

Comments received for  
ISO 639-3 Change Request  
2012-153

Outcome: Rejected

Effective date: 2013-01-23



SIL International  
ISO 639-3 Registration Authority

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Registration Authority decision on Change Request no. 2012-153: to retire the code element [bmy] “Bemba”.

The request to retire the code [bmy] Bemba is rejected at this point. However, the Registration Authority is sympathetic to the request and encourages the submitter to rework the request and resubmit. The RA notes these problems with the request: (1) The point discussed at length about the population being off by two orders of magnitude is well taken, but ends up being unnecessary. In checking with the Ethnologue editor, it was discovered that no population was posited for this language in the 14<sup>th</sup> edition; the population of 296,000 was a clerical mistake in the 15<sup>th</sup> edition caused by copying the population in DRC of the other language named Bemba [bem]. Ethnologue has now removed the population figure. (2) There are archive collections that are using [bmy] to code language resources; see <http://www.language-archives.org/language/bmy>. These probably should be coded as [bem]; however, these resources need to be checked to ensure that these do not attest the reality of [bmy]. (3) The request to retire this code says that it is based on “the paucity of public evidence that Kinyabemba is a separate language.” A scarcity of evidence is not in itself a sufficient argument, since something that is real can be scarce. The argument should be based on the absence of credible evidence; that is, any purported evidence should be shown not to be credible.