, Standard** [arb], 10
see Arabic, Standard [arb], 10
- Baharna**, *alt.* Arabic, Baharna Spoken [abv], 10
- Baharna Arabic**, *alt.* Arabic, Baharna Spoken [abv], 10
- Baharnah**, *alt.* Arabic, Baharna Spoken [abv], 10
- Bahraini Arabic**, *alt.* Arabic, Baharna Spoken [abv], 10
- Bahraini Gulf Arabic**, *dial.* Arabic, Gulf Spoken [afb], 10
- Bahraini Shi’ite Arabic**, *alt.* Arabic, Baharna Spoken [abv], 10
- Bahrani**, *alt.* Arabic, Baharna Spoken [abv], 10
- Bahrani Arabic**, *alt.* Arabic, Baharna Spoken [abv], 10
- English** [eng], 10
- Gujarati** [guj], 11
- Gulf Arabic**, *alt.* Arabic, Gulf Spoken [afb], 10
- Northern Kurdish**, *see* Kurdish, Northern [kmr], 11
- Persian, Iranian** [pes], 12
see Persian, Iranian [pes], 12
- Sunni Spoken Arabic**, *dial.* Arabic, Baharna Spoken [abv], 10

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