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

Change Request Number: 2022-006 (completed by Registration authority)

Date: Nov 3rd 2021

Primary Person submitting request: Antoine DUSSÉAUX

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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. x 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. x 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: apc

Associated reference name: North Levantine Arabic

1. Modify an existing language code element

    (a) What are you proposing to change:
            x   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: Levantine Arabic

    (c) Rationale for change:
          As explained below, North Levantine Arabic and South Levantine Arabic are not well-defined entities and should be merged.

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:
          ajp (South Levantine Arabic)

    (b) Rationale for change

Academic sources do not classify sedentary Levantine Arabic varieties into North and South. There

is no evidence that North Levantine Arabic and South Levantine Arabic are linguistically well-defined entities. There is no separate development of the two varieties. In particular, native speakers do not define their language as "North Levantine" or "South Levantine".

Scholars use the term "Levantine Arabic" to describe the continuum of mutually intelligible dialects spoken by sedentary populations across the Levant. Niamh E. Kelly describes varieties as "highly mutually intelligible", Aldrich as "to a large extent, mutually intelligible", and according to Kwaik et al.: "The results are informative and indicate that Levantine dialects are very similar to each other and furthermore, that Palestinian appears to be the closest to MSA."

Kees Versteegh classifies Levantine (which he calls "Syro-Lebanese") into three groups: Lebanese/Central Syrian (inc. Beirut, Damascus, Druze Arabic, Cypriot Maronite), North Syrian (inc. Aleppo), and Palestinian/Jordanian. However, according to Versteegh, the distinctions between the groups are unclear and the exact boundary cannot be determined with certainty using isoglosses. For instance, "baktub" vs "biktub" does not clearly distinguish North from South, as biktub is not universal in north Levantine (Aleppo).

Also, the urban dialects of the main cities (such as Damascus, Beirut, and Jerusalem) have much more in common with each other than they do with the rural dialects of their respective countries. For instance, urban Palestinian dialects, especially northern ones, have many similarities to urban dialects from Lebanon and Syria (ʔ for q, elision of h in pronouns, pronouns ending with n instead of m), that they don't share with rural Palestinian dialects.

All academic sources identified and listed at the end of this request form (esp. Aldrich 2017, Linguasphere, Rice 2011, Versteegh 2014, Versteegh 2005, Stowasser 2004, Cowell 1964, Brustad & Zuniga 2019) consider that all sedentary Levantine varieties belong to the same group that they call "Levantine Arabic", "Syro-Palestinian", "Eastern Arabic", "Syro-Lebanese" (as a broad term covering Jordan and Palestine as well), "Greater Syrian", or simply "Syrian Arabic".

In particular, Cowell starts the introduction of its Reference Grammar of Syrian Arabic with (bold ours): *"The language described in this book is Arabic as it is used in everyday conversation by educated city-dwelling Syrians, and most particularly by natives of Damascus. The spoken Arabic of Damascus is much like that of other cities in the western parts of Syria and in Palestine and Lebanon (for instance Beirut, Jerusalem, Aleppo). From a practical standpoint all the urban dialects of the "Syrian area" or "Greater Syria"—as she shall call this region—may be considered variants of one language which we call "Syrian Arabic".*"

Similarly, Stowasser opens his "Dictionary of Syrian Arabic: English-Arabic" with the following line: *"The term "Syrian Arabic" actually comprises quite a number of distinct dialects and subdialects spoken by the sedentary population of Greater Syria, that is, of present-day Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, and the Arab population of Israel. Yet these dialects share so many similar and identical features of phonology, grammar and vocabulary that **there is a great deal of justification for referring to them as a unit**. The degree of similarity among them is not necessarily by geographical location or political division. The urban dialects of Damascus, Beirut and Jerusalem, for instance, have much more in common than, let us say, the Arabic spoken in Damascus compared with that of some village thirty or forty miles away. Likewise, the dialects of two social or religious groups within the same community may show more points of dissimilarity in relation to each other than when compared with their counterparts in a community with a similar social or religious structure."*

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:

(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:

- Shahd Dibas, DPhil student in linguistics at the University of Oxford, is a native speaker. She is working on a dictionary for Palestinian Arabic, focusing on the dialects and subdialects of the elderly people living in the rural areas; such as, the refugee camps, villages and small towns.
- Adrian Abdul-Bahá is a second language speaker and he lived in Palestine and has first-hand knowledge of other dialects of the region.

(b) Knowledge through personal communication. Describe:

- Supporters communicated with various native speakers from the Levant.

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

- Abu Kwaik, Kathrein; Saad, Motaz K.; Chatzikyriakidis, Stergios; Dobnik, Simon (2018). "Shami: A Corpus of Levantine Arabic Dialects". Proceedings of the Eleventh International Conference on Language Resources and Evaluation (LREC 2018).
- Al-Jallad, Ahmad (2012). Ancient Levantine Arabic: A Reconstruction Based on the Earliest Sources and the Modern Dialects. ProQuest LLC. ISBN 978-1-267-44507-0.
- McLoughlin, Leslie J. (2009). Colloquial Arabic (Levantine): [Syria, Lebanon, Palestine, Jordan] (2nd ed.). London: Routledge. pp. 5–6. ISBN 978-0-203-88074-6. OCLC 313867477.
- Trentman, Emma; Shiri, Sonia (17 November 2020). "The Mutual Intelligibility of Arabic Dialects: Implications for the classroom". Critical Multilingualism Studies. 8 (1): 104–134. ISSN 2325-2871.
- Al-Wer, Enam; Jong, Rudolf de (2017), "Dialects of Arabic", The Handbook of Dialectology, John Wiley & Sons, Ltd, pp. 523–534, doi:10.1002/9781118827628.ch32, ISBN 978-1-118-82762-8, retrieved 17 July 2021
- Aldrich, Matthew (8 July 2017). Levantine Arabic Verbs: Conjugation Tables and Grammar. Lingualism. ISBN 978-0-9986411-3-3. OCLC 1083130827.
- "12-AAC-eh "Syro-Palestinian"". Linguasphere. Retrieved 17 July 2021.
- Rice, Frank A. (2011). Eastern Arabic. Majed F. Sa'id. Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press. ISBN 978-1-58901-899-0. OCLC 774911149.
- Versteegh, C. H. M. (2014). "11.2 Syro-Lebanese dialects". The Arabic language. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press. pp. 197–201. ISBN 978-0-7486-4529-9.

- Versteegh, C. H. M. (2005). Encyclopedia of Arabic language and linguistics. Leiden Boston: Brill. p. 607. ISBN 90-04-14473-0.
- Stowasser, Karl (November 2004). A Dictionary of Syrian Arabic: English-Arabic. Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press. ISBN 1-58901-105-8. OCLC 54543156.
- Cowell, Mark W. (1964). A Reference Grammar of Syrian Arabic. Georgetown University Press. ISBN 1-58901-003-5. OCLC 249229002.
- Brustad, Kristen; Zuniga, Emilie (6 March 2019). "Chapter 16: Levantine Arabic". In Huehnergard, John; Pat-El, Na'ama (eds.). The Semitic languages (2nd ed.). London & New York: Routledge Taylor & Francis Group. pp. 403–432. doi:10.4324/9780429025563. ISBN 978-0-429-02556-3.
- Omar, Margaret K. (1976). Levantine & Egyptian Arabic: Comparative Study (PDF). Foreign Service Institute, Department of State. ISBN 978-1-4538-4863-0.
- McCarus, Ernest N. (2011). A Course in Levantine Arabic. Hamdi A. Qafisheh, Raji M. Rammuny. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan. Department of Near Eastern Studies. ISBN 978-1-60785-223-0. OCLC 900710153.
- Lentin, Jérôme (18 October 2018). "The Levant". In Holes, Clive (ed.). Arabic Historical Dialectology: Linguistic and Sociolinguistic Approaches. 1. Oxford University Press. doi:10.1093/oso/9780198701378.003.0007. ISBN 978-0-19-870137-8.
- Fischer, Wolfdietrich; Jastrow, Otto (1980). "Das syrisch-palästinensische Arabisch". Handbuch der arabischen Dialekte (in German). Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz. pp. 174–206. ISBN 3-447-02039-3. OCLC 7308117.
- Elihay, J. (2012). The Olive Tree Dictionary: A Transliterated Dictionary of Eastern Arabic (Palestinian) (2nd ed.). Jerusalem: Minerva. ISBN 978-965-7397-06-0. OCLC 825044014.
- Cantineau, Jean. 1939. Remarques sur les parlers de sédentaire syro-libano-palestiniens. Bulletins de la Societé de Linguistique de Paris. 46: 80–88.
- A phonetic case study of a bidialectal speaker of Lebanese and Palestinian Arabic Niamh E. Kelly American University of Beirut, Lebanon: https://site.uit.no/acqva/files/2017/08/Bidialectalism_Tromso_pres_edit.pdf

- *Durand, Olivier; Ventura, Annamaria (2020). Grammatica di arabo mediorientale : La lingua šami (in Italian). Hoepli. ISBN 88-360-0059-2. "La Grammatica di arabo medio-rientale è una trattazione linguisticodescrittiva della lingua parlata in Siria, Libano, Giordania e Palestina, detta anche šami o del Levante."*
- *Barthélemy, Adrien (1935). Dictionnaire Arabe-Français : Dialectes de Syrie, Alep, Damas, Liban, Jerusalem (in French). Geuthner.*
- *Barthélemy, Adrien; Denizeau, Claude (1960). Dictionnaire des parlers arabes de Syrie, Liban et Palestine : Supplément au dictionnaire Arabe-Français de A. Barthélemy (in French). Éditions G.-P. Maissonneuve.*
- *Bauer, Leonhard (1957). Deutsch–Arabisches Wörterbuch der Umgangssprache in Palästina und im Libanon. Harrassowitz Verlag.*
- *Prochazka, Stephan (2018). "The Northern Fertile Crescent". In Holes, Clive (ed.). Arabic Historical Dialectology: Linguistic and Sociolinguistic Approaches. Oxford University Press. pp. 257–292. doi:10.1093/oso/9780198701378.003.0009. ISBN 978-0-19-870137-8.*
- *Al-Wer, Enam (2006). "The Arabic-speaking Middle East". In Ammon, Ulrich; Dittmar, Norbert; Mattheier, Klaus J; Trudgill, Peter (eds.). Sociolinguistics: An International Handbook of the Science of Language and Society. Vol. 3. De Gruyter. pp. 1917–*

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