ISO 639-3 Registration Authority

Request for Change to ISO 639-3 Language Code

Change Request Number: 2016-021 (completed by Registration authority)

Date: 2016-5-17

Primary Person submitting request: Nate Cheeseman

Affiliation: Payap University

E-mail address: Nate underscore Cheeseman at SIL dot org

Names, affiliations and email addresses of additional supporters of this request:
Ryan Gehrmann ryangehrmann at gmail dot com

Postal address for primary contact person for this request (in general, email correspondence will be used):
The Linguistics Institute Payap University, Muang District Chiang Mai 50000, Thailand

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: kgd

Associated reference name: Kataang

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:

(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_NewCodeRequestForMac.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:

Kataang (to be renamed) and Southern Kataang
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 current ISO code of [kgd] conflates three language varieties, which we call Northern Katang, Southern Katang and Katang Ta’oiq, the last of which is properly viewed as a dialect of Upper Ta’oih [tth]. In this document, we propose that Southern Katang, which comprises Katang Rueal of Salavan district, Salavan province, Laos and related varieties farther north in Tumlan district, Salavan province, be afforded its own ISO code in opposition to Northern Katang and Katang Ta’oiq. Evidence supporting these assertions is presented below under “Sources of Information”.

Katang is an officially recognized ethnic group of Laos with a population of 118,000 according to the 2005 national census. This makes Katang one of the larger ethnolinguistic groups in the country and so, it is not surprising that the glossonym Katang should require more than one ISO 639-3 code to adequately represent the internal diversity of the language community. As will be shown below, the term Katang is applied broadly, covering speakers of languages from both the West Katuic and Ta’oi subgroups of the Katuic language family (Sidwell 2005).

(c) The current ISO code [kgd] "Kataang" is classified in Ethnologue as a Central Katuic > Ta’oih language, which would make it closely related to Ong [oog] and Upper Ta’oih [tth]. In fact, Katang which was first mentioned by Ferlus (1974) in an article describing the distinctive and non-canonical register systems that are cognate between the Ong, Ta-oy and Katang languages (i.e. creaky vs. modal phonation on vowels whose provencance does not directly correlate with the etymological voicing of initials).

(d) Ferlus never published further on Katang (or, more accurately, Katang Ta’oiq), though his 318-item lexicon of the language is now available on SEAlang.net’s Mon-Khmer Languages Project. Due largely to Ferlus’s early work on Katang, the law of primacy has ensured that the glossonym Katang became associated with Ta’oi languages in the literature. Subsequent fieldwork, however, has shown that Katang Ta’oiq, spoken primarily
in Ta’oi district, Salavan province, Laos, is actually only one of the languages spoken by Katang people.

(e) Huffman (1979) conducted field research in refugee camps in Thailand and collected data on a language called Katang spoken in Salavan province. According to the criteria set out in my thesis (Gehrmann 2016), Huffman’s Katang (hereafter, Southern Katang) is clearly not a Ta’oi language like Katang Ta’oîq but is actually a West Katuic language, with close genetic affiliations to the languages of Ethnologue’s Brou-So sub-grouping, including Eastern Bru [bru], Western Bru [brv] and So [sss]. Huffman (1985) subsequently discussed Southern Katang vocalism in print but he neither mentioned Ferlus’s Katang nor compared the two.

(f) John & Carolyn Miller (1996) undertook an ambitious lexicostatistical comparison of Katuic languages in which Katang data was also analyzed. Five Katang varieties were investigated including one from Wapi district, Salavan province, a second from what was formerly Na Du district (presently Tumlan district), Salavan province, a third from an unidentified village called "Raviang" located 46 kms from Salavan city placing it somewhere in Salavan district, a fourth from Khong Sedong district, Salavan province and a fifth was noted as simply being from Salavan province. All of these represented West Katuic varieties of Katang and the Millers included Katang as a language of their "North Katuic" sub-group, which corresponds to the West Katuic > Brou-So sub-group in Ethnologue.

(g) Ryan Gehrmann has personally conducted research on a Southern Katang variety spoken in Salavan district, Salavan province, Laos whose speakers call their language Katang Rueal [keˈtaːˈræːl] and found it to be essentially identical to Huffman’s Katang (Gehrmann 2016, Gehrmann & Conver 2015). He also conducted research on yet another Katang variety that spoken farther north in Phin district, Savannakhet province, Laos (Gehrmann 2016, Gehrmann & Conver 2015). Like Southern Katang, this Northern Katang language (called Katang Phin in the aforementioned publications after Phin district, where the variety studied is spoken) is very clearly West Katuic and not Ta’oi.

(h) Ryan Gehrmann has worked with Northern and Southern Katang speakers at the same time in his research and has had the opportunity to observe their interaction. They were unable to communicate with each other using their native tongues and quickly switched to the national language to make themselves understood. There are significant lexical and phonological differences between the two varieties. The results of the lexical comparison of modified Swadesh 100 list shows Northern and Southern Katang to have a lexical similarity measurement of 77%. Southern Katang is more lexically similar to Northern Katang than any other language researched but Northern Katang has a higher lexical similarity percentage with Bru Tri (81%) than with Southern Katang.

(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
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: Southern Katang

(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:

Ryan Gehrmann has worked with Northern and Southern Katang speakers at the same time in his research and has had the opportunity to observe their interaction. They were unable to communicate with each other using their native tongues and quickly switched to the national language to make themselves understood. There are significant lexical and phonological differences between the two varieties.

(b) Knowledge through personal communication. Describe:

Ryan Gehrmann has interviewed a reliable, educated speaker of Ta’oïq, an Upper Ta’oïh [tth] variety, from Champasak province. This man was able to confirm that Ta’oïq speakers in Ta’oi district, Salavan province often call their language Katang or Katang Ta’oïq. He knew this because he had previously traveled in that area himself. The Katang Ta’oïq language was, completely intelligible to him and he reported that he felt very strongly that he and they were speaking the same language despite the different names.

(c) Knowledge from published sources (please give complete bibliographical references):

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 may be 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
E-mail: iso639-3@sil.org

An email attachment of this completed form is preferred.

Sources of documentation for ISO 639-3 identifiers: