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: 2015-8-24

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Associated Change request number : 2015-059 (completed by Registration Authority)
Tentative assignment of new identifier : rzh (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:
Rāziḥī

b) Autonym (self-name) for this language:
Rāziḥīt

c) Common alternate names and spellings of language, and any established abbreviations:
samrah rāziḥīt; samrit Rāziḥī; s-samrit

d) Reason for preferred name:
Most widely used.

e) Name and approximate population of ethnic group or community who use this language (complete individual language currently in use):
Rāziḥīs are from the district of Rāziḥ whose population was recorded as 62,915 in 2004 in the last government census, before the severe disruptions of the 2015 hostilities.

f) Preferred three letter identifier, if available: RZH

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%2D3/types.asp)

For individual languages, also complete:

b) Countries where used:
Yemen

c) Region within each country: towns, districts, states or provinces where used. Include GPS coordinates of the approximate center of the language, if possible:
Rāziḥī is spoken in the region of Jabal Rāziḥ, a rugged massif over 2000 m. in altitude at the western edge of the highlands in the far northwest of Yemen, overlooking the Tihāmah coastal plain to the west. The district of Rāziḥ lies about fifty kilometers west of Ṣaʿdah, the governorate capital. Its government center is al-Qalʿah, and its major town is al-Nazīr, 16.9092°N, 43.2592°E, with numerous small settlements scattered over the mountainside.

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:
Afro-Asiatic, Semitic, Central Semitic. Although it contains elements of spoken Arabic, Rāziḥī also has significant Ancient South Arabian as well as Modern South Arabian, Common Semitic and other differentiating features.

c) Closest language linguistically. For a Macrolanguage, list the individual languages (adopted and/or proposed) to be included in its group. For signed language, note influence from other signed or spoken languages:
Spoken varieties of Yemeni Arabic, especially those which have residual South Arabian features.
4. LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT AND USE

a) What written literature, inscriptions or recordings exist in this language? Are there newspapers, radio or television broadcasts, etc.?:
There is no indigenous written literature, however, there are written tribal political and legal documents which reflect the spoken language. Oral narratives, conversations, proverbs, and other utterances were written down in phonological transcription and hours of audio recordings were made in the course of linguistic and anthropological fieldwork. Two texts of phonologically transcribed conversations have been published (Watson et al., 2006b).

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?:
No. Arabic is the official language and the language of instruction in Yemen.

c) Comment on factors of ethnolinguistic identity and informal domains of use:
Rāziḥ is a mountainous area of settled tribes whose members take pride in their distinct language. The region's geographic isolation, agricultural productivity, and the past stability of local tribal governance allowed it to flourish as a linguistic enclave. At the same time, its long history of trade has kept it open to outsiders, and many of the men and some women understand the varieties of Yemeni Arabic spoken in adjacent areas.
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:

I conducted linguistic fieldwork on this language in Ṣana‘ā’ (briefly) and in al-Naẓīr, Rāziḥ, October-December 1979; and further linguistic fieldwork in London with Khalid al-Razihi from al-Naẓīr in July-August 2005 and March 2006.

b) Knowledge through personal communication. Describe:

From Shelagh Weir, who conducted anthropological fieldwork in al-Naẓīr, Rāziḥ, and in London with Rāziḥīs from al-Naẓīr in the course of which she gathered language material.

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


Please return this form to:
ISO 639-3 Registrar
SIL International, Office of Language Information Systems
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: