ISO 639-3 Registration Authority

Request for Change to ISO 639-3 Language Code

Change Request Number:  
(completed by Registration authority)

Date:  24 Oct 20  
Primary Person submitting request:  Richard Gravina  
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Postal address for primary contact person for this request (in general, email correspondence will be used):

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.  xx  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: jbn  
Associated reference name:  Nafusi
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_NewCodeRequestForm.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:
   East Zenati, with dialects: Jerba, Matmata/Tataouin, Tamezret (Tunisia); & Zeroua (Libya)
   Alternative spellings for Jerba: Djerba, Djerbi, Jerbi

   Nafusi (Libya)
   Alternative spellings for Nafusi: Djebel Nefoussa, Djebel Nefusa, Jebel Nafoussa,
   Jebel Nefousa, Nefousi, Nafousa

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:

There appears to be mutual consensus among linguists and anthropologists that five major
branches comprise Berber: Eastern Berber languages, Northern Berber languages, Guanche,
Tuareg languages, and Zenaga (Hsain Ilahiane, 2006). Libyan and Egyptian Berber fall under the
Eastern Berber languages; Northern Berber languages are spoken in Morocco, Algeria, and
Tunisia; Guanche is an extinct language; Tuareg languages can be found in the southernmost
Berber region, while Mauritanian Berber, the westernmost region where Berber is spoken, belongs
to the Zenaga branch.

Within the Northern branch of Berber one finds the Zenati languages, which is the placement
Kossmann (2013) assigns [East Zenati]. Likewise, Ilahiane also distinguishes [East Zenati] as
belonging to Northern Berber. Kossmann and Ilahiane both classify [Nafusi] as lying distinctly
outside the Northern branch, separate from the Zenatic variety of [East Zenati] (Kossmann
2013:24). Ilahiane refers to [Nafusi] as being an Eastern Berber variety (p. 84).
It is most practical, according to Kossmann, to classify Berber varieties as belonging to different blocks, differentiated “on geographical and linguistic grounds” (p. 18). Kossmann (2020) takes issue with Blažek’s (2010) classification of [Nefusi] within the Zenatic branch because of the treatment of loanwords (p. 285). Although Kossmann does agree that assigning the Berber variety of [East Zenati] to the Zenatic block and that of [Nafusi] to a block of its own is “somewhat arbitrary” (p. 24), he believes that the evidence justifies doing so. His judgment is based primarily on two arguments: [Nafusi] has certain distinct differences from [East Zenati], namely archaic features such as a “continuant pronunciation of *β before a consonant” (Kossmann 1999:114). Key is Kossmann’s secondary assertion that, although many features in [Nafusi] are common to Zenatic varieties, this phenomenon plays a less decisive role in determining [Nafusi]’s placement in Kossmann’s ‘dialect continuum’ (2013:16-8) than does the finding that [Nafusi] also has commonalities with varieties spoken in Libyan-Egyptian oases and Ghadames (p. 25), particularly such forms as “Nefusa ufṣs, Ghadames ofṣs ‘hand’ instead of general Berber (a)fus)” (Kossmann 2020:283). [Nafusi]’s relationship to the easterly Berber dialects leads Kossmann to believe that a more natural placement for [Nafusi] is in a separate block than [East Zenati].

Like Brugnatelli (2008:50), Kossmann (2020) finds reason to believe that a “certain zenatification” of [Nefusi] may have occurred due to frequent contacts within the Islamic Ibadite network of Zenatic- and [Nefusi]-speaking communities (p. 284). Brugnatelli (2009) explains that the [Nafusi] have had an influential presence on the island of Jerba since antiquity. Contact with [Nafusi] (in Libya) continues into the present. However, as Brugnatelli points out, the term [Nafusi] can be used in a fairly broad manner and is only one of several groups that have left their mark on Jerba (pp. 356-8). The [East Zenati] dialect is thus the result of multiple layers, indicating features found in [Nafusi], as well as elements found in Ghadamsi, Kabyle and Hawwara. At [East Zenati]’s core, however, “sans doute” is Zenati, confirmed in its morphology (p.364) and its lexicon (p.361) and demonstrated by the number of features common to both East Zenati and the Zenati Berber variety spoken in Fighug, Morocco (p. 367).

Brugnatelli (in press) substantiates his claim in a later article by providing significant documentation from the phonetics, phonology, grammar and lexicology of the Berber varieties spoken in Tunisia. He draws comparisons and highlights similarities between the varieties spoken in Djerba, Tamazret and in the Tatouine region (p. 6, 8, 9, 11, 14) as well as in Zuwarah, Libya (p. 6, 12). A syntax feature common in [East Zenati] as well as in [Nafusi] is also used in Algerian and Moroccan Berber (p. 16), indicating that this is a broader Berber feature. Other syntax features found in Tunisian Berber are also found in the Berber of Zuwarah (pp. 18-19) and in a Berber variety of Algerian Zenati (p. 18). Lexical features which are rare in [East Zenati] are common to [Nafusi] (p. 19). Furthermore, a number of the features common to both [Nafusi] and [East Zenati], as Brugnatelli (in press) points out, are either rare in [East Zenati] or are also found in Algerian and Moroccan Berber.

Agreement among three leading Berber specialists concerning the placement of [East Zenati] and [Nafusi] in separate branches of Berber gives very strong evidence that these cannot be considered dialects of a single language.
(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.

A good amount of academic research has been carried out on East Zenati and Nafusi. The languages are essentially oral languages and do not have an existing body of literature. East Zenati and Nafusi languages should be considered as separate in all contexts.

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:

(b) Knowledge through personal communication. Describe:

(c) Knowledge from published sources (please give complete bibliographical 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 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
E-mail: iso639-3@sil.org

An email attachment of this completed form is preferred.

Sources of documentation for ISO 639-3 identifiers: