

## Immigrant Languages



Statistics Canada released data on linguistic characteristics of Canadians from the 2011 Census. However, since the language questions were presented in a different context than they were in previous censuses, there are problems in how Canadians reported their mother tongue and home language. This has prompted Statistics Canada to issue a warning stating that data users are advised to exercise caution when evaluating trends related to mother tongue and home language that compare 2011 census data to those of previous censuses.<sup>1</sup> In view of this caution, this note looks at the language characteristics of Halton residents as recorded in the 2011 census without making any comparison with previous censuses.

In order to reflect the growing complexity of the Canadian linguistic reality, Statistics Canada has also introduced the term “immigrant languages” to refer to languages (other than English, French and Aboriginal languages) whose presence in Canada is due to immigration.<sup>2</sup>

In 2011, there were over 100,000 Halton residents who identified an immigrant language as their mother tongue, which is the first language learned at home in childhood and still understood. Over one in five (21%) of the population speaks one of the seventy immigrant languages in Halton. This ratio is the third highest among Ontario municipalities of similar size as Halton, after Brampton (43%) and Hamilton (23%).

The top five mother tongues that are an immigrant language are: Polish, Spanish, Italian, Portuguese and Urdu. Collectively, these are spoken by over 7% (36,000 persons) of Halton residents or 35% of immigrant mother tongue residents. Spanish and Italian were also among the top five immigrant languages spoken in Ontario and GTHA (Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area – which includes Durham, York, Toronto, Peel, Halton and Hamilton).

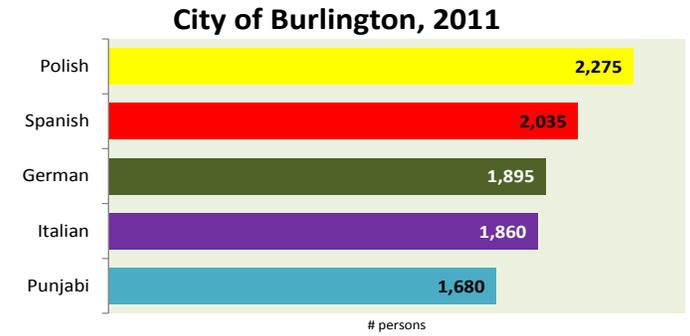
Top Five Immigrant Mother Tongues (as a percentage of total population)		
Halton	Ontario	GTHA (Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area)
Polish (1.7%)	Italian (1.9%)	Italian (2.8%)
Spanish (1.6%)	Chinese n.o.s. (1.5%)	Cantonese (2.6%)
Italian (1.5%)	Cantonese (1.4%)	Chinese n.o.s. (2.5%)
Portuguese (1.4%)	Spanish (1.4%)	Punjabi (2.4%)
Urdu (1.3%)	Punjabi (1.3%)	Spanish (2%)

*n.o.s. - not otherwise specified*  
Source: Statistics Canada, 2011 Census

1 <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/daily-quotidien/121024/dq121024a-eng.htm>  
2 Statistics Canada, Linguistic Characteristics of Canadians, Language, 2011 Census of Population, Catalogue no. 98-314-X2011001

## City of Burlington

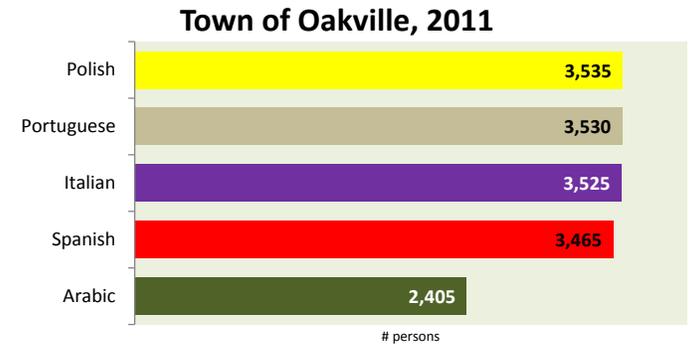
About 16% of the Burlington residents speak an immigrant language. Polish is the most spoken language followed by Spanish, German, Italian and Punjabi. Although German is not in the top five immigrant mother tongues in Halton, Burlington has one of the largest German speaking populations in Halton. Burlington has the second largest Punjabi speaking community next to Oakville.



Source: Statistics Canada, 2011 Census

## Town of Oakville

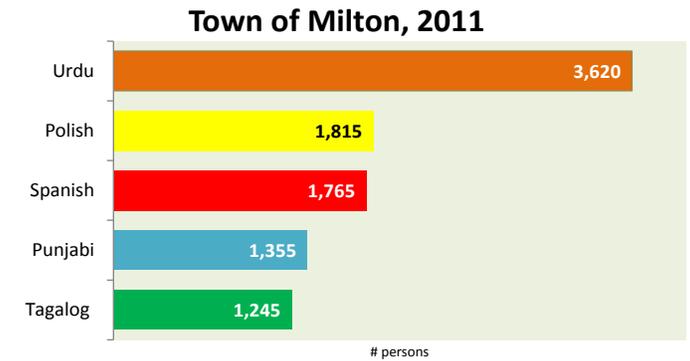
The Towns of Oakville and Milton are the two most linguistically diverse municipalities in Halton. Oakville has the highest number and proportion of immigrant mother tongues. About 46% of Halton's immigrant language speaking population lives in Oakville. One in four Oakville residents (26%) speaks an immigrant language. Polish, Portuguese, Italian and Spanish rank equally among the top immigrant languages. There were three immigrant mother tongues (Arabic, Punjabi and Korean) with more than 2,000 persons.



Source: Statistics Canada, 2011 Census

## Town of Milton

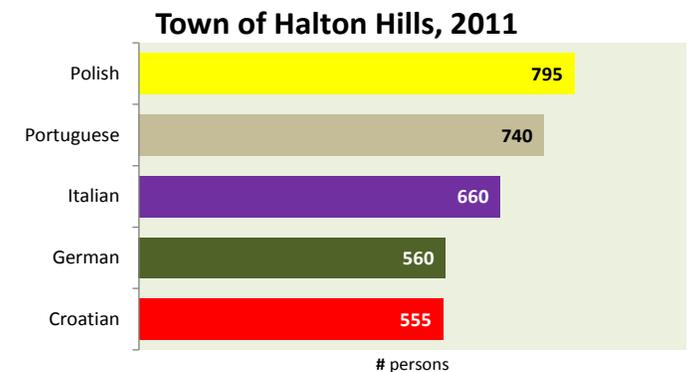
Similar to Oakville, one in four Milton residents (26%) speaks an immigrant language. Polish and Spanish are also two of the top five immigrant languages. In Milton, the most spoken immigrant language is Urdu. Urdu is the national language of Pakistan and is also widely spoken in India where it is an official language in five states. In fact, Milton has the largest Urdu speaking community (58%) in Halton.



Source: Statistics Canada, 2011 Census

## Town of Halton Hills

About 10% of Halton Hills resident speaks an immigrant language. Its proportion of immigrant mother tongues is the lowest among the four local municipalities. The top five immigrant languages represent over half (52%) of all the immigrant languages spoken in Halton Hills.



Source: Statistics Canada, 2011 Census

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