

# ISO 639-3 Registration Authority

## Request for New Language Code Element in ISO 639-3

This form is to be used in conjunction with a "Request for Change to ISO 639-3 Language Code" form

Date: 2008-5-8

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Associated Change request number : 2008-041

(completed by Registration Authority)

Tentative assignment of new identifier : dam

(completed by Registration Authority)

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. Use Shift-Enter to insert a new line in a form field (where allowed).

### 1. NAMES and IDENTIFICATION

- a) Preferred name of language for code element denotation:  
Damakawa
- b) Autonym (self-name) for this language:  
No longer known (see d below)
- c) Common alternate names and spellings of language, and any established abbreviations:  
The nearby Acipu people refer to the language as Tidama'un [tìdàmà'ũ], but there is no way of knowing if this was ever the autonym.
- d) Reason for preferred name:  
The original autonym seems to have been lost. 'Damakawa' is the Hausa term for the people group, and could now be regarded as the autonym since they no longer know the original name of their ancestral language. 'Damakawa' comes from a discussion on 20th April 2008 between myself, MA student Israel Wade, and a number of ethnic Damakawas in Marandu village (including Ibrahim Sule, Maraha Tura, and Tura Zaure). Even though the expected Hausa term for the language would be Damakanci, Damakawa was preferred as the term for the language as well.
- e) Name and approximate population of ethnic group or community who use this language (complete individual language currently in use):  
Damakawa, approximately 500-1000 people in Sakaba LGA, Kebbi State, Nigeria
- f) Preferred three letter identifier, if available: dam

Your suggestion will be taken into account, but the Registration Authority will determine the identifier to be proposed. The identifier is not intended to be an abbreviation for a name of the language, but to serve as a device to identify a given language uniquely. With thousands of languages, many sets of which have similar names, it is not possible to provide identifiers that resemble a language name in every case.

## 2. TEMPORAL DESCRIPTION and LOCATION

- a) Is this a
- |                                     |   |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/>            | Living language   |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Nearly extinct/secondary use only (includes languages in revival) |
| <input type="checkbox"/>            | Recently extinct language   |
| <input type="checkbox"/>            | Historical language   |
| <input type="checkbox"/>            | Ancient language  |
| <input type="checkbox"/>            | Artificially constructed language                                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/>            | Macrolanguage   |

(Select one. See explanations of these types at <http://www.sil.org/iso639%2D3/types.asp>)

For individual languages, also complete:

- b) Countries where used:  
Nigeria
- c) Region within each country: towns, districts, states or provinces where used. Include GPS coordinates of the approximate center of the language, if possible:  
Sakaba LGA, Kebbi State. There are three or four villages. Kilo village is approximately central, its GPS coordinates are  $\square$ N11 05.018 E5 30.135
- d) For an ancient or historical language, give approximate time frame; for a recently extinct language, give the approximate date of the last known user's death

## 3. MODALITY AND LINGUISTIC AFFILIATION

- a) This language is:  Signed  Spoken  Attested only in writings
- b) Language family, if classified; origin, if artificially constructed:  
Probably the Duka (aka northwest) branch of the West Kainji subgroup of Benue-Congo.
- c) Closest language linguistically. For a Macrolanguage, list the individual languages (adopted and/or proposed) to be included in its group. For signed language, note influence from other signed or spoken languages:  
Probably C'Lela [dri], but the words we collected also show influence from the neighbouring languages Tsvadi [tvd] and Cicipu [awc]. This may be an effect of language contact, or even of confusion or failure to remember on part of those interviewed.

## 4. LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT AND USE

- a) What written literature, inscriptions or recordings exist in this language? Are there newspapers, radio or television broadcasts, etc.?:  
None, other than approximately 80 words together with some phrases I collected together with Israel Wade in April 2008

b) Is this language officially recognized by any level of government? Is it used in any levels of formal education as a language of instruction (for other subjects)? Is it taught in schools?:  
no

c) Comment on factors of ethnolinguistic identity and informal domains of use:  
The language is almost extinct and is no longer used in everyday life, the people having shifted to C'Lela (dri) as their mother tongue. Nevertheless the Damakawa people have a distinct ethnic identity. Neighbouring groups such as the Acipu distinguish between Lelna (the speakers of C'Lela) and the Damakawa and they (and perhaps other tribes) have (or at least had until recently) a taboo preventing inter-marriage with Damakawas. The Acipu also have highly insulting myths about the origin of the Damakawa, and this does not seem to be the kind of playful relationship which often characterises Abokan Wasa in northern Nigeria.

We were told that the language still plays a role in traditional [animist] worship, but did not have an opportunity to observe this first-hand.

## SOURCES OF INFORMATION

You do not need to repeat sources previously identified in the form, “Request for Change to ISO 639-3 Language Code”

- a) First-hand knowledge. Describe:  
(described within form)
  
- b) Knowledge through personal communication. Describe:
  
  
- c) Knowledge from published sources. Include known dictionaries, grammars, etc. (please give complete bibliographical references):

### **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/default.asp>  
Email: [iso639-3@sil.org](mailto:iso639-3@sil.org)  
An email attachment of this completed form is preferred.

### **Further information:**

If your request for a new language code element is supported by the Registration Authority as a formal proposal, you may be contacted separately by researchers working with the Ethnologue or with LinguistList asking you to provide additional information.

### **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/> .

LinguistList. Ancient and Extinct Languages. <http://linguistlist.org/forms/langs/GetListOfAncientLgs.html>

LinguistList. Constructed Languages. <http://linguistlist.org/forms/langs/GetListOfConstructedLgs.html>