ISO 639-3 Registration Authority
Request for New Language Code Element in ISO 639-3

This form is to be used in conjunction with a “Request for Change to ISO 639-3 Language Code” form

Date: 2012-1-19

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Associated Change request number : 2011-161  (completed by Registration Authority)
Tentative assignment of new identifier : hso  (completed by Registration Authority)

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. Use Shift-Enter to insert a new line in a form field (where allowed).

1. NAMES and IDENTIFICATION
   a) Preferred name of language for code element denotation:
      Southern Hmong

   b) Autonym (self-name) for this language:
      Hmong Shib, Hmong Nzhuab, Hmong Lens, Hmong Dlex Ntchab, Hmong Sad

   c) Common alternate names and spellings of language, and any established abbreviations:
      Flowery Hmong, Hua Miao, Southern Hua Miao, Green Miao, Blue Miao, Blue Hmong, Lye Miao, Qing Miao, Dianxi Miao, Western Yunnan Miao, Moob Swb, Moob Xib, Moob Ntsuab, Moob Leeg, Moob Dlej Ntshab, Hwa Miao, Mong Hoa, Flowery Miao, Mong Leng, Mong Shi, Light Hmong, Ching Miao, Lu Miao, Qingshui Miao, Clear Water Hmong, Hmong Shua Bua, Sa Pa Hmong

   d) Reason for preferred name:
      The name Flowery Hmong or Hua Miao refers to multiple related but not mutually intelligible varieties. Because there are multiple ethnonyms for this group, a term which applies to all the people is preferred over choosing one of the ethnonyms. For the sake of consistency, this name was also agreed upon by members of multiple organizations working with Hmong in China and Southeast Asia.

   e) Name and approximate population of ethnic group or community who use this language:
      Hmong; population estimated around 500,000 in Johnson 1998

   f) Preferred three letter identifier, if available: mns

Your suggestion will be taken into account, but the Registration Authority will determine the identifier to be proposed. The identifiers is not intended to be an abbreviation for a name of the language, but to serve as a device to identify a given language uniquely. With thousands of languages, many sets of which have similar names, it is not possible to provide identifiers that resemble a language name in every case.
2. TEMPORAL DESCRIPTION and LOCATION

a) Is this a
   ☑ Living language
   ☐ Nearly extinct/secondary use only (includes languages in revival)
   ☐ Recently extinct language
   ☐ Historical language
   ☐ Ancient language
   ☐ Artificially constructed language
   ☐ Macrolanguage

(Select one. See explanations of these types at http://www.sil.org/iso639-3/types.asp)

b) Countries where used:
   P. R. China; Vietnam

c) Region within each country: towns, districts, states or provinces where used. Include GPS coordinates of the approximate center of the language, if possible:
   Yunnan Province; NW Vietnam

d) For an ancient or historical language, give approximate time frame; for a recently extinct language, give the approximate date of the last known user’s death

3. MODALITY AND LINGUISTIC AFFILIATION

a) This language is:
   ☐ Signed
   ☑ Spoken
   ☐ Attested only in writings

b) Language family, if classified; origin, if artificially constructed:
   Hmong-Mien, Hmongic, Chuanqiandian

c) Closest language linguistically. For signed language, note influence from other signed or spoken languages:
   1. Green Hmong
   2. Western Sichuan Hmong
   3. Northern Hmong
   4. Dananshan Hmong
   5. Black Hmong

4. LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT AND USE

a) What written literature, inscriptions or recordings exist in this language? Are there newspapers, radio or television broadcasts, etc.?:
   Radio broadcasts are made in a standardized form of this language in Wenshan, Yunnan.
Limited television programming as well as a limited number of VCD and DVD movies are available. Some primers and folk tales have been published. Recent informal testing has shown that Southern Hmong varieties spoken in China are not functionally intelligible with Green Hmong varieties. Literature produced in Green Hmong in Southeast Asia and the West is not intelligible to speakers of Southern Hmong in China.

b) Is this language officially recognized by any level of government? Is it used in any levels of formal education as a language of instruction (for other subjects)? Is it taught in schools?:

occasional short-term adult literacy classes offered by the minority language commission or local Miao association; bilingual teachers are provided in some government primary schools to help Hmong children transition to the national language

c) Comment on factors of ethnolinguistic identity and informal domains of use:

Estimate of ethnolinguistic vitality: 6a "Vigorous" for Hmong within China where very few speakers are using the written form of the language despite sporadic, short-term literacy classes offered by the language commission or schools. However the language is used orally by all generations and the situation is sustainable.

Ethnolinguistic identity: Southern Hmong identify themselves as part of the "Miao" nationality of China and part of the worldwide "Hmong" language group. They also acknowledge variety among the kinds of Miao/Hmong spoken languages, recognizing that there are some Hmong groups whom they understand well and others whom they cannot understand at all.
5. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

You do not need to repeat sources previously identified in the form, “Request for Change to ISO 639-3 Language Code”

a) First-hand knowledge. Describe:
SIL researchers have conducted field language research (survey work) including intelligibility testing among this and related language varieties.

Speakers' Self-Evaluation
Regarding Southern Hmong speakers' own recognition of their varying comprehension levels of other Hmong/Miao languages, see Andy Castro and Royce Flaming's 16 October 2009 "Honghe RTT Respondents' Individual Responses" and 4 September 2009 "Wenshan RTT Respondents' Individual Responses." For example, Hmong Lens respondent #4 at Y20 in Honghe replied that he understands Hmong Dlob but does not understand White Hmong speakers or Hmong Hangd Rongd speakers. Also, Hmong Shib respondent #6 at Y01 in Wenshan replied that she does not understand the Sinicized Hmong (Hmong Shuad) or the White Hmong (Hmong Dleub). Hmong Nzhuab respondent #5 at Y15, also in Wenshan, replied that she does understand White Hmong (Hmong Dleub) but does not understand the Hmong of Guangxi and Guizhou.

Inherent Intelligibility
Regarding inherent intelligibility between Southern Hmong and other varieties of Hmong, see Andy Castro and Royce Flaming, 4 September 2009, "Wenshan RTT Results" and 16 October 2009, "Honghe RTT Results" for the following data:

*Thailand Hmong Nzhuab texts tested on Hmong Shib in 2 Wenshan locations: average scores of 77%, 88% and 95%; tested on Hmong Nzhuab in 2 Wenshan locations: average scores of 93%, 99%, 100% and 100%; tested on Hmong Lens in 1 Honghe location: average score of 100%

With regard to high comprehension of Thailand Hmong Nzhuab in some of the Southern Hmong testing points, please note that the two Green Hmong stories used for RTT testing in Guizhou and Yunnan were fairly basic in content; for English translations of these stories, see Robert McLaughlin, 29 October 2008 Dananshan and Thailand Hmong Nzhuab RTT Data and Test Scores, "NZH Childhood Story Text" and "NZH Bear Story Text." My own [Diana Cohen's] informal testing of more abstract and complex Green Hmong content matter (such as folktales, children's stories, proverbs and translated narratives) on 10-12 Southern Hmong listeners (Hmong Shib and Hmong Nzhuab of Wenshan) has elicited remarks like the following: "It sounds as if the speaker is using Hmong words, but I don't know the meanings of those words. I can't get any meaning from what the speaker is saying, because we don't talk that way here."

*Dananshan Hmong texts tested on Hmong Shib in 2 Wenshan locations: average scores of 81% and 61%; tested on Hmong Nzhuab in 1 Wenshan location: average score of 71%; tested on Hmong Lens in 1 Honghe location: average score of 74%

*White Hmong text tested on Hmong Shib in Wenshan: average score of 94%; tested on Hmong Nzhuab in 2 Wenshan locations: average scores of 97% and 100%; tested on Hmong Lens in 1 Honghe location: average score of 89%

*Northern Hmong (Hmong Soud) text tested on Hmong Nzhuab in 1 Wenshan location: average score of 55%

*Black Hmong (Hmong Buak) text tested on Hmong Shib in 1 Wenshan location: average
score of 88%

Lexical Similarity
Regarding lexical similarity between Southern Hmong and other varieties of Hmong, see Andy Castro’s Table of Lexical Similarity, 9 February 2010, "Yunnan Hmong Dialect Survey Powerpoint Presentation":
"Within Southern Hmong, Hmong Shib, Hmong Nzhuab and Hmong Lens show high percentages of lexical similarity, ranging from 91.0 to 96.1
*S Southern Hmong varieties show high levels of lexical similarity with Black Hmong varieties (Buak and Dlob) with percentages ranging from 88.2 to 92.6
*S Southern Hmong varieties also show fairly high levels of lexical similarity with Northern Hmong varieties (Bes, Soud and Ndrous) with percentages ranging from 87.4 to 92.4
*S Southern Hmong varieties show intermediate levels of lexical similarity with White Hmong as spoken in different locations, with percentages ranging from 84.1 to 91.0
*Lexical similarity of Southern Hmong was not calculated in comparison to Dananshan Hmong or Green Hmong. Compare wordlists in "2008-2009 Yunnan and Guizhou Hmong Survey Wordlist Samples" abridged from 20 January 2010 Andy Castro and Royce Flaming, Wordlists with GT analysis, "Master list."
*With regard to Hmong Dlex Nchab, Castro et al write: “The positioning of Dlex Nchab is somewhat problematic. Our lexical similarity calculation indicates that it is slightly closer to Northern Hua Miao [Black Hmong and Northern Hmong] than Southern Hua Miao. However, its tonal features are identical with Nzhuab and very similar to Lens and Shib, suggesting it should be grouped with Southern Hua Miao.” Andy Castro, Royce Flaming & Luo Youliang. 2012 (accepted). A phonological and lexical comparison of Western Miao dialects in Honghe. SIL Electronic Survey Reports. p.32.

b) Knowledge through personal communication. Describe:

c) Knowledge from published sources. Include known dictionaries, grammars, etc. (please give complete bibliographical references):

Castro, Andy, Royce Flaming & Luo Youliang. 2012 (accepted). A phonological and lexical comparison of Western Miao dialects in Honghe. SIL Electronic Survey Reports.

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
Email: iso639-3@sil.org
An email attachment of this completed form is preferred.

Further information:
If your request for a new language code element is supported by the Registration Authority as a formal proposal, you may be contacted separately by researchers working with the Ethnologue or with LinguistList asking you to provide additional information.

Sources of documentation for ISO 639-3 identifiers: