

# TOP 20 LANGUAGES SPOKEN IN THE UNITED KINGDOM



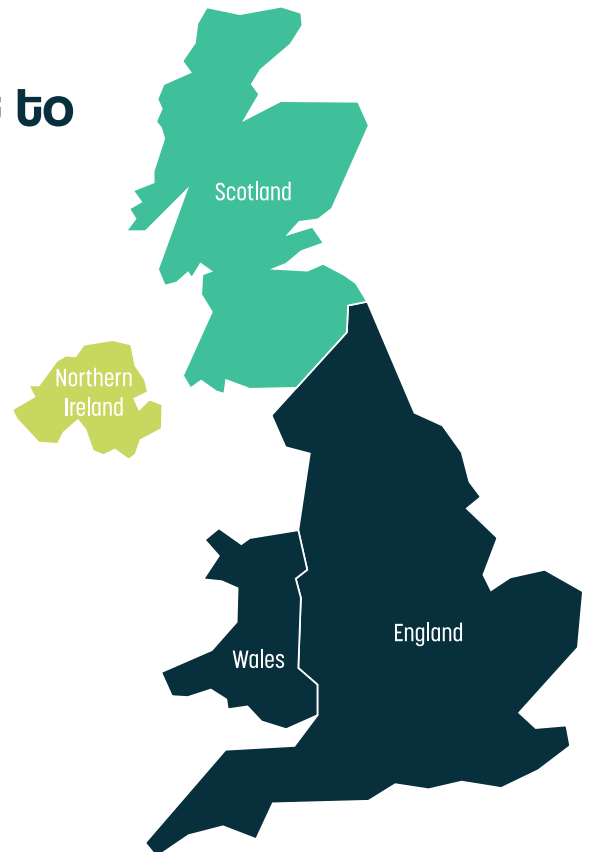
600+ languages are spoken in UK homes

685,000+ Polish speakers – UK's top non-English language

Over 2 million people speak a language other than English

Atlas Translations supports all major UK languages

A visual snapshot to help you and your organisation connect with multilingual audiences in England, Wales, Scotland, and Northern Ireland.



## Why should you care about the languages your audience speaks?

- Build trust and credibility with your local communities
- Show support for inclusive marketing & awareness
- Ensure industry accuracy (legal, medical, etc.)
- Enhance your customers' overall experience

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## Polish Speakers: 685,000+

- Fun Fact: The letter “Ł” is not an L—it’s pronounced like an English “W”!
- Translation Tip: Polish translation can take up to approx. 20% more space than English.
- Business Culture: Polish business culture values formality and punctuality; titles and surnames are commonly used.

## Romanian Speakers: 477,000+

- Fun Fact: Shares language roots with Italian, French, and Latin! So romantic!
- Translation Tip: Clear diacritics are vital (ă, ș, ț).
- Business Culture: Formal, but warm once relationships form.

## Punjabi Speakers: 313,000+

- Fun Fact: Written in two scripts, Gurmukhi (India) and Shahmukhi (Pakistan).
- Translation Tip: Specify script when commissioning translation.
- Business Culture: Family and community are central in Punjabi culture.

## Urdu Speakers: 292,000+

- Fun Fact: Shares script with Persian and Arabic; known for poetic expressions.
- Translation Tip: Direction matters in reading and writing (right-to-left).
- Business Culture: Formal greetings and titles are a must.

## Portuguese Speakers: 229,000+

- Fun Fact: Spoken on 4 continents.
- Translation Tip: European and Brazilian Portuguese are different from each other!
- Business Culture: Formality varies by region; be sure to confirm customs.

## Spanish Speakers: 228,000+

- Fun Fact: The second most spoken native language globally.
- Translation Tip: Choose European vs. Latin American Spanish wisely.
- Business Culture: Friendly, personal, often informal but respectful.

## Arabic Speakers: 225,000+

- Fun Fact: Arabic is written right-to-left and has a script that changes form based on letter position.
- Translation Tip: Modern Standard Arabic is used for formal writing; dialects are used in speech.
- Business Culture: Respect, modesty, and religious sensitivity matter.

## Bengali Speakers: 199,000+

- Fun Fact: Bengali has its own script and is known for its rich literary heritage.
- Translation Tip: Sylheti/Chatgaya are mainly spoken dialects, and not usually written.
- Business Culture: Community and family are central.

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## Scots (Ulster) Speakers: 190,000+

- Fun Fact: A recognised minority language under the European Charter.
- Translation Tip: Primarily used in cultural, literary, and community contexts.
- Business Culture: Tailor your message to reflect pride in cultural heritage and regional nuances.

## Gujarati Speakers: 188,000+

- Fun Fact: Language of Mahatma Gandhi.
- Translation Tip: A distinct script; don't confuse it with Hindi.
- Business Culture: Extended family are often part of business decisions.

## Chinese Speakers (Mandarin/Cantonese): 145,000+

- Fun Fact: Mandarin primarily uses simplified characters, while Cantonese uses traditional ones.
- Translation Tip: Clarify the target audience's dialect & script to ensure good communication.
- Business Culture: Business culture emphasises respect, hierarchy, and indirect communication.

## Italian Speakers: 168,000+

- Fun Fact: Italian only has 21 letters in its alphabet.
- Translation Tip: Italian translations are often more 'wordy', especially in legal or technical documents.
- Business Culture: Politeness, punctuality, and appearance all matter in Italian business culture—dress well and speak with respect.

## French Speakers: 132,000+

- Fun Fact: French has influenced around 40% of English vocabulary.
- Translation Tip: Often longer than English in translation; design and layout adjustments may be needed.
- Business Culture: Values formality, precision, and politeness.

## Lithuanian Speakers: 128,000+

- Fun Fact: Lithuanian is one of the oldest surviving Indo-European languages.
- Translation Tip: Diacritics like *ą*, *č*, *ė*, and *ū* are crucial.
- Business Culture: Direct and practical, with a strong preference for clarity and professionalism.

## Tamil Speakers: 125,000+

- Fun Fact: One of the oldest living languages.
- Translation Tip: Ensure accurate representation of the script and cultural references.
- Business Culture: Respect for elders and formal greetings are important in Tamil culture.

## Bulgarian Speakers: 115,000+

- Fun Fact: Nodding your head means "no", and shaking it means "yes".
- Translation Tip: Definite articles come after the noun, not before - 'the book' becomes 'book the'.
- Business Culture: Formality matters—wait for your host to initiate anything.

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## Turkish Speakers: 112,000+

- Fun Fact: Turkish used the Arabic script until 1928.
- Translation Tip: Vowel harmony and suffixes make for long words; be prepared!
- Business Culture: Hospitality matters; offer tea!

## Hindi Speakers: 100,000+

- Fun Fact: Uses the Devanagari script and shares some grammar with Sanskrit.
- Translation Tip: Be aware of the many dialects and honorifics.
- Business Culture: Politeness and structure are key.

## Persian (Farsi): 87,000+

- Fun Fact: Persian predates Arabic in literary history.
- Translation Tip: Farsi is a “right-to-left” language, and poetic where context is key.
- Business Culture: Politeness, non-confrontation, and diplomacy.

## Russian Speakers: 98,000+

- Fun Fact: Russian uses the Cyrillic alphabet and has no articles (like “a” or “the”).
- Translation Tip: Space out your text—Russian can expand up to 20% longer than English.
- Business Culture: Formality is key; use titles and surnames unless invited otherwise.

## How Atlas Translations Can Help

From on-demand interpreting via a phone call to polished, culturally-accurate translations and localisations, Atlas Translations has over 30 years of experience helping businesses communicate clearly and respectfully in over 300 languages.

**Are you ready to make your message multilingual? Contact us today at [team@atlas-translations.co.uk](mailto:team@atlas-translations.co.uk) or +44 (0)1727 812725**

- [England & Wales Office for National Statistics: Census 2021](#)
- [Scotland's Census 2022: Main Language](#)
- [Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency: Census 2021](#)

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