

new york minute

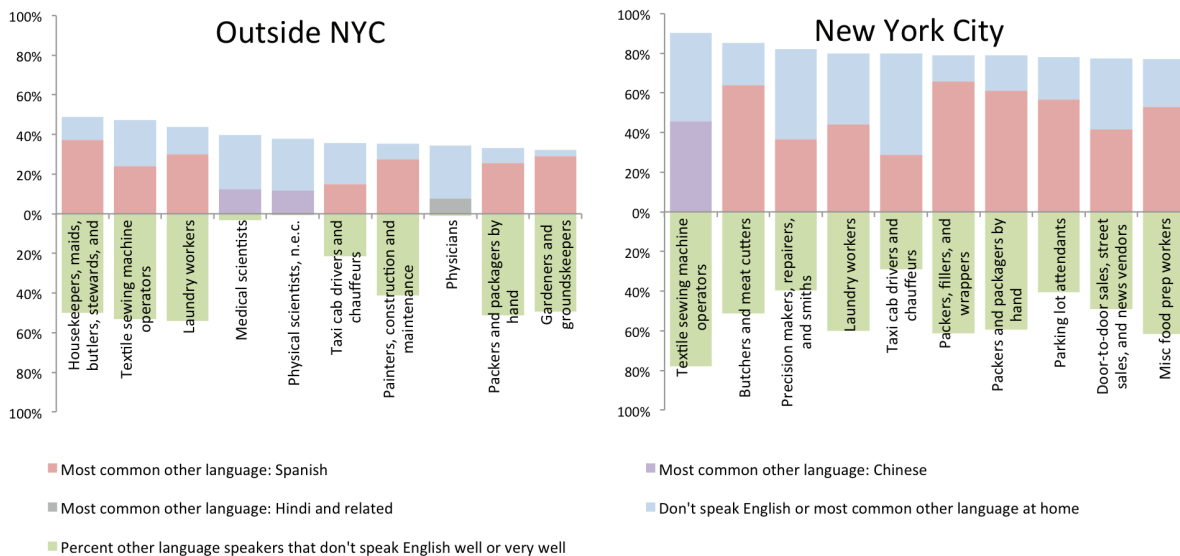
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Language spoken at home, English language proficiency and occupations in NYS

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English language proficiency can impact employment status, occupational aspirations and earnings. English-only speakers and people who speak English “very well” typically have higher employment rates, are more likely to work full time, and report higher median earnings. But even those that speak English well may speak another language at home, and this varies by occupation. In New York State (NYS), 29% of the employed population (age 16+) speaks a language other than English at home; 48% in New York City (NYC) and 16% outside of NYC.

To look at variation across occupations, we examined occupations with the highest percentages of persons that don’t speak English at home (analysis was limited to occupations with at least 5,000 persons). English language proficiency also differs within and between occupations. Persons employed as housekeepers outside of NYC are most likely to speak a language other than English at home (49%), with 37% of them speaking Spanish at home. In addition, 50% that speak another language at home don’t speak English well. In comparison, just 3% of medical scientists outside NYC who don’t speak English at home have problems with English proficiency. Chinese is the most commonly spoken language in this occupational group. The observed relationships between English speaking ability and occupation is largely due to the actual or perceived importance of English proficiency for job performance and the strong economic incentives in the labor market for matching these language skills and job requirements.



Source: 2008-2012 ACS PUMS.

For more detailed NYS data prepared by Cornell Program on Applied Demographics, visit:
<http://pad.human.cornell.edu/NYMinutes/NYMinute65stats.cfm>

¹ How Does Ability to Speak English Affect Earnings? Jennifer Cheeseman Day and Hyon B. Shin. Population Division, U.S. Census Bureau. http://www.census.gov/hhes/socdemo/language/data/acs/PAA_2005_AbilityandEarnings.pdf

² Occupational Language Requirements and the Value of English in the U.S. Labor Market, by Barry R. Chiswick and Paul W. Miller. Discussion Paper Series, IZA DP No. 2664. March 2007. <http://ftp.iza.org/dp2664.pdf>

