ISO 639-3 Registration Authority

Request for Change to ISO 639-3 Language Code

Change Request Number: 2020-040 (completed by Registration authority)

Date: November 2019, revised 5-January 2021

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  Kobo language project team: prokobotraduct at gmail dot com.

Postal address for primary contact person for this request (in general, email correspondence will be used):
  SIL-ECG, P. O. Box 750, Entebbe, UGANDA

PLEASE NOTE: This completed form will become part of the <u>public record</u> 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: Kobo

(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 BRIEF) They have a distinct identity despite their contact with the Nyanga and Hunde peoples; they are geographically isolated from the Nande people which they recognize to

be a kindred group. The lexical inventory and sound system of Kobo are significantly different from those of the languages of these and other nearby peoples.

  (IN DETAIL) The two recognized languages that are most closely related to Kobo are Nande <nnb> and Hunde <hke>. Kobo is not a dialect of, or otherwise included in, either of these. The following reasons may be cited:

  1. Lexical similarity: While a figure around 85% (based on 200 items) is possible between a central dialect and a peripheral dialect, it is noteworthy that the proportion of cognate core vocabulary shared by Kobo and each of Nande and Hunde is almost equal. Of which language, therefore, would Kobo be a dialect, if it is not itself a language?

  2. Phonology: It appears that Kobo has seven phonemic vowels, despite the fact that the "heavy vowels" have led to spirantization. For comparison, Nande has seven phonemic vowels but no spirantization has taken place. Meanwhile, the inventory of Hunde has only five vowels, but also fricatives and affices (which generally occur before high vowels, the result of spirantization). In fact, Kobo is very unusual, if not unique, in having seven vowels and the set of fricatives and affricates.

  Neither of the possible explanations – **either** that Kobo is a Nande variety that has started to undergo spirantization but has not yet lost the distinction between "heavy" and "light" vowels, **or** that Kobo is a Hunde variety which has lagged behind the central dialect in the 7 V > 5 V shift, and also followed different paths of spirantization (notably [f] instead of [pf] and [mv] instead of [mpf]) – are wholly convincing.

  3. Geography: The Kobo homeland is in the Walikale Territory (north of the Nyanga homeland) in a chiefdom called Ikobo. The Nande live to the north and east in the Lubero and Beni territories and the Hunde live to the east and south in the Masisi and Rutshuru territories. The separation of the groups is witness to the recognition, at the time of Belgian administration, that the Kobo were not a subgroup of either the Nande or the Hunde.

  4. Identity: The Kobo do not consider themselves to be either Nande or Hunde, nor do either the Nande or the Hunde claim the Kobo as a subgroup.

  5. Comprehension: Intercomprehension between the Kobo and each of the other peoples of the DRC is inadequate except in the case of someone having learned the other person's language. Inter-community communication is generally in Swahili.

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:

  DWB: Has analyzed a series of word lists collected or compiled in 2011, 2014, 2015 and 2016. Had heard of the language and people at the time of the Nyanga <nyj> language survey in 1995, but did not get details.

  CKL: Led a language development workshop in 2014, resulting in a trial alphabet, and worked with speakers again in 2017. Now there is a draft of a grammar sketch and the nucleus of a Kobo-French, French-Kobo dictionary.

  Saruti: Has interacted face to face with speakers on two occasions and is in regular contact with the team by telephone.

(b) Knowledge through personal communication. Describe:

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

(d)   Kadima, Kamuleta et al. 1983. Atlas Linguistique du Zaïre, Inventaire Préliminaire. Agence de Coopération Culturelle et Technique. Equipe Nationale Zaïroise. – Part of the series « Atlas Linguistique de l'Afrique Centrale » which included ALCAM (frequent reference for the Cameroon survey team). – Kikobo is listed among the languages of Walikale Zone and Bantu Zone "D" (not Zone "J" with Hunde and Nande).
   Jean-Baptiste Murairi Mitima. 2008. Parlons Kihunde ; Kivu, R-D. Congo : Langue et Culture. Harmattan. – Lists on page 10, among the other peoples of the region where Hunde is spoken, "Les Bakobo, du périmètre de jonction entre Masisi / Walikale / Rutshuru / Lubero."
   The Kobo are also included in the list of peoples of the Walikale area on the web page <lionjo.afrikblog.com/archives/2005/12/29/1160787.html>.

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
  `HYPERLINK`
`"http://linguistlist.org/forms/langs/GetListOfConstructedLgs.html"`http://linguistlist.o