According to the 2009 Census of Mali, the country has 15 major languages. Bambara is spoken by half of the population as their first language and is the most widely spoken language in the country. Despite not being listed as a possible first language in the census, French is Mali's official language, and is part of the standard school curriculum. Bambara, French, Fula, and Songhay are used as lingua franca in different regions of the country.