

Prepared by Jack Lynch, jlynch@andromeda.nyu.edu

## Official statistics

If you are looking for official statistics, **the Defense Language Institute** ( *CIA's foreign language teacher* ) has divided the language into four categories, including **type 1** which is **the easiest** and **type 4** is **The most difficult** for English speakers.

1. **Type 1** : Spanish, Italian, French, Portuguese
2. **Type 2** : German, Indonesian
3. **Type 3** : Hebrew, Hindi (Sanskrit), Persian, Russian, Serbian, Tagalog, Thai, Urdu, Turkish .
4. **Type 4** : Mandarin Chinese (Chinese), Korean, Japanese, Arabic .

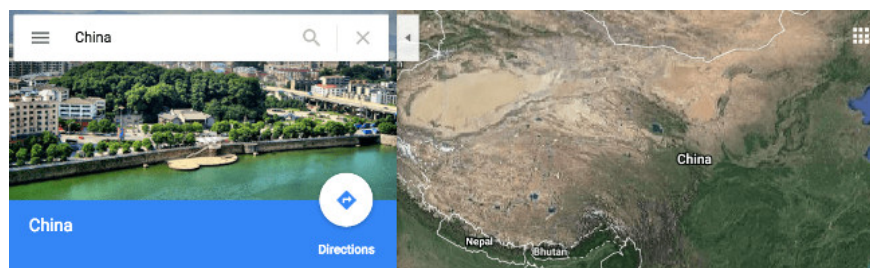
## Top 7 most difficult languages ??for English speakers:



In this article, we will provide you with a complete list and details explaining why this is so. Let's find out and comment in the section below about the challenges you are having while learning these languages!

## 1. Mandarin Chinese (China)

1. **Native people** : 1.2 billion people
2. **The country with the most users** : China

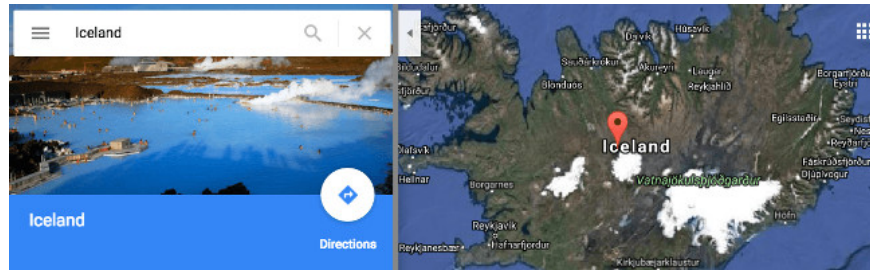


**Why is it difficult** : Perhaps this is the most spoken language in the world, but it makes it difficult for English speakers. Mandarin is a monophonic language, just a change in intonation can completely change the meaning of the sentence.

Moreover, the complex writing system with thousands of characters plus the rich and diverse letters is the reason that makes it **one of the most difficult languages ??in the world** .

## 2. Icelandic

1. **Number of native speakers** : 330,000 people
2. **The country has the most users** : Iceland

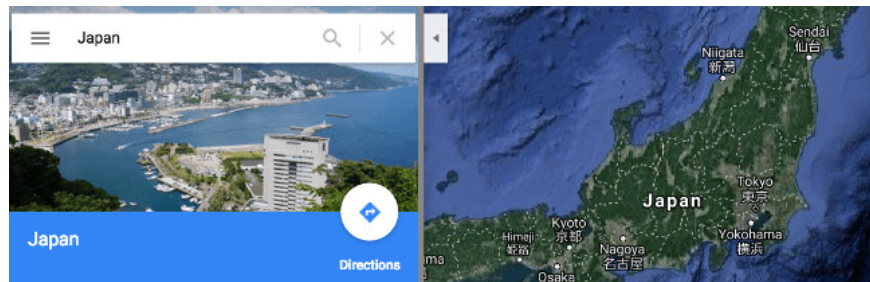


**Why is it difficult** : Although Icelandic has not changed much since the island nation was founded in the ninth and twentieth centuries, it **continues to add new meanings to old words** .

Besides, another difficulty comes from the fact that there are less than 400,000 native speakers so that people can study and practice with them.

### 3. Japanese

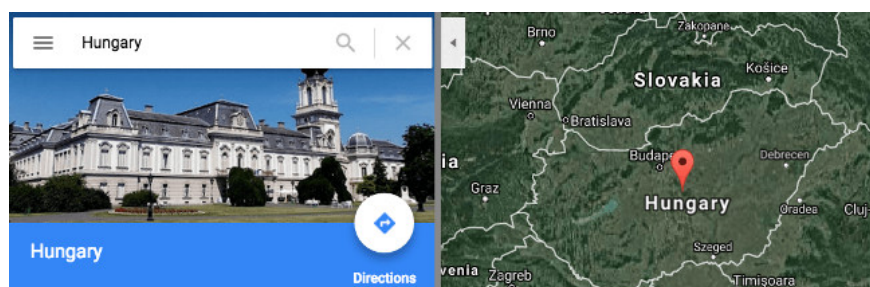
1. **Number of native speakers** : 112 million people
2. **The country with the most users** : Japan



**Why is it difficult** : Japanese has 3 independent alphabets: **hiragana** , **katakana** and **kanji** . Before starting to write, Japanese learners need to learn thousands of characters in these alphabets. However, it is comforting that it is still easier to learn than Chinese.

### 4. Hungarian

1. **Number of native speakers** : 13 million people
2. **The country with the most users** : Hungary

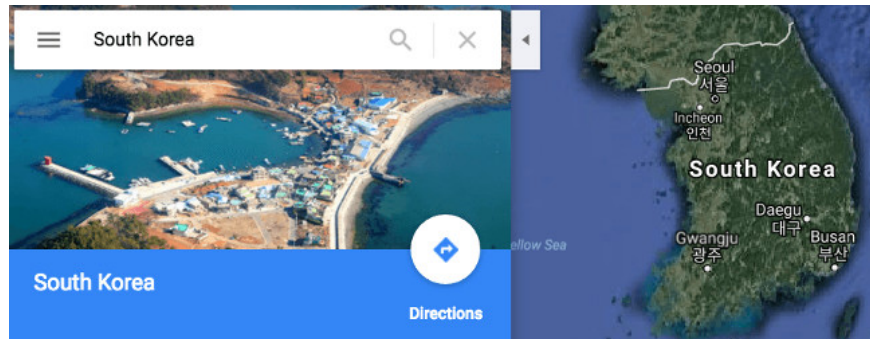


**Why is it difficult** : Most of the spoken languages ??in Europe belong to the **Indo-European** language system, but Hungarian belongs to the **Finno-Urgic** ( *Finnish-Urgic* ) language group, in which the Words are formed separately.

In other words, it is not the same as the word or sentence structure in English. For example, with the phrase ' with my [female] friend ' ( for you [my girl] ) it is combined into a single word ' *barátn?mmel* '. Scary?

## 5. Korean

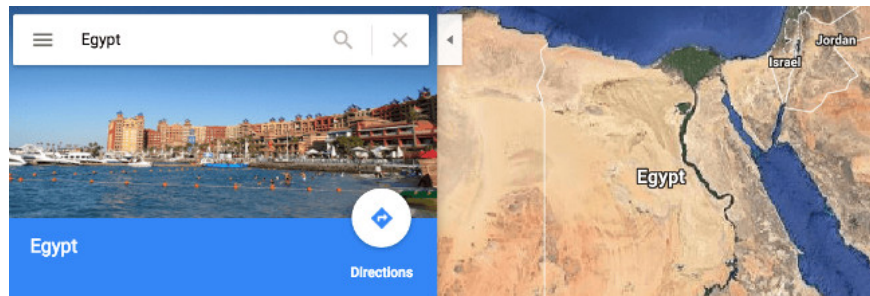
1. **Number of native speakers** : 66.3 million people
2. **The country with the most users** : South Korea



**Why is it difficult** : Korean is an isolated language, meaning it has no connection with any language group. Moreover, Korean has **seven different levels of pronunciation that vary** depending on the form.

## 6. Arabic

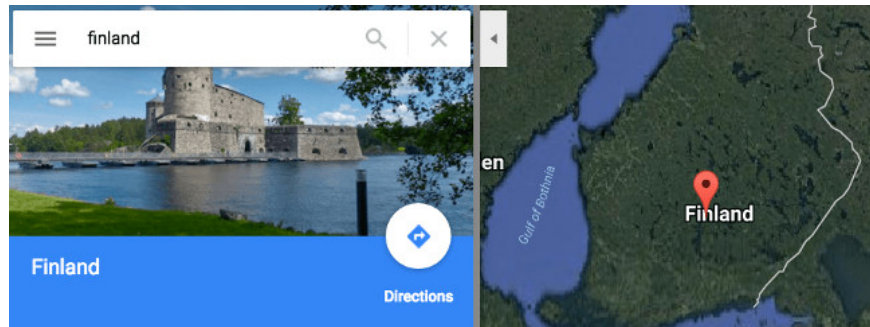
1. **Native people** : 221 million
2. **The country with the most users** : Egypt



**Why is it difficult** : Although there are 221 million native speakers to exchange learning, Arabic is still one of the most difficult languages. The first is that its writing does not have vowels. Moreover, most Arabic letters are written in four different forms depending on the location of the word.

## 7. Finnish

1. **Number of native speakers** : 5.4 million
2. **The country with the most users** : Finland



**Why is it difficult** : Have you seen the movie ' *Lord of The Rings - Lord of the Rings* '? Finnish is the basis for **JRR Tolkien** author to build Elvish language.

Finnish, like Hungarian, is a **Finno-Ugric** language ( *Finnish-Urgic* ), in which **the complexity of grammar is no limit** . And when you can smoothly translate Finnish to English, you will quickly discover that modern Finnish speakers have a different way of expressing emotions than traditional translations!

## Advice

Note that the most difficult language to learn with English speakers **depends on many different factors** , not just one. The number of speakers, language origin, similarity with English and other factors contribute to determining the level of difficulty you will encounter in your studies.

The important thing here is not ' *the most difficult language to learn* '. It's when you decide how to learn a language, how passionate you are, how you face the anxiety and how you need help.

**Each language has its own challenges, but it is accompanied by worthy rewards, experiences and satisfaction when completed. Remember, no matter which language you decide to study, the time you spend on it is worth it.**

See also: The secret of effective language learning from a 35-year-old man who speaks 11 languages

Having fun!

You finished reading the article "**Top 7 most difficult languages ??for English speakers**" edited by the [TipsMake](#) team. We hope this article has provided you with many useful tech tips and tricks. You can search for similar articles on tips and guides. Thank you for reading and for following us regularly.