ISO 639-3 Registration Authority
Request for Change to ISO 639-3 Language Code

Change Request Number: 2015-062 (completed by Registration authority)

Date: 2015-8-24

Primary Person submitting request: Mark Penny

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Names, affiliations and email addresses of additional supporters of this request:
Benny Kurian, Central India Cluster (of SIL-SAG), bennymaryk at gmail dot com

Postal address for primary contact person for this request (in general, email correspondence will be used):
13-512 Luxettipet Road, Mancherial, Adilabad District, Telangana, 504208, India

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 and will be posted on the ISO 639-3 website.

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 (duplicate or non-existent)
4. ☐ Expand the denotation of a code element through the merging one or more language code elements into it (retiring the latter group of code elements)
5. ☒ Split a language code element into two or more new code elements
6. ☐ 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: ggo

Associated reference name: Gondi, Southern

1. Modify an existing language code element

(a) What are you proposing to change:

☐ Language reference name; generally this is changed only if it is erroneous;

if usage is shifting to a new preferred form, the new form may be added (next box)

☐ Language additional names
☐ 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. Propose a new macrolanguage or modify a macrolanguage group

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

(b) Rationale for change:
Remove code [ggo] Southern Gondi and add codes [wsg] Western Southern Gondi and [esg] Eastern Southern Gondi needed if this split request is approved.

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_NewCode RequestForm.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.

(b) If equivalent with another code element, with which ISO 639-3 code element (identifier and name) is it equivalent:

(c) Rationale for change:

4. Expand the denotation of a code element through merging of one or more code elements

(a) List the languages (identifier and name) to be merged into this code element and retired from use:

(b) Rationale for change

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

    (a) List the languages into which this code element should be split:
        Gondi, Aheri
        Gondi, Adilabad

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:
The situation with the so called "Southern Gondi" (ggo) is rather complex. After a sociolinguistic survey published by SIL in 1991, it was decided that all the speakers spread across a wide geographical area spoke the same language. Although Beine (1991) recognised from the lexical similarity figures that there clearly was a "Southern Group" and an "Eastern Group", it was decided that these two groups could be considered as a single language as the "Sironcha is the dialect understood best by the others, with 90% to 98% intelligibility." However, we now know that the RTT used for testing the Sironcha dialect in other areas was not sufficiently representative of the Gondi spoken in that Eastern area, and probably included a significant amount of Telugu which resulted in high RTT results when being tested elsewhere in the region - especially in Andhra Pradesh, where Telugu is the LWC. The more widely-spoken Gondi is from around Aheri, and RTT intelligibility results between Aheri and test points in the neighbouring Adilabad district were as low as 43% and even 34% in Beine's survey. So now, almost 25 years later, based on years of working in this region we are convinced that there are indeed two distinct, but related, Gondi languages.

This conviction is based on (a) re-interpreting Beine's data by taking into account information that was not known at the time; (b) academic research by scholars which highlights significant linguistic differences between the Eastern and Western areas (Rao); (c) relatively recent surveys to assess the language situation; and (d) obvious differences when comparing literature which has been produced in the different regions.

Although there are obvious linguistic similarities as well some cultural similarities (including intermarriage) there are many differences in language and culture which makes mutual intelligibility a problem. It is for this reason that separate language development programs are in progress in each of these two language areas. In addition to the above-mentioned points, due to these communities primarily being in two different states, they have the added division of the (primary) script being different - with Devanagari being used in the Eastern group, and Telugu being used in the Western group.

As accurate tagging of language data becomes increasingly important in the digital information age, it is important to use unique ISO codes to refer to each of these distinct 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.
Both languages belong to the Gondi language family (macro code: gon). There is a growing body of mutually unintelligible literature in BOTH languages.

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.

6. 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:
Benny Kurian has been actively involved in promoting the use of the Gondi language in the Eastern half of the Southern Gondi region since 1994. Based on his observations and interaction with the people across the entire region, he is convinced that there are significant differences which impair good communication between the different groups. This has lead to several surveys which have helped to confirm this belief (Theodore Gipson Benjamin and others. 2008. A participatory assessment of the Southern Gondi Dialects -

unpublished manuscript).

Mark Penny has been actively involved in Language Development and Multi-lingual Education in the Western half of the Southern Gondi region since 2003. Based on personal experience of working with language speakers from both the Eastern and Western parts of the language area, he is sure that the languages are distinct.

(b) Knowledge through personal communication. Describe:

(c) Knowledge from published sources (please give complete bibliographical references):
(i) Lincoln, Neville John. 1969. A Descriptive Analysis of the Adilabad Dialect of Gondi
(ii) Garapati, Umamaheshwar Rao. 1991. "Subgrouping of the Gondi Dialects." In Studies in Dravidian and general linguistics: a festschrift for Bh. Krishnamurti, edited by B. Lakshmi bai and B. Ramakrishna reddy. 73-90. Centre of Advanced Study in Linguistics, Osmania University.
(iii) Garapati, Umamaheshwar Rao. 2008. A comparative grammar of the Gondi dialects

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) rejected as a whole; or 4) amended and resubmitted for the next review cycle. 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
ISO 639-3/RA web site: http://www.sil.org/iso639-3/
E-mail: iso639-3@sil.org

An email attachment of this completed form is preferred.

Sources of documentation for ISO 639-3 identifiers:

Gordon, Raymond G., Jr. (ed.), 2005. Ethnologue: Languages of the World, Fifteenth edition. Dallas, Tex.: SIL International. Online version: http://www.ethnologue.com/ .

Linguist List. Ancient and Extinct Languages. http://linguistlist.org/forms/langs/GetListOfAncientLgs.html

Linguist List. Constructed Languages. http://linguistlist.org/forms/langs/GetListOfConstructedLgs.html