L2/11-112

To: UTC and ISO/IEC JTC1/SC2 WG2

Title: Documenting a fallback glyph for Tifinagh Consonant Joiner

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The Tifinagh Consonant Joiner (U+2D7F) was accepted in L2/08-198 (WG2 n3482). In the initial proposal the glyph was similar to that used by Khmer Coeng. Later the glyph (in the Unicode charts) was changed to this:

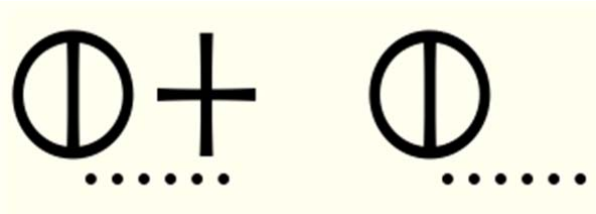
Chapter 13 of TUS (http://www.unicode.org/versions/Unicode6.0.0/ch13.pdf) says:

> If a rendering system cannot display obligatory bi-consonants with the correct, fully-formed bi-consonant glyphs, a fallback rendering should be used which displays the TIFINAGH CONSONANT JOINER visibly, so that the correct textual distinctions are maintained, even if they cannot be properly displayed.

And the annotation in the charts says: “shape shown is arbitrary and is not visibly rendered.”

While the glyph in the charts is fine for chart display, it is felt that the fallback glyph should render text in a more aesthetically pleasing way. If the font does not have a bi-consonant ligature glyph to display, the text should not render a glyph that is unacceptable.

As SIL was considering what glyph to use, we considered using the small plus as Khmer does but the plus-like symbol is used meaningfully in the Tifinagh script so we wanted to use something that wouldn’t be confused with another character. In our Tifinagh fonts, SIL is currently implementing the fallback glyph for the TCJ with a small row of dots—the first half would be under the 2nd half of the first consonant and the second half would appear under the first half of the second consonant. In the first example below the TCJ fallback is displayed using U+2D40 TCJ U+2D5C. In the second example, one can see what it would look like prior to typing U+2D5C. At this point, the user doesn’t know if the font has a bi-consonant ligature glyph or not.



There are others, such as Microsoft and the original Tifinagh script proposer Patrick Andries, who like SIL’s choice in a fallback glyph and would like to use it. However, it was felt that UTC needed to approve a glyph change. It is unclear at the moment whether the chart glyph should change or whether the fallback glyph should be specified.