Comments received for
ISO 639-3 Change Request
2008-017

Outcome: Adopted
Effective date: 2009-01-26
Registration Authority decision on Change Request no. 2008-017: to expand the denotation of the [nfd] Ndun code element with the merging of [nfg] Nyeng, [nfk] Shakara, and update the name to “Ahwai”.

The Registration Authority, in reviewing the requested change, noted that the request to merge these three language varieties into a single language code element was at odds with the conclusion of another researcher whose works are also cited in the request. In order to understand and assess these differing conclusions, the RA sought additional information from the requesters, asking them to supply more specific data from the survey of 2007 described in the change request. The requesters supplied the full report from the survey, written a short time after they had submitted the change request form. Three factors supported by the report: (1) the lexical data and analysis supplied in the report, (2) the self-identification of the speakers, that “It's the same language; only the intonation is different,” and (3) their assertion that they speak to one another each in his own dialect and are understood, are sufficient evidence to adopt the requested merge and assign one code element to identify “Ahwai”.

The following section on lexical similarity is excerpted from the unpublished report: “Sociolinguistic Survey of the Ahwai People, Kaduna State, Nigeria”, by Michael J. Rueck, Katarína Hannelová, and Zachariah Yoder, 1 August 2008. The report also included the full word lists and lexical analysis, as well as a letter from a leader within the “Ahwai Communities” substantiating the conclusions of the report. The authors have plans to submit the report for publication, but authorized this excerpt.

2.3.2 Lexical similarity results

Table 5 shows the percentage of similar words between pairs of wordlists. For example, 87% of the words compared between the Ankpong 1 and Ung. Dauda/Kako lists were similar. No claim is made about cognicity, as the historical-comparative method was not employed.

Table 5: Lexical similarity percentages between Ahwai dialects

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Ankpong 1 (Indung)</th>
<th>Ankara (Indung)</th>
<th>Ung. Dauda/Kako (Shakara)</th>
<th>Ung. Sarki (Shakara)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Inyeng</td>
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<td>96</td>
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<td>93</td>
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<td>93</td>
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<td>96</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

The lexical similarity percentages are consistent with the reported relationships between the varieties. All the varieties have a high lexical similarity (over 86%), which is consistent with the reported comprehension between all the dialects. Also, between Indung and Inyeng there is a higher similarity (93-96%) than between those dialects and the Shakara (86-88%). This corroborates the reports that Shakara had a “bigger difference,” though it was still understandable.