
First language spoken

Important note: This is an archived metadata standard from the AIHW Knowledgebase. For current metadata standards and related information please access METeOR, the AIHW's Metadata Online Registry at <http://meteor.aihw.gov.au>

Identifying and Definitional Attributes

Data Dictionary: NCSDD
Knowledgebase ID: 000519 Version number: 2
Metadata type: DATA ELEMENT
Registration Authority: NCSIMG Admin status: SUPERSEDED
 Effective date: 01-MAR-05

Definition: The language the person identifies, or remembers, as being the first language that they could understand to the extent of being able to conduct a conversation.

Context: 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.

Relational and Representational Attributes

Datatype: Numeric
Representational form: CODE
Representation layout: N(NNN)
Minimum Size: 1
Maximum Size: 4

Data Domain: NOVAL Refer to the ABS Australian Standard Classification of Languages, 1997, Cat. no. 1267.0 for details.

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.

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.

Related metadata: supersedes previous data element First language spoken version 1

Administrative Attributes

Source Document: Australian Bureau of Statistics 1997. Australian Standard Classification of Languages, Australia 1997. Cat. no. 1267.0. Canberra: ABS.
Reference through:
<<http://www.abs.gov.au/Ausstats/abs@.nsf/StatsLibrary>>. Select ABS classifications.
Australian Bureau of Statistics 1999. Standards for Statistics on Cultural and Language Diversity. Cat. no. 1289.0 Canberra: ABS.
Reference through
<<http://www.abs.gov.au/Ausstats/abs@.nsf/StatsLibrary>>. Select Other ABS Statistical Standards.

Source Organisation: Australian Bureau of Statistics

Data Element Links

Information Model Entities linked to this Data Element

NCSIM Social-cultural characteristic

Data Agreements which include this Data Element
