ISO 639-3 Registration Authority

Request for Change to ISO 639-3 Language Code

Date: 16 October 2006

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Do not be concerned about your responses causing the form text spacing or pagination to change. Use Shift-Enter to insert a new line in a form field (where allowed)

Types of change requests

This form is to be used in requesting changes (whether creation, modification, or deletion) to elements of the ISO 639 Codes for the representation of names of languages — Part 3: Alpha-3 code for comprehensive coverage of languages. The types of changes that are possible are to 1) modify the reference information for an existing code element, 2) retire a code element from use, including merging its scope of denotation into that of another code element, 3) split an existing code element into two or more separate language code elements, or 4) create a new code element. Fill out section 1, 2, 3, or 4 below as appropriate, plus section 5 to document the sources of your information. The process by which a change is received, reviewed and adopted is summarized on the final page of this form.

For changes of type 1, 2 or 3 (proposing a change to an existing code), please identify:

Affected ISO 639-3 identifier: yib
Associated reference name: Yinglish

1. Modify an existing language code element

   (a) What are you proposing to change:

      ☐ Language name
      ☐ Language type (living, extinct, historical, etc.)
      ☐ Language scope (individual language or macrolanguage)

   (b) What new value(s) do you propose:
(c) **Rationale for change:**

2. **Retire a language code element from use**

   (a) **Reason for change:**
   
   - ![ ] There is no evidence that the language exists.
   - ![ ] This is equivalent to another ISO 639-3 language.
   - ![ ] This is a variety that is fully intelligible with another ISO 639-3 language and should be merged with it.

   (b) If one of the latter two reasons, with which ISO 639-3 code element (identifier and name) should it be merged: eng

   (c) **Rationale for change:**

   I do not believe that there exists evidence justifying the treatment of Yinglish as a separate language from English, rather than a dialect with Yiddish-derived vocabulary and occasional aberrant Yiddish-derived syntax. The differences between English and Yinglish are simply not comparable to the differences between German and Yiddish or Spanish and Ladino.

   In fact, Yinglish fits smoothly into the English dialect continuum. Yinglish is readily understood by speakers of plain English, provided the lexical items are explained, and even some of them have now entered the lexicon of colloquial American English, as your mavin Joshua Fishman notes. If there are enough unusual items, as in Yeshiva English, the speech may be unintelligible to the uninstructed listener, but no more so than the technical talk of pilots, doctors, or computer programmers. (Some borrowed words have un-English phonologies, but so do "Bach" and "oeuvre" as pronounced by many English speakers.)

   Furthermore, U.S. and U.K. Yinglish are about as different as U.S. and U.K. English, though segregating the first two into a separate language would lead us to expect that they would stand together as against non-Jewish dialects of English. Orthographically (which is relevant to the sociolinguistics), Yinglish is invariably written in Latin script using mostly English conventions, quite unlike the various Jewish languages, which are mostly written in Hebrew script using their own conventions.

   Finally, the Ethnologue claim that Yinglish is "a second language only" is misleading. It is not a *second* language which some English-speakers also command; it is for the most part the particular way in which those English-speakers speak their first language, English. (There are some Yinglish-speakers whose first
language is not English, of course.) Furthermore, the number and variety of Yinglish features in a particular speaker's speech (or writing) is under direct control: one can use more or fewer of them as appropriate. I've used only one in this letter.

(On a separate note, the term "Ameridish", listed in the Ethnologue as a synonym for Yinglish, wasn't originally meant to be: it was coined by Rosten to refer to Eastern Yiddish as spoken in the United States, with English lexical influences. He occasionally lost track of his own distinction, defining "opstairsiker/keh" as Yinglish and "donstairsiker/keh" as Ameridish for upstairs and downstairs neighbor respectively; both terms can be seen as either. But then again, Samuel Johnson defined "windward" and "leeward" the same way!)

3. Split a language code element into two or more code elements

(a) List the languages into which this code element should be split:

By the language identification criteria set forth in ISO 639-3, the simple fact of distinct identities is not enough to assign separate identifiers. The criteria are defined in the standard as follows:

For this part of ISO 639, judgments regarding when two varieties are considered to be the same or different languages are based on a number of factors, including linguistic similarity, intelligibility, a common literature (traditional or written), a common writing system, the views of users concerning the relationship between language and identity, and other factors. The following basic criteria are followed:

- Two related varieties are normally considered varieties of the same language if users of each variety have inherent understanding of the other variety (that is, can understand based on knowledge of their own variety without needing to learn the other variety) at a functional level.

- Where intelligibility between varieties is marginal, the existence of a common literature or of a common ethnolinguistic identity with a central variety that both understand can be strong indicators that they should nevertheless be considered varieties of the same language.

- Where there is enough intelligibility between varieties to enable communication, the existence of well-established distinct ethnolinguistic identities can be a strong indicator that they should nevertheless be considered to be different languages.

(b) Referring to the criteria given above, give the rationale for splitting the existing code element into two or more languages:
(c) Does the language code element to be split represent a major language in which there already exists a significant body of literature and research? Are there contexts in which all the proposed separate languages may still be considered the same language—as in having a common linguistic identity, a shared (or undistinguished) body of literature, a written form in common, etc.? If so, please comment.

In order to complete the change request, the form “Request for New Language Code Element in ISO 639-3” (file name “ISO639-3_NewCodeRequestForm.doc” or “ISO639-3_NewCodeRequestForm.rtf”) must also be submitted for each new identifier that is to be created. That step can be deferred until this form has been processed by the ISO 639-3 registrar.

4. Create a new language code element

(a) Name of missing language:

(b) State the case that this language is not the same as or has not been included within any language that already has an identifier in ISO 639-3:

In order to complete the change request, the form “Request for New Language Code Element in ISO 639-3” (file name “ISO639-3_NewCodeRequest.doc” or “ISO639-3_NewCodeRequestForm.rtf”) must also be submitted to more fully document the new language.

5. Sources of information

Please use whichever of the points below are relevant in order to document the sources on which you have based the above proposal.

(a) First-hand knowledge. Describe:
   I am a native speaker of English living in New York City, where the English even of non-Jews contains many Yiddish lexical features, and I have studied Yiddish-in-English informally for many years, including direct experience with Yinglish speakers. I am not a speaker of Yiddish.

(b) Knowledge through personal communication. Describe:

(c) Knowledge from published sources (please give complete bibliographical references):
The change proposal process

A request to change the code set goes through a five step process:

1. A user of ISO 639-3 proposes a change and submits it to the ISO 639-3 Registration Authority (ISO 639-3/RA) using this form.

2. The ISO 639-3 registrar processes the change request to verify that the request is compatible with the criteria set forth in the standard and to ensure that the submitter has supplied all necessary information. This may involve rounds of interaction with the submitter.

3. When the change request proposal is deemed to be sufficiently complete in its documentation (including all associated New Code Requests), the change request is promoted to “Proposed Change” status and the ISO 639-3 registrar posts the request on the official web site of the ISO 639-3/RA. Also at this time, an announcement is sent to appropriate discussion lists (those which express in their statement of purpose an interest in the language or language family in focus in the proposal, inviting individuals to review and comment on the proposal. The source of list information is the LinguistList Mailing List index, http://cf.linguistlist.org/cfdocs/new-website/LL-WorkingDirs/lists/index.html. Responses are sent to the ISO 639-3 registrar for compilation. The consensus of reviews may result in promotion to “Candidate Status” (with or without amendment), or withdrawal of the change request, if the conclusion is that the request is not in keeping with the stated criteria of the ISO 639-3 standard.

4. Three months prior to the end of the annual cycle of review and update, a new notice is posted on the official web site of the ISO 639-3/RA, and an announcement listing the Candidate Status Change Requests is posted to LINGUIST, http://linguistlist.org/issues/index.html, and other general language and linguistics discussion lists, as well as lists relating to specific languages or language families. All change requests are then open to further review and comment by any interested party for a period of three months.

5. At the end of the formal review period, a given Change Request may be: 1) adopted as a whole, 2) adopted in part (specific changes implicit in the whole Change Request may be adopted separately), 3) amended and resubmitted for the next review cycle, or 4) withdrawn from consideration. All change requests remain permanently archived at the official web site of the ISO 639-3/RA.

Please return this form to:
ISO 639-3 Registrar
SIL International, Office of Language Information Systems
7500 West Camp Wisdom Road
Dallas, Texas 75236 USA
E-mail: iso639-3@sil.org

An email attachment of this completed form is preferred.

Sources of documentation for ISO 639-3 identifiers:

