

Ethnologue: Languages of Malawi

Twenty-sixth edition data

David M. Eberhard, Gary F. Simons, and Charles D. Fennig, Editors

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List of Abbreviations

A	Agent in constituent word order
ACHPR	African Charter on Human Peoples' Rights (1987)
<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
CPPDCE	Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions (2005)
CSICH	Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage (2003)
DBS	Deaf Bible Society
<i>dial.</i>	primary dialect name for
DOOR	Deaf Opportunity Outreach
ICCPR	International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (1966)
ISO	International Organization for Standardization
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
SVO	Subject-Verb-Object
<i>Type</i>	Typological information
UNCPRD	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
UNSD	United Nations Statistics Division
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 Malawi 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 21 languages listed in the *Ethnologue* for the country of Malawi. 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. *Map*: Map page. *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.

The “Language Map” (page 16) shows the locations of the listed languages. If the location of a language is given on a map, the *Map* element of the language entry indicates the page number of the map. If the language is identified on a map by name, but that name differs from the primary name in the language entry, the name on the map is given in parentheses. If the language is represented on the map by an index number, rather than by its name, the index number is given following the page number (with a colon as separator).

Many ways of finding languages are provided. “Languages by Population” (page 17) lists the languages in order of their first-language speaker populations. “Languages by Status” (page 19) 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

District” (page 22) lists the top-level administrative subdivisions of Malawi and the languages located within each. “Languages by Family” (page 23) lists the languages by their linguistic classifications. “Language Code Index” (page 25) 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 26) lists every name that appears in the language listings as a primary or alternate name of a language or dialect. A total of 107 unique names are associated with the 21 languages described in this digest.

Finally, a listing of all the published sources cited within this digest is found in “Bibliography” (page 29). 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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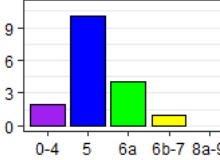
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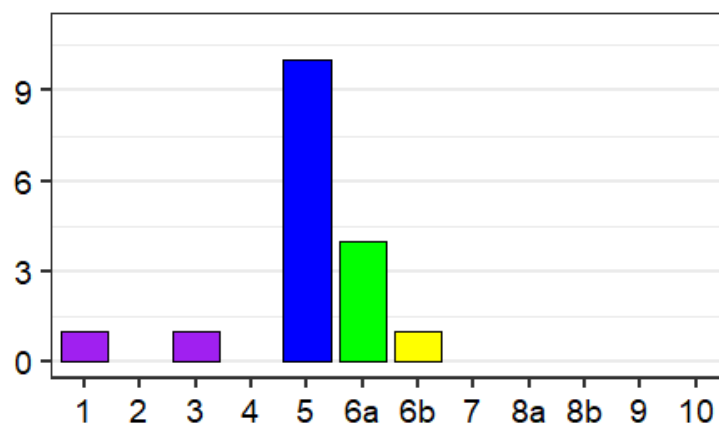
Country Overview

Name of country	Malawi												
Other names	Republic of Malawi												
Population	19,130,000 (2020 World Bank)												
Principal language	English												
Literacy rate	62% (2015 UNESCO)												
Deaf population	200,000 audiologically deaf, estimated (Baer 2013, citing Deaf Action)												
International conventions	ACHPR (1989), CPPDCE (2010), CSICH (2010), ICCPR (1993), UNCRPD (2009), UNDRIP (2007)												
General references	Bendor-Samuel and Hartell 1989, Boeder 1984, Patai 1972												
Language counts	<p>The number of established languages listed for Malawi is 17. All are living languages. Of these, 13 are indigenous and 4 are non-indigenous. Furthermore, 2 are institutional, 10 are developing, 4 are vigorous, and 1 is in trouble. Also listed are 4 unestablished languages.</p>  <table border="1"> <caption>Language Vitality Counts for Malawi</caption> <thead> <tr> <th>Vitality Category</th> <th>Count</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>0-4</td> <td>2</td> </tr> <tr> <td>5</td> <td>10</td> </tr> <tr> <td>6a</td> <td>4</td> </tr> <tr> <td>6b-7</td> <td>1</td> </tr> <tr> <td>8a-9</td> <td>0</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Vitality Category	Count	0-4	2	5	10	6a	4	6b-7	1	8a-9	0
Vitality Category	Count												
0-4	2												
5	10												
6a	4												
6b-7	1												
8a-9	0												

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 Malawi 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 19) 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 Malawi. 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 Malawi 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 Malawi 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 17) 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
10,000,000 to 99,999,999	1	5.9	5.9%	10,500,000	49.88811	49.88811%
1,000,000 to 9,999,999	3	17.6	23.5%	8,740,000	41.52591	91.41402%
100,000 to 999,999	4	23.5	47.1%	1,470,000	6.98434	98.39835%
10,000 to 99,999	7	41.2	88.2%	328,500	1.56079	99.95914%
1,000 to 9,999	2	11.8	100.0%	8,600	0.04086	100.00000%
<i>Totals</i>	17	100.0		21,047,100	100.00000	

Summary by language status

Table 2 summarizes the distribution of living established languages in Malawi 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 19) 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 Malawi. 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			Mean	Median
	Count	Percent	Cumulative	Total	Percent	Cumulative		
1	1	5.9	5.9%	11,000	0.0523	0.0523%	11,000	11,000
3	1	5.9	11.8%	10,500,000	49.8881	49.9404%	10,500,000	10,500,000
5	10	58.8	70.6%	10,378,600	49.3113	99.2517%	1,037,860	265,500
6a	4	23.5	94.1%	147,500	0.7008	99.9525%	36,875	36,250
6b	1	5.9	100.0%	10,000	0.0475	100.0000%	10,000	10,000
<i>Totals</i>	17	100.0		21,047,100	100.0000			

Summary by language family

The genealogical classifications given in the language entries of the “Alphabetical Listing of Languages” (page 10) name 3 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			
	Count	Percent	Total	Percent	Mean	Median
Indo-European	3	17.6	27,600	0.1	9,200	11,000
Niger-Congo	13	76.5	20,926,500	99.4	1,609,731	149,000
Sign language	1	5.9	93,000	0.4	93,000	93,000
<i>Totals</i>	17	100.0	21,047,100	100.0		

Alphabetical Listing of Languages

Afrikaans [afr]. Autonym: Afrikaans. *Users*: 3,600 in Malawi (2020 Joshua Project), based on ethnicity. *Location*: Scattered. *Status*: 5* (Dispersed). *Class*: Indo-European, Germanic, West, Low Saxon-Low Franconian, Low Franconian. *Type*: SVO (SOV in subordinate clauses); prepositions; noun head final; definite and indefinite articles; passives; tense; 20 consonants, 16 vowels, 9 diphthongs; non-tonal; free stress. *Lg Dev*: Fully developed. *Bible*: 1933–2000. *Writing*: Braille script, used since 1953. Latin script, primary usage. *Other*: Non-indigenous. Spoken by people of Dutch descent from South Africa. *Worldwide*: Total users in all countries: 17,674,200 (as L1: 7,359,600; as L2: 10,314,600). Global EGIDS level: 1 (National). Indigenous in: Botswana, South Africa. Also established in: Eswatini, Namibia, Zambia. Unestablished in: Australia, Canada, Netherlands, New Zealand, United Kingdom, United States, Zimbabwe.

Chichewa [nya] (Chewa, Chinyanja, Nyanja, Nyanja-Chewa). Autonym: Chicheŵa. *Users*: 10,500,000 in Malawi (2020 World Factbook), based on ethnicity. 7,271,000 Chewa, 2,200,000 Ngoni, 678,000 Manganja, and 382,000 Nyanja (2020 World Factbook). *Location*: West central and southwest. *Status*: 3 (Wider communication). De facto language of national identity. Originated in what is today the Democratic Republic of Congo, and brought to Malawi in the 14th or 15th century. Gained speakers when Dutch Reformed missionaries came to the Chewa area of Malawi in 1888 from South Africa. In 1968, was made an official language. Used in media and education. *Class*: Niger-Congo, Atlantic-Congo, Volta-Congo, Benue-Congo, Bantoid, Southern, Narrow Bantu, Central, N, Chewa-Nyanja (N.31). *Dialects*: Chewa (Cheva, Chichewa, Sheva), Ngoni, Manganja (Cimanganja, Waganga), Nyasa, Peta (Cipeta, Malawi, Marave, Maravi). Manganja is also a Chewa-influenced dialect of Sena [swk]. *Type*: SVO. *Lg Use*: Most Ngoni in Malawi speak the Chewa dialect or Tumbuka [tum]. Used as L2 by Kokola [kzn], Malawi Lomwe [lon], Malawian Sign Language [lws], Yao [yao]. *Lg Dev*: Taught in all primary schools in grades 1–4. Newspapers. Radio. Dictionary. Grammar. *Bible*: 1905–1998. *DLS*: Vital (0.61). *Writing*: Braille script. Latin script, primary usage. *Other*: Traditional religion, Christian. *Map*: 16. *Worldwide*: Total users in all countries: 14,380,700. Also indigenous in: Mozambique (Nyanja), Zambia. Also established in: Zimbabwe. Unestablished in: Eswatini.

English [eng]. Autonym: English. *Users*: 1,091,000 in Malawi, all users. L1 users: 11,000 in Malawi (2020 Joshua Project), based on ethnicity. L2 users: 1,080,000 (2020). *Status*: 1 (National). Statutory national working language (1994, Constitution, Articles 51.1b, 56.5, 94.2b). *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 Dev*: Taught in all primary and secondary schools from grade 5; taught as subject in grades 1–4. Taught in all

tertiary 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.

Greek [ell]. *Users*: 5,400 in Malawi (2020 Joshua Project), based on ethnicity. *Status*: Unestablished. *Class*: Indo-European, Greek, Attic. *Type*: SVO; prepositions; noun head final; gender (masculine/feminine/neuter); definite and indefinite articles; case-marking (3 cases); verb affixes mark person, number; passives (active, medio-passive, passive); tense and aspect; comparatives; 18 consonant and 5 vowel phonemes; non-tonal; free stress. *Lg Dev*: Fully developed. Bible: 1840–1994. *Writing*: Braille script. Cyrillic script, used in Ukraine. Greek script, primary usage. *Other*: Non-indigenous. *Worldwide*: Total users in all countries: 13,088,220 (as L1: 12,992,220; as L2: 96,000). Global EGIDS level: 1 (National). Indigenous in: Albania, Greece. Also established in: Australia, Cyprus, Egypt, Hungary, Italy, Romania, Turkey, Ukraine. Unestablished in: Argentina, Armenia, Austria, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brazil, Bulgaria, Canada, Chile, Czechia, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Denmark, Djibouti, Finland, Germany, Israel, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Lebanon, Libya, Luxembourg, Mexico, Mozambique, Netherlands, New Zealand, North Macedonia, Norway, Panama, Russian Federation, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom, United States, Uruguay, Uzbekistan, Zambia, Zimbabwe.

Gujarati [guj]. *Users*: 54,000 in Malawi (2020 Joshua Project), based on ethnicity. *Status*: Unestablished. *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 Use*: The second main language of Asians in Malawi. *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: Bahrain, Fiji, Kenya, Pakistan, Singapore, Tanzania, Zambia. Unestablished in: Australia, Bangladesh, Botswana, Burundi, Canada, Iran, Madagascar, Malaysia, Mauritius, New Zealand, Oman, Réunion, South Africa, Sri Lanka, United Kingdom, United States, Zimbabwe.

Kacchi [kfr] (Cuchi, Cutch, Kachchi, Kachi, Katchi). *Users*: 13,000 in Malawi (2020 Joshua Project), based on ethnicity. *Location*: Blantyre, Lilongwe, Nkhata Bay, and Zomba districts; Mzuzu and urban centers. *Status*: 6a* (Vigorous). *Class*: Indo-European, Indo-Iranian, Indo-Aryan, Outer Languages, Northwestern, Sindhi. *Lg Dev*: Radio. Grammar. NT: 2013. *Writing*: Devanagari script. Gujarati script. *Other*: Non-indigenous. Muslim. *Worldwide*: Total users in all countries: 1,193,600 (as L1: 1,188,360; as L2: 5,240). Indigenous in: India. Also established in: Pakistan, Tanzania. Unestablished in: Canada, Kenya, United Kingdom.

- Kokola** [kzn] (Ekokhola, Kokhola). Autonym: iKokola. *Users*: 134,000 in Malawi (2020), based on ethnicity. *Location*: Mulanje district; Thyolo district: Sandama area. *Status*: 5* (Developing). *Class*: Niger-Congo, Atlantic-Congo, Volta-Congo, Benue-Congo, Bantoid, Southern, Narrow Bantu, Central, P, Makhuwa (P.31). *Dialects*: None known. May be a subvariety of Lolo, which is itself a subvariety of Lomwe [lon]. May be intelligible of Lomwe. Reportedly similar to Marendje [vmr] and Takwane [tke]. *Type*: SVO. *Lg Use*: Also use Chichewa [nya]. *Lg Dev*: NT: 2018. *DLS*: Emerging (0.01). *Writing*: Latin script. *Map*: 16. *Worldwide*: Total users in all countries: 297,000. Also indigenous in: Mozambique.
- Lambya** [lai] (Ichilambya, Kilambya, Lambia, Lambwa, Rambia). Autonym: ChiLambya. *Users*: 59,500 in Malawi (2009 UNSD). *Location*: Chitipa and Karonga districts: along Tanzania and Zambia borders. *Status*: 6a* (Vigorous). *Class*: Niger-Congo, Atlantic-Congo, Volta-Congo, Benue-Congo, Bantoid, Southern, Narrow Bantu, Central, M, Nyiha-Safwa (M.201). *Dialect*: Central Lambya. Ndali [ndh] may be intelligible with Lambya. *Lg Dev*: Texts. NT: 2016. *DLS*: Emerging (0.01). *Writing*: Latin script. *Other*: Traditional religion, Christian. *Map*: 16. *Worldwide*: Total users in all countries: 106,900. Also indigenous in: Tanzania, Zambia.
- Lomwe, Malawi** [lon] (Anguru, Elhomwe, Ellomwe, Elomwe, Lhomwe, Nguru). *Users*: 3,990,000 (2020 World Factbook), based on ethnicity. *Location*: Blantyre, Machinga, Mulanje, Phalombe, Thyolo, and Zomba districts. *Status*: 5* (Developing). *Class*: Niger-Congo, Atlantic-Congo, Volta-Congo, Benue-Congo, Bantoid, Southern, Narrow Bantu, Central, P, Makhuwa (P.331). *Dialects*: Mihavane (Emihavani, Muhavane), Ekokholani. Not intelligible of Lomwe [ngl] of Mozambique. Different from Ngulu [ngp] (Kingulu) of Tanzania. Reportedly similar to Takwane [tke]. *Type*: SVO. *Lg Use*: Vigorous. Also use Chichewa [nya]. *Lg Dev*: Approved orthography. Radio. Dictionary. Texts. Bible: 2019. *DLS*: Emerging (0.04). *Writing*: Latin script. *Other*: Nguru is derogatory if used by an outsider; a signal of close identity if used by an insider. Elhomwe is the official name. Traditional religion, Christian. *Map*: 16.
- Malawian Sign Language** [lws] (MSL, Malawi Sign, Malawi Sign Language). *Users*: 93,000 (2021 DBS/DOOR/SIL). Estimated 55,000–110,000 deaf signers, assuming 0.3%–0.6% of total population. Deaf Action estimates 200,000 deaf overall (Baer 2013). *Location*: Scattered. *Status*: 5 (Developing). *Class*: Sign language, Deaf community sign language. *Dialects*: None known. Some influence from American Sign Language, especially visible in the fingerspelling system (2016 M. Sorola), although ASL signers correctly identify less than half of MSL signs (Minton-Ryan et al 2019). *Type*: One-handed fingerspelling derived from American Sign Language [ase]. *Lg Use*: Vigorous. Within higher education, Malawian Sign Language is taught but mixed with American Sign Language [ase] and British Sign Language [bfi], for which better documented resources and textbooks are available (2016 M. Sorola), whereas natural Malawian Sign Language is more common in deaf schools with deaf native signers. Used by all. Some also use American Sign Language [ase] (Baer 2013). Some also use Chichewa [nya] (Baer 2013). Some also use English [eng] (Baer 2013). *Lg Dev*: Four deaf elementary boarding schools, the first founded in 1968. Three are historically oralist but have begun to use signing since about 2005; one school was founded in 1994 using Total

Communication (Baer 2013). Agency: Malawi National Association of the Deaf (MANAD). *DLS*: Emerging (0.02). *Other*: Influence from American Sign Language [ase] and British Sign Language [bfi] in deaf schools, but developed naturally with many local signs and some borrowing from other African countries (Baer 2013, 2016 M. Sorola, Minton-Ryan et al 2019). Malawi National Association of the Deaf has 23 sign language instructors (2019 MANAD).

Ndali [ndh] (Chindali). Autonym: Chindali. *Users*: 70,000 in Malawi (2003 SIL). *Location*: Chitipa district: Sukwa Hills. *Status*: 6a* (Vigorous). *Class*: Niger-Congo, Atlantic-Congo, Volta-Congo, Benue-Congo, Bantoid, Southern, Narrow Bantu, Central, M, Nyakyusa-Ngonde (M.301). *Dialect*: Sukwa. *Type*: SVO; prepositions; noun head initial; noun classes; verbal affixation for subject, object, tense, aspect, mood, and derivation; 19 consonant phonemes; 10 vowel phonemes; tonal. *Lg Dev*: Literature. Texts. NT: 2020. *Writing*: Latin script. *Other*: Came from Tanzania, and may be intelligible with Lambya [lai]. *Map*: 16. *Worldwide*: Total users in all countries: 263,000. Global EGIDS level: 5 (Developing). Also indigenous in: Tanzania.

Nyakyusa-Ngonde [nyy] (Ikingonde, Ikinyikyusa, Kinyakyusa, Kinyakyusa, Konde, Kukwe, Mombe, Ngonde, Nkhonde, Nkonde, Nyakusa, Nyakyusa, Nyekyosa, Sochile, Sokile). Autonym: Kinyakyusa. *Users*: 149,000 in Malawi (2009 UNSD). 18,800 Nyakyusa, 130,000 Nkonde (2009 UNSD). *Location*: Chitipa district: northeast; Karonga district: west of Lake Malawi. *Status*: 5* (Developing). *Class*: Niger-Congo, Atlantic-Congo, Volta-Congo, Benue-Congo, Bantoid, Southern, Narrow Bantu, Central, M, Nyakyusa-Ngonde (M.31). *Dialects*: Nyakyusa, Nkonde, Sukwa. Related to Ndali [ndh]. *Type*: SVO; prepositions; noun head initial; noun classes; verbal affixation for subject, object, tense, aspect, mood and derivation; 18 consonant phonemes; 14 vowel phonemes (7 long, 7 short); tonal. *Lg Use*: Also use English [eng]. *Lg Dev*: Literacy rate in L2: Above average in Swahili [swh]. Literature. Dictionary. Texts. Bible: 1993–1996. *Writing*: Latin script. *Map*: 16. *Worldwide*: Total users in all countries: 1,359,000. Also indigenous in: Tanzania.

Nyiha, Malawi [nyr] (Kinyiha, Shinyiha). *Users*: 10,000 (2007). *Location*: Chitipa district: Kameme town area villages. *Status*: 6b* (Threatened). *Class*: Niger-Congo, Atlantic-Congo, Volta-Congo, Benue-Congo, Bantoid, Southern, Narrow Bantu, Central, M, Nyiha-Safwa (M.23). *Dialects*: None known. Reportedly similar to but not the same as Nyiha [nyf] (Giryama) of Kenya and Nyiha [nih] of Tanzania. *DLS*: Still. *Writing*: Latin script, limited usage. *Map*: 16.

Nyika [nkv] (Chinyika, Kinyika). *Users*: 5,000 in Malawi (2007). *Location*: Chitipa district: Chisenga area villages; Karonga district: west. *Status*: 6a (Vigorous). *Class*: Niger-Congo, Atlantic-Congo, Volta-Congo, Benue-Congo, Bantoid, Southern, Narrow Bantu, Central, M, Nyiha-Safwa (M.23). *Dialects*: None known. Reportedly similar to Malawi Nyiha [nyr]. *Lg Use*: All domains. Used by all. *DLS*: Still. *Writing*: Unwritten. *Map*: 16. *Worldwide*: Total users in all countries: 14,300. Also indigenous in: Zambia.

Portuguese [por]. Autonym: Português. *Users*: 18,000 in Malawi (2020 Joshua Project), based on ethnicity. *Status*: Unestablished. *Class*: Indo-European, Italic, Romance, Italo-Western,

Western, Gallo-Iberian, Ibero-Romance, West Iberian, Portuguese-Galician. *Type*: SVO; prepositions; gender (masculine/feminine); definite and indefinite articles; verb affixes mark person, number; passives; tense; comparatives; 21 consonants, 13 vowels, 11 diphthongs; non-tonal. *Lg Dev*: Fully developed. *Bible*: 1751–2017. *Writing*: Braille script. Latin script, primary usage. *Other*: Non-indigenous. *Worldwide*: Total users in all countries: 263,638,850 (as L1: 236,266,650; as L2: 27,372,200). Global EGIDS level: 1 (National). Indigenous in: Portugal, Spain. Also established in 14 other countries and unestablished in 38 more.

Sena, Malawi [swk] (Chisena, Cisena). *Users*: 805,000 (2020 World Factbook), based on ethnicity. *Location*: Chikwawa district: south; Nsanje district; along Mozambique border. *Status*: 5* (Developing). *Class*: Niger-Congo, Atlantic-Congo, Volta-Congo, Benue-Congo, Bantoid, Southern, Narrow Bantu, Central, N, Senga-Sena (N.441). *Dialect*: Chimanganja. Linguistically related to Kunda [kdn] but not intelligible. *Lg Dev*: Literature. Radio. *Bible*: 2005. *DLS*: Emerging (0.04). *Writing*: Latin script. *Map*: 16.

Shona [sna]. Autonym: Chishona. *Users*: 93,000 in Malawi (2021 Joshua Project), based on ethnicity. *Status*: Unestablished. *Class*: Niger-Congo, Atlantic-Congo, Volta-Congo, Benue-Congo, Bantoid, Southern, Narrow Bantu, Central, S, Shona (S.10). *Type*: SVO; noun head initial; 13 noun classes; no articles; verb affixes mark person, number, object; passives; causatives; 31 consonants, 5 vowels, 2 diphthongs; tonal (2 tones: high, low). *Lg Dev*: Dictionary. Grammar. *Bible*: 1949–1980. *Writing*: Braille script. Latin script, primary usage. *Other*: Non-indigenous. Migrant laborers. *Worldwide*: Total users in all countries: 10,873,630 (as L1: 7,371,360; as L2: 3,502,270). Global EGIDS level: 3 (Wider communication). Indigenous in: Zambia, Zimbabwe. Also established in: Botswana (Zezuru). Unestablished in: Australia, Canada, South Africa, United Kingdom, United States.

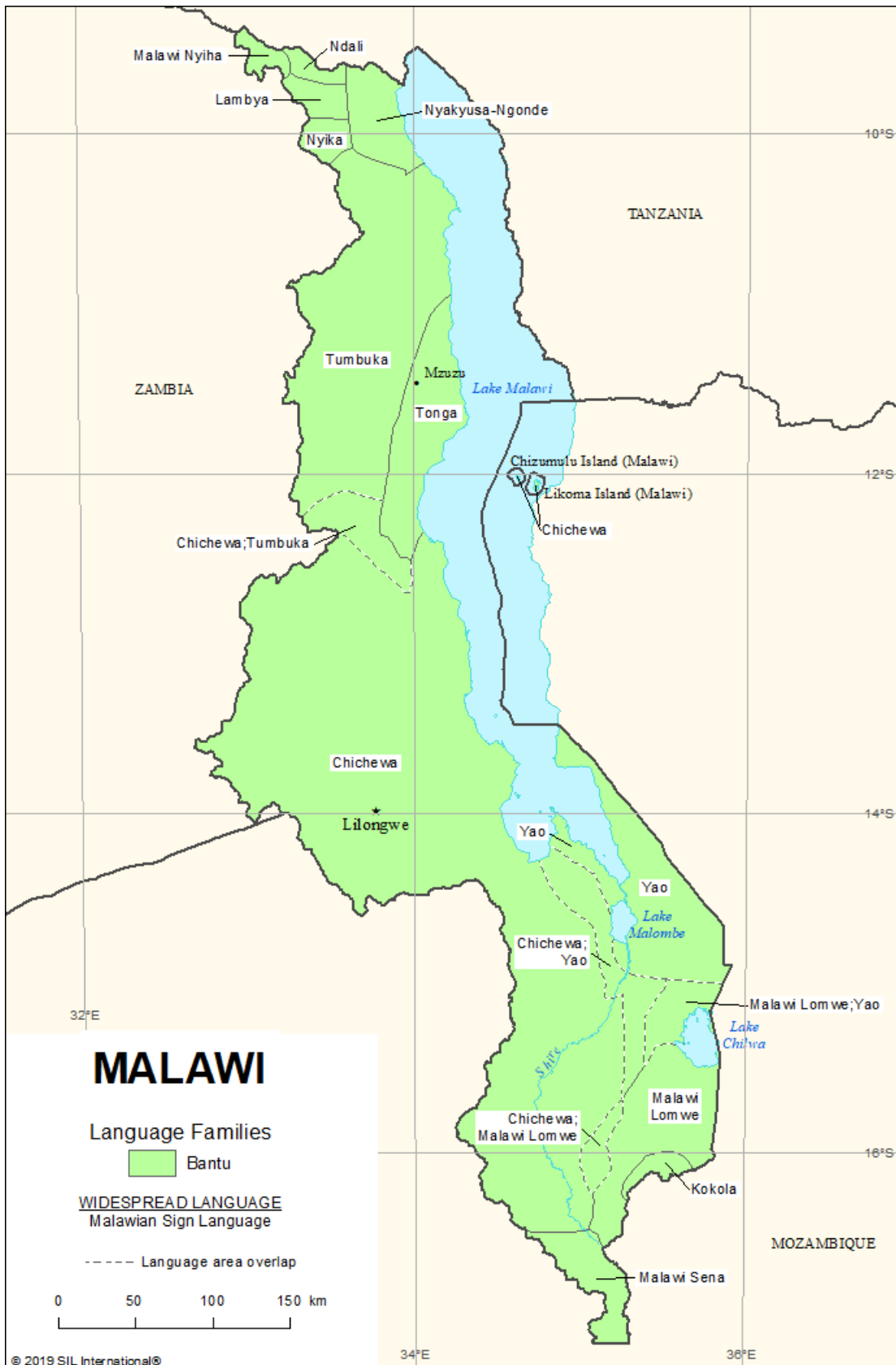
Tonga [tog] (Kitonga, Siska, Sisyá, Western Nyasa). Autonym: Chitonga. *Users*: 382,000 (2020 World Factbook), based on ethnicity. *Location*: Nkhata Bay district: Lake Malawi west shore; Nkhotakota, Mzimba, and Rumphi districts. *Status*: 5* (Developing). *Class*: Niger-Congo, Atlantic-Congo, Volta-Congo, Benue-Congo, Bantoid, Southern, Narrow Bantu, Central, N, Manda (N.15). *Lg Dev*: *Bible*: 1987. *DLS*: Emerging (0.04). *Writing*: Latin script. *Other*: Different from Tonga [toi] of Zimbabwe and Zambia and Tonga [toh] of Mozambique. *Map*: 16.

Tumbuka [tum] (Citumbuka, Tamboka, Tambuka, Timbuka, Tombucas, Tumboka). Autonym: Chitumbuka. *Users*: 1,950,000 in Malawi (2020 World Factbook), based on ethnicity. *Location*: Chitipa and Karonga districts: Lake Malawi west shore; Nkhata Bay, Nkhotakota, Rumphi, and Mzimba districts. *Status*: 5* (Developing). *Class*: Niger-Congo, Atlantic-Congo, Volta-Congo, Benue-Congo, Bantoid, Southern, Narrow Bantu, Central, N, Tumbuka (N.21). *Dialects*: Chitumbuka, Chikamanga (Henga, Kamanga), Njenja, Poka (Chipoka, Phoka), Yombe, Senga, Nthali, Fungwe, Wenya, Hewe (Hewa). *Lg Dev*: Dictionary. Grammar. *Bible*: 1957–2017. *DLS*: Ascending (0.28). *Writing*: Latin script. *Other*: Kandawire and Fulirwa are clans, not dialects. Christian, traditional religion. *Map*: 16. *Worldwide*: Total users in all countries: 2,316,000. Also indigenous in: Zambia.

Yao [yao] (Achawa, Adsawa, Adsoa, Ajawa, Ayao, Ayawa, Ayo, Chiyao, Chiyawo, Ciyaawo, Ciyao, Djao, Haiiao, Hiao, Hyao, Jao, Veiao, Wajao, Yawo, chiYao, ciYao, waYao). Autonym: Ciyawo. *Users*: 2,800,000 in Malawi (2020 World Factbook), based on ethnicity. *Location*: Balaka, Machinga, Mangochi, and Zomba districts: bordering Mozambique, between southeast tip of Lake Kilwa and Lake Malawi; Chiradzulu district: small area. *Status*: 5* (Developing). *Class*: Niger-Congo, Atlantic-Congo, Volta-Congo, Benue-Congo, Bantoid, Southern, Narrow Bantu, Central, P, Yao (P.21). *Dialect*: Mangoche. *Lg Use*: Also use Chichewa [nya]. Also use Standard Arabic [arb]. *Lg Dev*: Literacy rate in L1: 5%. Literacy rate in L2: 60% Chichewa [nya], 30% Arabic [arb]. Literature. Radio. Dictionary. Grammar. Texts. Bible: 2014. *DLS*: Ascending (0.24). *Writing*: Latin script. *Other*: Yao in Tanzania use a different orthography from Malawi; Mozambique Yao also has some differences. Muslim. *Map*: 16. *Worldwide*: Total users in all countries: 3,728,000. Also indigenous in: Mozambique. Also established in: Tanzania, Zambia.

Zulu [zul] (Isizulu, Kingoni, Ngoni, Zunda). *Users*: 72,000 in Malawi (2021 Joshua Project), based on ethnicity. *Location*: Dedza, Karonga, Mzimba, and Ntcheu districts. *Status*: 5* (Dispersed). *Class*: Niger-Congo, Atlantic-Congo, Volta-Congo, Benue-Congo, Bantoid, Southern, Narrow Bantu, Central, S, Nguni (S.42). *Type*: SVO; noun head initial; 13 noun classes; no articles; verb affixes mark person, number, object; passives; aspect; causatives; 30 consonant and 10 vowel phonemes; stress on penultimate syllable; non-tonal. *Lg Use*: Only a few elderly use Ngoni. *Lg Dev*: Newspapers. Radio. Dictionary. Grammar. Bible: 1883–1959. *Writing*: Braille script. Latin script, primary usage. *Other*: Non-indigenous. Ngoni is a dialect of Zulu or Swazi [ssw] spoken in Malawi. Ngoni also an alternate name for Chichewa [nya] and possibly for Matengo [mgv]. *Worldwide*: Total users in all countries: 27,804,600 (as L1: 12,104,600; as L2: 15,700,000). Global EGIDS level: 1 (National). Indigenous in: Lesotho, Mozambique, South Africa. Also established in: Eswatini. Unestablished in: Botswana.

Language Map



Languages by Population

In this section the languages of Malawi 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.

10,000,000 to 99,999,999

Chichewa [[nya](#)] *Users:* 10,500,000 in Malawi (2020 World Factbook), based on ethnicity. 7,271,000 Chewa, 2,200,000 Ngoni, 678,000 Manganja, and 382,000 Nyanja (2020 World Factbook). *Status:* 3 (Wider communication). De facto language of national identity. *Worldwide:* Total users in all countries: 14,380,700.

1,000,000 to 9,999,999

Lomwe, Malawi [[lon](#)] *Users:* 3,990,000 (2020 World Factbook), based on ethnicity. *Status:* 5* (Developing).

Yao [[yao](#)] *Users:* 2,800,000 in Malawi (2020 World Factbook), based on ethnicity. *Status:* 5* (Developing). *Worldwide:* Total users in all countries: 3,728,000.

Tumbuka [[tum](#)] *Users:* 1,950,000 in Malawi (2020 World Factbook), based on ethnicity. *Status:* 5* (Developing). *Worldwide:* Total users in all countries: 2,316,000.

100,000 to 999,999

Sena, Malawi [[swk](#)] *Users:* 805,000 (2020 World Factbook), based on ethnicity. *Status:* 5* (Developing).

Tonga [[tog](#)] *Users:* 382,000 (2020 World Factbook), based on ethnicity. *Status:* 5* (Developing).

Nyakyusa-Ngonde [[nyy](#)] *Users:* 149,000 in Malawi (2009 UNSD). 18,800 Nyakyusa, 130,000 Ngonde (2009 UNSD). *Status:* 5* (Developing). *Worldwide:* Total users in all countries: 1,359,000.

Kokola [[kzn](#)] *Users:* 134,000 in Malawi (2020), based on ethnicity. *Status:* 5* (Developing). *Worldwide:* Total users in all countries: 297,000.

10,000 to 99,999

Malawian Sign Language [[lws](#)] *Users:* 93,000 (2021 DBS/DOOR/SIL). Estimated 55,000–110,000 deaf signers, assuming 0.3%–0.6% of total population. Deaf Action estimates 200,000 deaf overall (Baer 2013). *Status:* 5 (Developing).

Shona [[sna](#)] *Users:* 93,000 in Malawi (2021 Joshua Project), based on ethnicity. *Status:* Unestablished. *Worldwide:* Total users in all countries: 10,873,630 (as L1: 7,371,360; as L2:

3,502,270).

Zulu [zul] *Users:* 72,000 in Malawi (2021 Joshua Project), based on ethnicity. *Status:* 5* (Dispersed). *Worldwide:* Total users in all countries: 27,804,600 (as L1: 12,104,600; as L2: 15,700,000).

Ndali [ndh] *Users:* 70,000 in Malawi (2003 SIL). *Status:* 6a* (Vigorous). *Worldwide:* Total users in all countries: 263,000.

Lambya [lai] *Users:* 59,500 in Malawi (2009 UNSD). *Status:* 6a* (Vigorous). *Worldwide:* Total users in all countries: 106,900.

Gujarati [guj] *Users:* 54,000 in Malawi (2020 Joshua Project), based on ethnicity. *Status:* Unestablished. *Worldwide:* Total users in all countries: 62,116,220 (as L1: 57,076,220; as L2: 5,040,000).

Portuguese [por] *Users:* 18,000 in Malawi (2020 Joshua Project), based on ethnicity. *Status:* Unestablished. *Worldwide:* Total users in all countries: 263,638,850 (as L1: 236,266,650; as L2: 27,372,200).

Kacchi [kfr] *Users:* 13,000 in Malawi (2020 Joshua Project), based on ethnicity. *Status:* 6a* (Vigorous). *Worldwide:* Total users in all countries: 1,193,600 (as L1: 1,188,360; as L2: 5,240).

English [eng] *Users:* 11,000 in Malawi (2020 Joshua Project), based on ethnicity. 1,091,000 in Malawi, all users. L2 users: 1,080,000 (2020). *Status:* 1 (National). Statutory national working language (1994, Constitution, Articles 51.1b, 56.5, 94.2b). *Worldwide:* Total users in all countries: 1,456,448,320 (as L1: 379,682,200; as L2: 1076,766,120).

Nyiha, Malawi [nyr] *Users:* 10,000 (2007). *Status:* 6b* (Threatened).

1,000 to 9,999

Greek [ell] *Users:* 5,400 in Malawi (2020 Joshua Project), based on ethnicity. *Status:* Unestablished. *Worldwide:* Total users in all countries: 13,088,220 (as L1: 12,992,220; as L2: 96,000).

Nyika [nkv] *Users:* 5,000 in Malawi (2007). *Status:* 6a (Vigorous). *Worldwide:* Total users in all countries: 14,300.

Afrikaans [afr] *Users:* 3,600 in Malawi (2020 Joshua Project), based on ethnicity. *Status:* 5* (Dispersed). *Worldwide:* Total users in all countries: 17,674,200 (as L1: 7,359,600; as L2: 10,314,600).

Languages by Status

In this section the languages of Malawi 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)

English [eng] *Users:* 1,091,000 in Malawi, all users. L1 users: 11,000 in Malawi (2020 Joshua Project), based on ethnicity. L2 users: 1,080,000 (2020). *Status:* Statutory national working language (1994, Constitution, Articles 51.1b, 56.5, 94.2b). *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: 1,076,766,120).

3 (Wider communication)

Chichewa [nya] *Users:* 10,500,000 in Malawi (2020 World Factbook), based on ethnicity. 7,271,000 Chewa, 2,200,000 Ngoni, 678,000 Manganja, and 382,000 Nyanja (2020 World Factbook). *Status:* De facto language of national identity. Originated in what is today the Democratic Republic of Congo, and brought to Malawi in the 14th or 15th century. Gained speakers when Dutch Reformed missionaries came to the Chewa area of Malawi in 1888 from South Africa. In 1968, was made an official language. Used in media and education. *Lg Use:* Most Ngoni in Malawi speak the Chewa dialect or Tumbuka [tum]. Used as L2 by Kokola [kzn], Malawi Lomwe [lon], Malawian Sign Language [lws], Yao [yao]. *Lg Dev:* Newspapers. Radio. Dictionary. Grammar. Bible: 1905–1998. *Writing:* Braille script. Latin script, primary usage. *Worldwide:* Total users in all countries: 14,380,700.

5 (Developing)

Kokola [kzn] *Users:* 134,000 in Malawi (2020), based on ethnicity. *Lg Use:* Also use Chichewa [nya]. *Lg Dev:* NT: 2018. *Writing:* Latin script. *Worldwide:* Total users in all countries: 297,000.

Lomwe, Malawi [lon] *Users:* 3,990,000 (2020 World Factbook), based on ethnicity. *Lg Use:* Vigorous. Also use Chichewa [nya]. *Lg Dev:* Radio. Dictionary. Texts. Bible: 2019. *Writing:* Latin script.

Malawian Sign Language [lws] *Users:* 93,000 (2021 DBS/DOOR/SIL). Estimated 55,000–110,000 deaf signers, assuming 0.3%–0.6% of total population. Deaf Action estimates 200,000 deaf overall (Baer 2013). *Lg Use:* Vigorous. Within higher education, Malawian Sign Language is taught but mixed with American Sign Language [ase] and British Sign Language

[bfi], for which better documented resources and textbooks are available (2016 M. Sorola), whereas natural Malawian Sign Language is more common in deaf schools with deaf native signers. Used by all. Some also use American Sign Language [ase] (Baer 2013). Some also use Chichewa [nya] (Baer 2013). Some also use English [eng] (Baer 2013).

Nyakyusa-Ngonde [nyy] *Users:* 149,000 in Malawi (2009 UNSD). 18,800 Nyakyusa, 130,000 Ngonde (2009 UNSD). *Lg Use:* Also use English [eng]. *Writing:* Latin script. *Worldwide:* Total users in all countries: 1,359,000.

Sena, Malawi [swk] *Users:* 805,000 (2020 World Factbook), based on ethnicity. *Lg Dev:* Literature. Radio. Bible: 2005. *Writing:* Latin script.

Tonga [tog] *Users:* 382,000 (2020 World Factbook), based on ethnicity. *Lg Dev:* Bible: 1987. *Writing:* Latin script.

Tumbuka [tum] *Users:* 1,950,000 in Malawi (2020 World Factbook), based on ethnicity. *Lg Dev:* Dictionary. Grammar. Bible: 1957–2017. *Writing:* Latin script. *Worldwide:* Total users in all countries: 2,316,000.

Yao [yao] *Users:* 2,800,000 in Malawi (2020 World Factbook), based on ethnicity. *Lg Use:* Also use Chichewa [nya]. Also use Standard Arabic [arb]. *Lg Dev:* Literature. Radio. Dictionary. Grammar. Texts. Bible: 2014. *Writing:* Latin script. *Worldwide:* Total users in all countries: 3,728,000.

5 (Dispersed)

Afrikaans [afr] *Users:* 3,600 in Malawi (2020 Joshua Project), based on ethnicity. *Writing:* Braille script, used since 1953. Latin script, primary usage. *Worldwide:* Total users in all countries: 17,674,200 (as L1: 7,359,600; as L2: 10,314,600).

Zulu [zul] *Users:* 72,000 in Malawi (2021 Joshua Project), based on ethnicity. *Lg Use:* Only a few elderly use Ngoni. *Writing:* Braille script. Latin script, primary usage. *Worldwide:* Total users in all countries: 27,804,600 (as L1: 12,104,600; as L2: 15,700,000).

6a (Vigorous)

Kacchi [kfr] *Users:* 13,000 in Malawi (2020 Joshua Project), based on ethnicity. *Writing:* Devanagari script. Gujarati script. *Worldwide:* Total users in all countries: 1,193,600 (as L1: 1,188,360; as L2: 5,240).

Lambya [lai] *Users:* 59,500 in Malawi (2009 UNSD). *Lg Dev:* Texts. NT: 2016. *Writing:* Latin script. *Worldwide:* Total users in all countries: 106,900.

Ndali [ndh] *Users:* 70,000 in Malawi (2003 SIL). *Writing:* Latin script. *Worldwide:* Total users in all countries: 263,000.

Nyika [nkv] *Users:* 5,000 in Malawi (2007). *Lg Use:* All domains. Used by all. *Writing:* Unwritten. *Worldwide:* Total users in all countries: 14,300.

6b (Threatened)

Nyiha, Malawi [nyr] *Users:* 10,000 (2007). *Writing:* Latin script, limited usage.

Unestablished

Greek [ell] *Users:* 5,400 in Malawi (2020 Joshua Project), based on ethnicity. *Writing:* Braille script. Cyrillic script, used in Ukraine. Greek script, primary usage. *Worldwide:* Total users in all countries: 13,088,220 (as L1: 12,992,220; as L2: 96,000).

Gujarati [guj] *Users:* 54,000 in Malawi (2020 Joshua Project), based on ethnicity. *Lg Use:* The second main language of Asians in Malawi. *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).

Portuguese [por] *Users:* 18,000 in Malawi (2020 Joshua Project), based on ethnicity. *Writing:* Braille script. Latin script, primary usage. *Worldwide:* Total users in all countries: 263,638,850 (as L1: 236,266,650; as L2: 27,372,200).

Shona [sna] *Users:* 93,000 in Malawi (2021 Joshua Project), based on ethnicity. *Writing:* Braille script. Latin script, primary usage. *Worldwide:* Total users in all countries: 10,873,630 (as L1: 7,371,360; as L2: 3,502,270).

Languages by District

This index gives an alphabetical listing of the top-level administrative subdivisions within Malawi. Under the name of each district is a list of the language communities that are located within its area.

Balaka

Yao [yao], 15

Blantyre

Kacchi [kfr], 11

Lomwe, Malawi [lon], 12

Chikwawa

Sena, Malawi [swk], 14

Chiradzulu

Yao [yao], 15

Chitipa

Lambya [lai], 12

Ndali [ndh], 13

Nyakyusa-Ngonde [nyy], 13

Nyiha, Malawi [nyr], 13

Nyika [nkv], 13

Tumbuka [tum], 14

Dedza

Zulu [zul], 15

Karonga

Lambya [lai], 12

Nyakyusa-Ngonde [nyy], 13

Nyika [nkv], 13

Tumbuka [tum], 14

Zulu [zul], 15

Lilongwe

Kacchi [kfr], 11

Machinga

Lomwe, Malawi [lon], 12

Yao [yao], 15

Mangochi

Yao [yao], 15

Mulanje

Kokola [kzn], 12

Lomwe, Malawi [lon], 12

Mzimba

Tonga [tog], 14

Tumbuka [tum], 14

Zulu [zul], 15

Nkhata Bay

Kacchi [kfr], 11

Tonga [tog], 14

Tumbuka [tum], 14

Nkhotakota

Tonga [tog], 14

Tumbuka [tum], 14

Nsanje

Sena, Malawi [swk], 14

Ntcheu

Zulu [zul], 15

Phalombe

Lomwe, Malawi [lon], 12

Rumphu

Tonga [tog], 14

Tumbuka [tum], 14

Thyolo

Kokola [kzn], 12

Lomwe, Malawi [lon], 12

Zomba

Kacchi [kfr], 11

Lomwe, Malawi [lon], 12

Yao [yao], 15

Languages by Family

This index gives an alphabetical listing of the linguistic classifications used for the established languages of Malawi. 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.

Indo-European, Germanic, West, English

English [eng], [10](#)

Indo-European, Germanic, West, Low Saxon-Low Franconian, Low Franconian

Afrikaans [afr], [10](#)

Indo-European, Indo-Iranian, Indo-Aryan, Outer Languages, Northwestern, Sindhi

Kacchi [kfr], [11](#)

Niger-Congo, Atlantic-Congo, Volta-Congo, Benue-Congo, Bantoid, Southern, Narrow Bantu, Central, M, Nyakyusa-Ngonde (M.301)

Ndali [ndh], [13](#)

Niger-Congo, Atlantic-Congo, Volta-Congo, Benue-Congo, Bantoid, Southern, Narrow Bantu, Central, M, Nyakyusa-Ngonde (M.31)

Nyakyusa-Ngonde [nyy], [13](#)

Niger-Congo, Atlantic-Congo, Volta-Congo, Benue-Congo, Bantoid, Southern, Narrow Bantu, Central, M, Nyiha-Safwa (M.201)

Lambya [lai], [12](#)

Niger-Congo, Atlantic-Congo, Volta-Congo, Benue-Congo, Bantoid, Southern, Narrow Bantu, Central, M, Nyiha-Safwa (M.23)

Nyiha, Malawi [nyr], [13](#)

Nyika [nkv], [13](#)

Niger-Congo, Atlantic-Congo, Volta-Congo, Benue-Congo, Bantoid, Southern, Narrow Bantu, Central, N, Chewa-Nyanja (N.31)

Chichewa [nya], [10](#)

Niger-Congo, Atlantic-Congo, Volta-Congo, Benue-Congo, Bantoid, Southern, Narrow Bantu, Central, N, Manda (N.15)

Tonga [tog], [14](#)

Niger-Congo, Atlantic-Congo, Volta-Congo, Benue-Congo, Bantoid, Southern, Narrow Bantu, Central, N, Senga-Sena (N.441)

Sena, Malawi [swk], [14](#)

Niger-Congo, Atlantic-Congo, Volta-Congo, Benue-Congo, Bantoid, Southern, Narrow Bantu, Central, N, Tumbuka (N.21)

Tumbuka [tum], [14](#)

Niger-Congo, Atlantic-Congo, Volta-Congo, Benue-Congo, Bantoid, Southern, Narrow

Bantu, Central, P, Makhuwa (P.31)

Kokola [kzn], [12](#)

**Niger-Congo, Atlantic-Congo, Volta-Congo, Benue-Congo, Bantoid, Southern, Narrow
Bantu, Central, P, Makhuwa (P.331)**

Lomwe, Malawi [lon], [12](#)

**Niger-Congo, Atlantic-Congo, Volta-Congo, Benue-Congo, Bantoid, Southern, Narrow
Bantu, Central, P, Yao (P.21)**

Yao [yao], [15](#)

**Niger-Congo, Atlantic-Congo, Volta-Congo, Benue-Congo, Bantoid, Southern, Narrow
Bantu, Central, S, Nguni (S.42)**

Zulu [zul], [15](#)

Sign language, Deaf community sign language

Malawian Sign Language [lws], [12](#)

Language Code Index

This index gives an alphabetical listing of all 21 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/>.

afr	Afrikaans, 10	nya	Chichewa, 10
ell	Greek, 11	nyr	Nyiha, Malawi, 13
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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.

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