Comments received for
ISO 639-3 Change Request
2007-183

Outcome: Adopted with amendment
Effective date: 18 February, 2008
Registration Authority decision on Change Request no. 2007-183: Adopt the requested change to retire Malay (individual language) [mly] and split it into four varieties, with amendment:

- **Standard Malay [zsm]:** adopted
- **Papuan Malay [pmy]:** adopted
- **Haji [hji]:** adopted
- **Malay (individual language) [zlm]:** adopted (but not with name Local Malay, as requested)

The code element Malay (individual language) [mly] already is a member of the macrolanguage group Malay (macrolanguage) [msa/may]; though now retired, its membership mapping is retained. Three of the constituents of this split, Standard Malay [zsm], Haji [hji], and Malay (individual language) [zlm] are also to be added as members to this macrolanguage group. The addition of Papuan Malay will be taken under consideration as a part of the review of the whole Malay macrolanguage group (see below).

An additional goal of the change request was to document the existing code elements with which [mly] overlapped, due to the problem of duplicate listing in the Ethnologue 15th ed. (see discussion below). The existing entries affected by this implicit overlapped with [mly] are:

- Bakumpai [bkr]
- Bangka [mfb] *(2007-180)*
- Banjar [bhn]
- Basap [bdb]
- Betawi [bew]
- Kaur [vkk]
- Kedah Malay [meo]
- Kupang Malay [mkn]
- Makassar Malay [mfp]
- Malayic Dayak [xdy]
- Manado Malay [xmm]
- Musi [mui] *(2007-182)*
- Pattani Malay [mfa]
- Peranakan Indonesian [pea]

The two noted with change request numbers were also updated in this 2007 round of change requests.

**RECOMMENDED ACTION REGARDING RETIRED CODE ELEMENT [mly]:**

Map an existing application onto one of the four individual languages from the split, or to the appropriate existing code element, in cases where a variety was listed as a dialect of Malay while also already having a separate code element, as noted above (see the change request for more information regarding these).

Alternatively, a system administrator that is unable to determine the appropriate applications of individual code elements for individual cases may map such instances of [mly] use to the macrolanguage code [msa].

**DISCUSSION**

The request to split Malay (individual language) into four distinct languages is better considered as a request to clarify the intended meaning of the Malay (individual language) code element and add two languages to the ISO 639-3 code set that had previously been subsumed within [mly], but should be considered separate languages. The problem with [mly] relates to the broad denotation it has had as described in the Ethnologue 15th ed., where it is described as being used in five different countries, and among those countries lists roughly 30 dialects, including Papuan Malay, and Haji (Aji, as it is called in the Ethnologue entry). Standard Malay is listed as both a dialect and an alternate name. It is clearly desirable to have a distinct code element denoting Standard Malay (parallel to the situation of Standard Arabic) that is not confused by the inclusion of other...
Malay dialects that may in the future be determined to require separate code elements. Some of the listed dialects are already acknowledged to be distinct languages with their own code elements in the ISO 639-3 standard (and in the Ethnologue), and the inclusion of them as dialects of [mly] was an oversight in editing these complex entries. This change request enumerates these quite comprehensively, and the editor of the next edition of the Ethnologue is making a special effort to correct these conflicts. The remaining dialects described within [mly] can be grouped as follows:

1. Varieties that should be considered distinct languages (Papuan Malay and Haji);
2. Varieties that should be considered similar enough to other existing Malay languages and subsumed within their denotations (the change request enumerates these extensively, and several other 2007 series change requests act further to make these clarifications);
3. Varieties that are less differentiated, but still clearly distinguishable, from Standard Malay (the change request lists a number of these);
4. Varieties about which there is not enough data to make a linguistic determination at this time (the change request lists a few of these).

The last two groups in this list correspond to the grouping labeled as “Local Malay” in this request. Additional discussion with the requester established that enough is known about these varieties to identify them clearly as Malay, to assign population figures and regions of use, as well as membership within the genetic sub-group of “local Malay” (which also includes Haji, Central Malay [cf. 2007-179], and others). The main deliberation has been whether to assign a code element to this group separately from Standard Malay. While there is some degree of intelligibility, for some varieties, there is need for additional research. There is also a separation of identities, particularly for speakers of Malay that reside in Indonesia and clearly would not identify with speaking Standard Malay. Because of the expectation that future research may show some of these varieties to warrant code elements of their own, or possibly, to be better considered as being aligned with other existing “local Malay” languages, this code element is anticipated to be subject to future splits. It is therefore more desirable to have a distinct, stable code element for Standard Malay.

The use of the name “Local Malay” as a name to be used with the code element [zlm] for the language denoting these closely related varieties was felt to be prone to confusion with the term “local Malay” meaning the genetic subgroup (as in the above paragraph), which is a wider grouping of languages that are clearly distinguished from one another phonologically, morphologically, and lexically. It was therefore less desirable to use the name “Local Malay” than to retain the (admittedly cumbersome) “Malay (individual language),” since there is no single more precise name that aptly labels this group of largely intelligible Malay varieties, which are typically called just “Malay” by their speakers.

The change request also comments on the “somewhat random selection of Malay dialects as well as Malay trade languages and creoles” currently included in the Malay macrolanguage mapping. The ISO 639-3 Registration Authority will be undertaking to verify existing inclusions and add others currently excluded that should be considered members of the wider Malay language community.