Person—first language spoken, code (ASCL 2011) NN{NN}

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Person—first language spoken, code (ASCL 2011) NN{NN}

Identifying and definitional attributes

Metadata item type:	Data Element
Short name:	First language spoken
METEOR identifier:	460120
Registration status:	Health!, Standard 13/10/2011 Community Services (retired), Standard 13/10/2011 Housing assistance, Standard 13/10/2011 [Non Dictionary] Disability, Standard 13/08/2015 Homelessness, Superseded 10/08/2018 [Non Dictionary]
Definition:	The language the person identifies as being the first language that they could understand to the extent of being able to conduct a conversation, as represented by a code.
Data Element Concept:	Person—first language spoken
Value Domain:	Language code (ASCL 2011) NN{NN}

Value domain attributes

Representational attributes

Classification scheme:	Australian Standard Classification of Languages 2011
Representation class:	Code
Data type:	Number
Format:	NN{NN}
Maximum character length:	4

Collection and usage attributes

Guide for use:	The Australian Standard Classification of Languages (ASCL) has a three-level hierarchical structure. The most detailed level of the classification consists of base units (languages) which are represented by four-digit codes. The second level of the classification comprises narrow groups of languages (the Narrow group level), identified by the first two digits. The most general level of the classification consists of broad groups of languages (the Broad group level) and is identified by the first digit. The classification includes Australian Indigenous languages and sign languages.
	For example, the Lithuanian language has a code of 3102. In this case 3 denotes that it is an Eastern European language, while 31 denotes that it is a Baltic language. The Pintupi Aboriginal language is coded as 8713. In this case 8 denotes that it is an Australian Indigenous language and 87 denotes that the language is a Western Desert language.
	Language data may be output at the Broad group level, Narrow group level or base level of the classification. If necessary, significant languages within a Narrow group can be presented separately while the remaining languages in the Narrow group are aggregated. The same principle can be adopted to highlight significant Narrow groups within a Broad group.

Data element attributes

Collection and usage attributes

Collection methods:	Data should be captured, classified and stored at the base level of the classification wherever possible as this allows the greatest flexibility for output.

Recommended question:

Which language did you/did the person/did (name)/will (name of child under two years) first speak as a child?

While agencies are encouraged to use the recommended question described above, it is acknowledged that this is not always possible in practice. For example, where the data collection is a by-product of the provision of a health or community service, the information may be ascertained using different means. However, this standard should be used wherever practically possible.

Response options for detailed data:

Alternative 1

> English []
> Mandarin []
> Italian []
> Arabic []
> Cantonese []
> Greek []
> Vietnamese []
> Spanish []
> Hindi []
> Tagalog []
> Other - please specify ....

The above list includes languages based on their statistical significance in the Australian context. The list is reviewed when data indicate that different languages have been more or less frequently reported in the Census of Population and Housing.

Alternative 2

> English []
> Other - please specify ....

Response option for minimum data:

> English []
> Other []

Comments:	Persons whose first language is not English have been identified by service providers as a population group that may experience disadvantage when seeking to obtain equal access to government and community programs and services in Australia. Data relating to 'First language spoken' may thus provide a surrogate indicator of disadvantage potentially associated with a lack of English competence or with other factors associated with cultural background.

The ABS Language Standards, 2012, Version 1.1 (cat. no. 1200.0.55.005) was released in September 2012. The recommended question recognises children under two years of age.

Source and reference attributes

Origin:	Australian Bureau of Statistics 2011. Australian Standard Classification of Languages (ASCL) 2011. Cat. no. 1267.0. Canberra: ABS.

Reference documents:	Australian Bureau of Statistics 2012. Language Standards, 2012, Version 1.1. Cat. no. 1200.0.55.05. Canberra: ABS.

Relational attributes

Related metadata references:

Supersedes [Person—first language spoken, code (ASCL 2005) NN{NN}](#)
[Community Services (retired)](#), Superseded 13/10/2011
[Health!](#), Superseded 13/10/2011
[Housing assistance](#), Superseded 30/05/2013

See also [Person—main language other than English spoken at home, code (ASCL 2011) NN{NN}](#)
[Children and Families](#), Superseded 20/01/2021
[Community Services (retired)](#), Standard 13/10/2011
[Disability](#), Standard 13/08/2015
[Health!](#), Superseded 25/01/2018
[Homelessness](#), Superseded 10/08/2018
[Housing assistance](#), Standard 13/10/2011

See also [Person—main language spoken at home, code (ASCL 2011) NN{NN}](#)
[Health!](#), Recorded 24/04/2014

See also [Person—proficiency in spoken English, code N](#)
[Homelessness](#), Standard 10/08/2018

See also [Person—proficiency in spoken English, code N](#)
[Community Services (retired)](#), Standard 01/03/2005
[Disability](#), Standard 13/08/2015
[Health!](#), Standard 01/03/2005
[Housing assistance](#), Standard 10/02/2006

Implementation in Data Set Specifications:

[Cultural and language diversity cluster](#)
[Community Services (retired)](#), Standard 10/04/2013
[Disability](#), Standard 13/08/2015