ISO 639-3 Registration Authority

Request for Change to ISO 639-3 Language Code

Date: 2011-1-18
Primary Person submitting request: David Thormoset
Affiliation: SIL Cameroon
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Names, affiliations and email addresses of additional supporters of this request:
Larry Seguin, Director of Language Services, SIL Cameroon
E-mail: dir hyphen langservices underscore cameroon at sil dot org

Postal address for primary contact person for this request (in general, email correspondence will be used):
SIL, BP 1299, Yaounde, CAMEROON

PLEASE NOTE: This completed form will become part of the public record of this change request and the history of the ISO 639-3 code set.

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) propose a new macrolanguage or modify a macrolanguage group; 3) retire a code element from use, including merging its scope of denotation into that of another code element, 4) split an existing code element into two or more new language code elements, or 5) create a new code element for a previously unidentified language variety. Fill out section 1, 2, 3, 4, or 5 below as appropriate, and the final section documenting 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.

Type of change proposed (check one):

1. ☒ Modify reference information for an existing language code element
2. □ Propose a new macrolanguage or modify a macrolanguage group
3. □ Retire a language code element from use
4. □ Split a language code element into two or more new code elements
5. □ Create a code element for a previously unidentified language

For proposing a change to an existing code element, please identify:

Affected ISO 639-3 identifier: mgg
Associated reference name: Mpongmpong

1. Modify an existing language code element

(a) What are you proposing to change:
   ☒ Language reference name
   □ Language additional names

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(b) What new value(s) do you propose: Mpumpong

(c) Rationale for change:
1. The Mpumpong paramount chief, His Royal Highness Mattieu Messabiem, and the president of the Mpumpong inter-church committee currently leading the language development/translation program have requested that the correct name be used for their language (letter attached).

2. The words "Canton Mpoumpong" (in French 'ou' = [u]) are found on the official village signboards, showing that the requested value more accurately reflects what is already in use by government authorities.

3. The current reference name, like most of the alternate names listed in the Ethnologue, is a distortion by speakers of other languages and is not used by native speakers. To maintain it is roughly equivalent to listing the main language name for the "eng" code as "Anglais" or "Engels".

2. Propose a new macrolanguage or modify a macrolanguage group

(a) For an existing Macrolanguage, what change to its individual language membership do you propose:

(b) Rationale for change:

For a new Macrolanguage proposal, please also complete the form “Request for New Language Code Element in ISO 639-3” (file name “ISO639-3_NewCodeRequest.doc” or “ISO639-3_NewCodeRequestForm.rtf”), which must also be submitted to fully document the intended meaning for the new macrolanguage.

3. 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:

(c) Rationale for change:
4. 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.

5. 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.

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 an SIL linguist, working with the Mpumpong people since 2006. Having frequently traveled both axes (105km total) of Mpumpong territory, and having spent many hours with inhabitants of the 18 villages, I have yet to encounter any native speaker who uses the current Ethnologue name. The requested name, however, figures in many of our audio recordings and is consistently pronounced \[\text{p}\hat{\text{o}}\text{ŋ}\], except in a few villages on the western axis where the final vowel tends more towards \[\text{u}\], as in \[\text{p}\hat{\text{o}}\text{̂ŋ}\].

The choice to write the aspirated \[\text{p}\] as 'mp' is historically accurate and reflects the linguistic intuition of native speakers. It appears in many village names and on many birth certificates so has been retained for the current Mpumpong orthography.

The name "Mpumpong" consists of two parts: the first part "mpu" means "gathering, assembly, union" and the second part is the name "Mpong"*. The Mpumpong use the same structure to designate other groups around the m (e.g. Mputsil, Mpumam, Mputong).

*Sometimes also expressed as "Mpo" by older people, especially when recounting the history of the people. This "Mpumpoo" might correspond to the alternate names currently given in the Ethnologue as "Mpompo" and "Mpopo".

(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 six-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 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 anyone requesting notification of new proposals matching their specified criteria (region and/or language family of interest). Periodically, a message maybe sent to the general LINGUIST discussion list on Linguist List (http://linguistlist.org/issues/index.html), and other appropriate discussion lists, inviting individuals to review and comment on pending proposals. Anyone may request from the ISO 639-3 registrar to receive notification regarding proposals involving languages in a specific region of the world or specific language family.

4. Individuals may send comments to the ISO 639-3 registrar for compilation. The consensus of early 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.

5. 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 the LINGUIST discussion list and other discussion lists, as requested by their owners. All change requests are then open to further review and comment by any interested party for a period of three months. A Change Request received after the start of Candidacy phase must wait until the next annual cycle for consideration. The purpose of this phase is to ensure that a minimum of three months is allotted for the review of every proposal.

6. 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:
COMITE CHRETIEN D'ETUDE DE
LA LANGUE MPUMPONG
( COCELMPU )
Siège social : Yokadouma
Tel : +237 761 762 58 (Président), +237 965 753 78 (Secrétaire)
Email : cocelmpu@ymail.com

Yokadouma le 29 Décembre 2010

Aux rédacteurs de la publication Ethnologue

Chers messieurs-dames:

Nos collègues de la SIL ici au Cameroun nous ont informés que notre peuple et notre langue figurent dans votre publication Ethnologue sous le nom « Mpongmpong ». Avec cette présente lettre, nous tenons à vous informer que cette appellation est incorrecte pour notre peuple ainsi que pour notre langue; elle n’est jamais utilisée par nos locuteurs natifs.
La forme correcte, et celle que nous souhaitons voir dans votre publication, est « Mpumpong » (dans notre propre alphabet, « Mmpumŋ »). La combinaison « mp » signifie un « p » aspiré, alors la prononciation correcte est [pʰu,pʰŋ].

Nous vous remercions en avance de votre attention à cette requête.

S.M. MESSABILM Matthieu
Chef du canton Mpumpong

Pasteur KOUBATTE
Président de COCELMPU

Translation:

To the editors of the publication Ethnologue.

Dear ladies and gentlemen;

Our SIL colleagues here in Cameroon have pointed out to us that our people and our language are listed in your publication under the name "Mpongmpong". With this letter, we wish to inform you that this appellation is incorrect, both for the name of the people and for the language; it is simply never used by our native speakers.
The correct form, and the one which we would like to see used in your publication, is "Mpumpong" ("Mmpumŋ" in our own orthography). The "mp" indicates an aspirated "p", thus the correct pronunciation is [pʰu,pʰŋ].

Thank you in advance for your attention to this request.