ISO 639-3 Registration Authority

Request for Change to ISO 639-3 Language Code

Date: 2011-8-29
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Postal address for primary contact person for this request (in general, email correspondence will be used):
P O Box 307, Chiang Mai THAILAND 50000

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: jya
Associated reference name: Jiarong

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:

(c) Rationale for change:

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

(a) List the languages into which this code element should be split:
   1. Japhug rGyalrong
   2. Tshobdun rGyalrong
   3. Zbu rGyalrong
   4. Situ rGyalrong
   5. bTsanlha rGyalrong

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:

These five languages do not have adequate inherent mutually intelligibility, nor do they share common literature in the present day (although historically some of them might have). Intelligibility tests between Situ and bTsanlha indicate that these two languages do not have adequate mutual intelligibility. Although intelligibility tests have not been conducted in the other languages, Guilluame Jacques has stated, "I have first hand experience on both (though I did not analyse many texts) and intelligibility between them is very limited without prior exposure. However, many people from Zbu (especially men) learn Tshobdun, which is why it can give the impression that they are two dialects (would you say Catalan is a dialect of Spanish because all Catalan speakers understand Spanish due to exposure through the mass media?...we know for sure that Tshobdun and Zbu are not intelligible, and the Stodpa node may not even exist (at least, it has not yet been formally demonstrated)."

(Jacques, pc). Jacques, who is the world's foremost scholar of Japhug, claims that Japhug is different from Tshobdun, Zbu, Situ and bTsanlha (pc).

(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.

Beginning stages of research has been completed in these languages, and from that it is clear that although these languages are closely related they should not be considered as one language. A book in Situ rGyalrong, using the Tibetan writing system, was published in China in 2010. Two grammars of Situ have been completed and Japhug grammar and bTsanlha dictionary have been completed.

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, SIL researcher Jesse Gates, have conducted first hand research into Situ and bTsanlha from 2006-2011. I have collected and analyzed data and I am writing my MA thesis on the synchronic and diachronic relationships of these languages entitled rGyalrongic dialectology: integrating synchronic and diachronic perspectives (Gates, forthcoming).

(b) Knowledge through personal communication. Describe:
I have had personal communication via emails, phone conversations and face-to-face conversations with Hiroyuki Suzuki, Guillaume Jacques, Mariella Prins, Sun Hongkai and Jackson Sun, all of whom have published a number of scholarly articles in professional academic journals as well as books on these languages.

(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
An email attachment of this completed form is preferred.

**Sources of documentation for ISO 639-3 identifiers:**

