

Person—first language spoken, code (ASCL 1997) N[NNN]

Identifying and definitional attributes

Metadata item type:	Data Element
Short name:	First language spoken
METEOR identifier:	270306
Registration status:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Community Services (retired), Superseded 29/04/2006• Housing assistance, Superseded 10/02/2006

Data Element Concept: [Person—first language spoken](#)

Value domain attributes

Representational attributes

Classification scheme:	Australian Standard Classification of Languages 1997
Representation class:	Code
Data type:	Number
Format:	N[NNN]
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 Indigenous Australian 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 has a code of 8217. In this case 8 denotes that it is an Australian Indigenous language and 82 denotes that the language is Central Aboriginal.

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.


The recommended question is: Which language did you/the person/name first speak as a child?

To be followed by either a set of 'most likely' languages with tick boxes and an 'Other -please specify' response category for writing a language not specified in the tick box list; or a tick box for 'English' and an 'Other - please specify' response category.

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.

Relational attributes

Related metadata references:

Supersedes  [First language spoken, version 2, DE, NCSDD, NCSIMG, Superseded 01/03/2005.pdf](#) (18.0 KB) *No registration status*

Has been superseded by [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