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

Change Request Number: 2020-038   (completed by Registration authority)

Date: 2020-7-20

Primary Person submitting request: Bernadette MItterhofer

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Names, affiliations and email addresses of additional supporters of this request:
Tim Roth, linguist, SIL-Tanzania, tim_roth at sil dot org

Postal address for primary contact person for this request (in general, email correspondence will be used):
P.O.Box 60368, Dar es Salaam, Tanzania

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:

Associated reference name:

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_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:

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:

(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.

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: Ruwila

(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:
A sociolinguistic survey of the Ruwila and Konongo peoples of Mlele District, Katavi Region, Tanzania, was carried out by the SIL Tanzania Language Assessment Team in February and March

2012. The goal was to see if this language was a dialect of any other language in the area, like Konongo or Bende-Tongwe. The only known previous research in Ruwila was done in 2010 as a part of another survey by members of SIL. Information from that survey was incorporated into the data from the 2012 survey research. Prior to that Abe mentioned Ruwila in her case study of Gongwe, Bende and Pimbwe (Abe 2011). She says that "extremely limited information is available" and "it is mentioned by local people as a language that is closely associated with Konongo" (178).")

(c) A few mentions of Ruwila as a name of a people group can be found. It shows up as "Rwira" in the list of people groups in the 1967 Population Census of Tanzania (1970). The "Rwira" are mentioned settling in Tabora and Ubende together with the Pimbwe and the Galla in "A History of the Rukwa Region (Tanzania) Ca. 1870-1940: Aspects of Economic and Social Change from Precolonial to Colonial Times" (Tambila, A. 1981). And the "Warwira" are part of a list of people groups living in the Mpanda area (which is in the Rukwa region and borders Ubende) like the Gongwe, the Bende, the Konongo, the Pimbwe, the Galla, etc. in an unpublished short "History of the Wagongwe Tribe" (in Swahili) by Waters (2001).

(d) According to Roth (2012), Ruwila has 80% lexical similarity with Konongo, 77% with Galla, 64% with Sukuma/Nyamwezi and 67% with Bende-Tongwe (based on a 389-item wordlist taken during the survey in 2012). Roth then applied these percentages to a distance-based network analysis (Splits Tree) which shows "Ruwila having a close relationship with both Konongo and Bende-Tongwe" (p.3) Bende-Tongwe is more related to Bantu languages in DRC whereas Konongo is more related to Bantu languages in the east (Nyamwezi). Ruwila seems to be in-between these two linguistically. According to lexical similarity Ruwila is closest to Konongo (although 80% is not so high for Bantu languages, considering that prefixes are not part of the calculation and make a considerable difference). But there are quite a few grammatical differences between Ruwila and Konongo, eg. Konongo uses noun class 5 infinitives, Ruwila noun class 15, Ruwila (like Bende-Tongwe) has $*/k/\_/i/ > s$ in all positions stem-medially and stem-initially (which has even affected the class 7 prefix) but not Konongo, Ruwila has augment loss (unlike Konongo but like Bende-Tongwe),etc. Roth concludes that the genetic affiliation of Ruwila remains unclear. (Roth 2012)

(e) Sociolinguistically speaking, Ruwila speakers see themselves as distinct from Konongo speakers (and speakers of the other languages), though there is much contact, e.g mixed marriages, between Ruwila with both Konongo and Bende-Tongwe speakers (and speakers of the other languages). Comprehension between Konongo and Ruwila speakers seems to be acquired rather than due to inherent intelligibility: According to teachers of the area (non-Ruwila speakers) Ruwila children do not know any other local languages (besides Ruwila). Ruwila people's opinions as to the age when (Ruwila) children can understand Konongo differ: Some say they might understand at age 6 (but not speak!) others say young people only understand at age 18, but it is a different language that one has to learn. (Ruwila short survey report.) In 2019 both the Ruwila and Konongo language communities each started their own oral translation project of the Bible; the differences would have been to big to overcome if only one language would have been chosen.

(f) All this and the fact ,that outsiders have mentioned the Ruwila people separately from other people groups of the area, points to Ruwila speakers having their own separate identity distinct from Konongo and other language groups surrounding them. Therefor Ruwila should be considered as its own language.

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:
The SIL Tanzania Language Assessment Team carried out a sociolinguistic survey of the Ruwila and Konongo peoples in Mlele District, Katavi Region, Tanzania in February and March 2012. The findings are presented in the survey report and in an unpublished paper (Roth (2012). A brief look at the genetic affiliation of Ruwila, a previously undocumented language in Tanzania. Unpublished manuscript.).

(b) Knowledge through personal communication. Describe:

(c) Knowledge from published sources (please give complete bibliographical references):
Abe, Yuko. 2011. The Continuum of Languages in West Tanzania Bantu: A Case Study of Gongwe, Bende and Pimbwe. In Hieda, Osamu, König, Christa and Hirosi Nakagawa (eds.), Geographical Typology and Linguistic Areas, with special reference to Africa, 177-188. Tokyo University of Foreign Studies/University of Cologne.

Tambila, A. (1981). A history of the Rukwa region (Tanzania) ca. 1870-1940: Aspects of economic and social change from precolonial to colonial times. A. Tambila.

Tanzania, United Republic of. (1970) 1967 Population census.

Waters, Tony. 2001."Historia ya Kabila ya Wagongwe (Julai 2001)". Unpublished report.

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