

# 1-in-5 in US Homes Speaks a Second Language after English

今回は、アメリカの家庭で話される第二言語に関する話題です。今や約5人に1人が英語以外の言葉を使い、多文化社会が広がっています。アジア系やヒスパニック系などの国から移住してきた家庭では、親が子どもたちに母語を教えようと努力する姿も紹介されています。ちなみに「移住する」は英語で「emigrate」と言い、emigrate to the US（アメリカに移住する）や emigrate from Vietnam（ベトナムから移住する）などのように使います。移民の国アメリカでは、多言語社会が広がっていることを改めて感じますが、もしあなたが新しく言葉を学ぶとしたら、どの言語に挑戦してみたいですか？



## 1. Article

Read the following article aloud.

The U.S. Census Bureau reports that the number of people in the United States who speak a language other than English at home increased by three times between 1980 and 2019.

About one in five people in America speak a second language at home. That is 68 million people.

### Arabic among top five

Dina Arid of California, who is the mother of three children, is one of them. She grew up speaking Arabic at home. She said it is true that the country is “a melting pot,” a place where many cultures come together.

Arabic is one of the five most-spoken second languages in the U.S. Arid speaks mostly English to her children and is trying to teach them a little Arabic.

She said some of her cousins “didn’t get to learn Arabic.” They “always wished that their parents spoke to them in Arabic more so that they have that language,” she noted.

## Spanish is most common second language

Spanish is the most popular second language in the United States. More than 41 million people — about 12 times more than the other most common second languages — speak Spanish at home. Hispanics are the largest [minority](#) group in the United States. Fifty-five percent of Spanish speakers were born in the United States.

The other languages in the top five are Chinese, Tagalog and Vietnamese.

## Returning to help in family's homeland

Jenny Nguyen is studying dentistry in Virginia. Her parents [emigrated](#) from Vietnam, so they spoke both English and Vietnamese at home. “I would speak English at school during the day and at night I would only speak Vietnamese just so I could keep the language, Nguyen says. “When I was younger, I didn’t understand the importance, but I think now I’m very glad that I’m able to speak and write at such a [proficient](#) level.”

She was able to put her language skills to use when she traveled to Vietnam to offer free [dental](#) care to poor communities. Many of her co-workers there were also Vietnamese Americans.

“They couldn’t really communicate with the patients,” Nguyen says. “I was one of the very few young volunteers that were able to speak with the patients and communicate with them what was going on.”

## Secret language

Cathy Erway is a food writer based in New York City. Erway is using a language [application](#) to improve her ability in her mother’s native Mandarin Chinese. She said her parents used Chinese between them to talk secretly when their young children were listening

The Census Bureau reports that the number of people who spoke only English at home also increased – by about 25 percent – during the same period.

I’m Jill Robbins.

Dora Mekouar reported on this story for VOA News. Jill Robbins adapted it for Learning English.

## 2. Key phrases and vocabulary

First repeat after your tutor and then read aloud by yourself.

**1. minority (n.)** a smaller group within a larger population

Native Americans are considered to be a minority in the US.

**2. emigrate (v.)** to leave one country to live in another

My grandfather emigrated from Denmark to Canada.

**3. proficient (adj.)** skilled enough at something to do common or everyday tasks

To work here, you must be proficient in Japanese.

**4. dental (adj.)** of or related to the teeth

Health experts recommend getting a dental checkup at least once a year.

**5. application (n.)** a piece of software used on computers and smartphones (“app”)

Before Microsoft Excel, the biggest business application was VisiCalc, developed for Apple.

## 3. Questions

Read the questions aloud and answer them.

**1. How many people in the US speak a language other than English at home?**

**2. What are the five most common languages in the US besides English?**

**3. How did Jenny Nguyen use her skills in Vietnamese?**

**4. What advantages do emigrants have by being able to speak both their native language and the language of the country that they live in?**

**5. What languages can you speak? When do you use them? What languages would you like to learn? Why?**