

## ENHANCING GRADE VII STUDENTS' DEVELOPMENT, A POSITIVE ATTITUDE AND INTEREST TOWARDS LEARNING DZONGKHA AT KHASADRAPCHU MSS.

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### ABSTRACT

*This study looked into ways to boost Class VII students' interest and motivation for learning Dzongkha, Bhutan's national language. This language subject has struggled with low academic performance and high failure rates. The research involved 35 students and used a quantitative pretest-posttest design. It applied interactive teaching methods such as role-playing, storytelling, project-based learning, and the use of digital tools. Structured questionnaires showed significant improvements in students' attitudes after the intervention. Many reported increased enjoyment, active participation, and cultural engagement. Their motivation and confidence in Dzongkha skills also rose noticeably. Despite ongoing challenges with grammar comprehension and lesson difficulty, using student-centered methods and creating a supportive learning environment led to better engagement. The study highlights the success of innovative, interactive strategies and technology in revitalizing Dzongkha education. The results emphasize the importance of motivation, consistent resources, and teaching innovation in strengthening language education at the middle school level.*

**Keywords:** motivation, Dzongkha, student-centered, consistent resources, teaching methods.

## INTRODUCTION

Dzongkha, the national language of Bhutan, is a core subject in the Bhutanese education system. Despite its significance, students in urban schools often find Dzongkha difficult to learn. At Khasadrapchu Middle Secondary School, which has diverse students, performance in Dzongkha has been consistently poor, with a high failure rate. To address this issue, the school conducted a study in 2024 to identify the primary causes of students' low achievement in Dzongkha. The findings revealed several factors affecting students' learning experience, but the most critical issue was the lack of interest and motivation in studying Dzongkha. One major challenge is the inconsistency in learning materials. Dzongkha textbooks are published annually, leading to frequent updates. While new editions are introduced each year, many students continue to use older textbooks due to limited supply, creating inconsistencies in classroom learning. Interest and motivation play a crucial role in students' engagement with the subject. Interest reflects curiosity and willingness to explore Dzongkha, while motivation serves as the driving force that compels students to learn. Strengthening students' interest in Dzongkha can be a powerful motivator that enhances their learning experience and academic performance.

Enhancing students' engagement in Dzongkha requires interactive and well-structured learning approaches, making Dzongkha more accessible and enjoyable by integrating digital resources, roleplay, storytelling, and active participation. Addressing inconsistencies in textbooks by supplementing lessons with additional reading materials and multimedia resources ensures students receive reliable and updated information, preventing confusion. Furthermore, awarding certificates and recognition motivates students to excel, while peer learning and mentorship programs foster a collaborative and supportive learning experience. By combining these strategies, students can cultivate both interest and motivation to learn Dzongkha, for which the findings will provide valuable insights into effective teaching strategies that can be applied to improve students' overall learning experience and appreciation of Dzongkha subject performance at Khasadrapchu MSS.

## OBJECTIVES

1. Identify and implement innovative teaching strategies, such as multimedia resources and interactive activities, regular positive feedback to enhance Class VII students' interest and positive attitudes towards learning Dzongkha at Khasadrapchu Middle Secondary School.

## SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS

A student is considered to have passed only if Dzongkha, a major subject, is passed. (School curriculum Division, 2023). Over the years, Khasadrapchu Middle Secondary School has recorded a high number of failures in Dzongkha. In the mid-term examination of 2024, 73% of the students failed in the subject. The school-level study conducted in 2024 found that students lacked interest and motivation in learning Dzongkha. To address this issue, it is essential to examine current teaching practices and explore new strategies to make learning Dzongkha more appealing.

Dzongkha teachers should adopt interactive and engaging methods, such as educational videos and games, to make lessons more dynamic. Activities like group discussions and role-playing can foster a more interactive learning environment. Additionally, providing regular positive feedback and creating a supportive classroom atmosphere are crucial for motivating students and building their confidence. By implementing these strategies, teachers can help students develop a positive attitude towards learning Dzongkha, thereby improving their academic performance and interest in the subject.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Developing a positive attitude and interest in learning Dzongkha among students is crucial for preserving Bhutan's linguistic and cultural heritage. The study suggests that students' attitudes towards a subject are influenced by various factors, including teaching methods, relevance to daily life, and the learning environment (Syukur, 2016). This literature review explores strategies that Dzongkha teachers can use to enhance students' engagement and motivation in learning Dzongkha at Khasadrapchu Middle Secondary School.

Effective teaching strategies significantly impact students' interest in learning a language. Interactive teaching methods, such as cooperative learning, storytelling, and project-based learning, have been found to foster enthusiasm and participation. (Dr. Rania Al-Hammoud, 2023). Dzongkha teachers can incorporate communicative language teaching (CLT) approaches that emphasize real-life conversations, discussions, and role-playing to make learning more engaging.

Several studies highlight the difficulties students face in learning Dzongkha, which often result in high failure rates. According to (Chencho Wangchuk, 2023), one of the major factors contributing to students' poor performance in Dzongkha is the lack of motivation and interest. Many students perceive Dzongkha as difficult due to its complex grammar, limited exposure outside the classroom, and a lack of engaging instructional materials. Similarly, the teaching methodologies used in Dzongkha classrooms are largely traditional, relying heavily on rote memorization and textbook-based learning. This approach often leads to disengagement among students, as they struggle to relate the content to real-life experiences. Moreover, the absence of digital resources and interactive teaching methods further hinders students' ability to grasp Dzongkha effectively.

Given the persistent challenges in Dzongkha education, researchers have explored various strategies to enhance student engagement and learning outcomes. According to Choden (Griffiths, 2004), adopting interactive teaching methods such as storytelling, role-playing, and multimedia resources can significantly improve students' motivation and comprehension in Dzongkha. Another effective approach is the integration of ICT in language learning. A study by (Leong, 2005) demonstrated that incorporating digital tools like educational apps, online quizzes, and interactive language games can make Dzongkha lessons more engaging. The study found that students who used ICT-based learning resources showed greater enthusiasm and performed better in Dzongkha assessments compared to those who followed traditional learning methods.

Additionally, teachers play a crucial role in fostering interest in Dzongkha. A report by the (BCSEA, 2023) recommended that educators receive training in modern teaching strategies, such as differentiated

instruction and student-centered learning approaches. Providing professional development opportunities for Dzongkha teachers can equip them with the skills needed to create a more dynamic and engaging classroom environment. Furthermore, parental involvement has been identified as a key factor in improving students' performance in Dzongkha. (Syukur, 2016) Suggested that encouraging parents to use Dzongkha at home and engage their children in conversations and storytelling in the language can strengthen students' linguistic skills. Schools can also organize cultural events and Dzongkha language competitions to instill a sense of appreciation and pride in the language.

To make Dzongkha more interesting for students, it is essential to move beyond rote learning and create an engaging, interactive environment. Research suggests that using storytelling, role-playing, and ICT tools like educational apps can make learning more enjoyable and relatable. Connecting Dzongkha to real-life situations, organizing cultural events, and encouraging parental involvement can further boost students' motivation. Additionally, training teachers in modern, student-centered teaching methods can help create a dynamic classroom experience. By adopting these strategies, Dzongkha can become a subject that students find both meaningful and enjoyable.

### **ACTION RESEARCH QUESTION**

How can I support Class VII students in developing positive attitudes and interest towards learning Dzongkha through interactive teaching strategies, integrating ICT tools, and fostering a supportive learning environment at Khasadrapchu MSS?

### **RESEARCH DESIGN**

The study will adopt a quantitative approach of pretest and posttest methods to gain a comprehensive understanding of how researchers can support students in developing positive attitudes and interest in learning Dzongkha. A pretest survey questionnaire will be used to collect quantitative data, measuring students' attitudes and interest before and after the intervention to explore their experiences, challenges, and perspectives on fostering student engagement and motivation in learning Dzongkha.

## **DATA COLLECTION TOOL**

In this study, two tools will be used to collect data. A one-group pre-test and post-test design will be used along with structured survey questionnaires that include 20 items. The questionnaire has four sections, each with five items: Section 1 assesses students' interest in learning Dzongkha; Section 2 evaluates their motivation to learn Dzongkha; Section 3 identifies challenges faced in learning Dzongkha; and Section 4 explores perceptions about improvements in Dzongkha teaching strategies. A Likert scale with five response options—Strongly Disagree (1), Disagree (2), Neutral (3), Agree (4), and Strongly Agree (5)—will measure students' interest and motivation in learning Dzongkha. This tool will be given both before and after the intervention, allowing for a comparison of any changes in students' attitudes. To make sure the survey questionnaires are reliable, a pilot test will be conducted with a sample of 10 students who will not take part in the main study. Feedback and results from this pilot test will help improve and confirm the questionnaire before the implementation of the study.

## **PARTICIPANT SAMPLE**

The study will use a pretest and posttest design to collect quantitative data through survey questionnaires. The researcher will specifically select the one section of class VII students as the target group (N=35), as the researcher is currently teaching in this class, to get the many possible results of the study. This approach will help analyze the effectiveness of intervention strategies to enhance students' engagement and improve their learning outcomes.

## **DATA ANALYSIS**

The study will use descriptive analysis techniques to present the research findings. Quantitative data from the pre-test and post-test will be analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 22.0 and Microsoft Excel from the Microsoft Office 2016 package. SPSS will be used for descriptive analysis to calculate the Mean (M), Standard Deviation (SD), to measure changes in student interest.

## INTERVENTION STRATEGIES

For this study, the intervention period of one month will be conducted by the researcher in classroom teaching. Focusing on implementing interactive teaching strategies, integrating ICT tools, and fostering a supportive learning environment to enhance students' interest and motivation in learning Dzongkha. Teachers will adopt role-playing and storytelling to make Dzongkha lessons more engaging. Additionally, project-based learning will be introduced, where students create Dzongkha stories, poems, and presentations to develop practical language skills. These approaches aim to shift away from traditional rote learning methods and create a more student-centered classroom experience. Furthermore, ICT will be integrated into Dzongkha lessons to enhance student engagement. Digital tools such as educational apps, online quizzes, and multimedia resources will be used to make learning more interactive. Additionally, parental involvement will be encouraged through home-based language activities to strengthen students' exposure to Dzongkha beyond the classroom. By implementing these interventions, students will develop a more positive attitude towards learning Dzongkha, ultimately improving their academic performance and language proficiency.

## FINDINGS

Table 1 shows that students generally have positive feelings about learning Dzongkha. They experienced noticeable improvements between the pretest and post-test phases. The highest mean score was for the statement "I am interested in improving my Dzongkha language skills. This score increased slightly from the pretest ( $M = 4.46$ ,  $SD = 0.505$ ) to the post-test ( $M = 4.48$ ,  $SD = 0.508$ ). This reflects a strong and ongoing interest in developing language skills.

Students also recognized the importance of Dzongkha for their future studies and careers. Mean scores rose from the pretest ( $M = 4.34$ ,  $SD = 0.591$ ) to the post-test ( $M = 4.58$ ,  $SD = 0.891$ ). Their enjoyment of learning Dzongkha as a school subject also improved, increasing from ( $M = 4.29$ ,  $SD = 0.710$ ) at the pretest to ( $M = 4.71$ ,  $SD = 0.861$ ) at the post-test. Motivation to explore Bhutanese culture through

Dzongkha received positive ratings in both assessments, showing a significant increase from (M = 4.29, SD = 0.860) to (M = 4.66, SD = 0.981).

The lowest mean score in the pretest was for active participation in Dzongkha lessons and activities (M = 3.66, SD = 0.639). However, this area showed the greatest improvement after the intervention, with the mean rising sharply to (M = 4.81, SD = 0.981). This suggests that even though initial engagement was moderate, student involvement increased significantly after the instructional support. Additionally, the small standard error values across all items indicate that responses were consistent, which increases the reliability of the findings. Overall, these results emphasize positive changes in students' attitudes and engagement with Dzongkha language learning due to the intervention.

**Table 1:** Interest in learning Dzongkha. (N = 35)

| <b>Interest in learning Dzongkha</b>  | Pretest M | Pretest SD | Posttest M | Posttest SD | Mean Difference (Posttest – Pretest) |
|---|-----------|------------|------------|-------------|--------------------------------------|
| I enjoy learning Dzongkha as part of my school subjects.                      | 4.29      | 0.71       | 4.71       | 0.86        | 0.42                                 |
| I am interested in improving my Dzongkha language skills.                     | 4.46      | 0.51       | 4.48       | 0.51        | 0.02                                 |
| Learning Dzongkha is important for my future academic and professional goals. | 4.34      | 0.59       | 4.58       | 0.89        | 0.24                                 |
| I actively participate in Dzongkha lessons and activities.                    | 3.66      | 0.64       | 4.81       | 0.98        | 1.15                                 |
| I feel motivated to explore more about Bhutanese culture through Dzongkha.    | 4.29      | 0.86       | 4.66       | 0.98        | 0.37                                 |

**Table 2** shows that the students showed mostly positive views about learning Dzongkha across all five items in both the pretest and posttest assessments. On average, students felt encouraged by their Dzongkha teacher to improve their language skills. Mean scores increased slightly from the pretest (M = 4.14, SD = 0.601) to the posttest (M = 4.16, SD = 0.871). The belief that learning Dzongkha helps express thoughts effectively also showed a significant improvement from the pretest (M = 4.09, SD =

0.612) to the posttest ( $M = 4.76$ ,  $SD = 0.821$ ). Students' confidence in speaking, reading, and writing in Dzongkha grew notably, moving from a pretest mean of 3.83 ( $SD = 0.785$ ) to 4.81 ( $SD = 0.861$ ) in the posttest. Additionally, students reported actively looking for extra learning resources, such as books and videos. This showed a slight increase from the pretest ( $M = 3.69$ ,  $SD = 0.718$ ) to the posttest ( $M = 3.86$ ,  $SD = 0.719$ ). Support from peers and the school environment remained consistently positive across assessments, with mean scores staying stable from pretest ( $M = 3.91$ ,  $SD = 0.781$ ) to posttest ( $M = 3.93$ ,  $SD = 0.782$ ). The relatively low standard deviations indicate moderate variability in responses, while consistent standard errors suggest stable estimates across the sample. Furthermore, one-sample t-tests showed that the mean scores for all items were significantly different from zero ( $p < .001$ ). This confirms that students have positive and meaningful attitudes toward learning Dzongkha.

**Table 2** Motivation to learn Dzongkha. ( $N = 35$ )

| <b>Motivation to learn Dzongkha</b>  | Pretest<br>M | Pretest<br>SD | Posttest<br>M | Posttest<br>SD |
|--|--------------|---------------|---------------|----------------|
| I feel encouraged by my Dzongkha teacher to improve my language skills.                        | 4.14         | 0.601         | 4.16          | 0.871          |
| I believe that learning Dzongkha helps me express my thoughts effectively.                     | 4.09         | 0.612         | 4.76          | 0.821          |
| I feel confident when speaking, reading, and writing in Dzongkha.                              | 3.83         | 0.785         | 4.81          | 0.861          |
| I seek additional learning resources (books, videos, etc.) to improve my Dzongkha proficiency. | 3.69         | 0.718         | 3.86          | 0.719          |
| My classmates and school environment inspire me to develop my Dzongkha language skills.        | 3.91         | 0.781         | 3.93          | 0.782          |

**Table 3** showed that students had different views about their Dzongkha learning experiences in both the pretest and posttest assessments. Their motivation to keep learning Dzongkha outside the classroom was moderate. The mean scores were 3.74 ( $SD = 0.817$ ) in the pretest and 3.75 ( $SD = 0.819$ ) in the posttest. Students noted receiving strong support from their teacher when they encountered challenges. The mean scores were high at 5.14 ( $SD = 6.792$ ) in the pretest and 5.18 ( $SD = 7.882$ ) in the posttest; however, the large standard deviations show that there was a lot of variation in these perceptions. The teaching

methods used in Dzongkha classes received positive feedback. The mean score rose from 4.00 (SD = 0.767) in the pretest to 6.19 (SD = 0.769) in the posttest. On the other hand, students faced some difficulties with Dzongkha grammar and sentence structure. The mean scores were lower, at 3.20 (SD = 1.079) in the pretest and 3.24 (SD = 1.081) in the posttest. Likewise, students found Dzongkha lessons to be moderately difficult compared to other subjects, with consistent mean scores of 3.14 (SD = 1.264) in the pretest and 3.14 (SD = 1.287) in the posttest. Standard errors varied from 0.130 to 1.148. This reflects differences in response precision, especially regarding views on teacher support. Overall, these findings show mostly positive attitudes toward teacher support and teaching methods while pointing out ongoing challenges with grammar understanding and lesson difficulty.

**Table 3:** Challenges in learning Dzongkha. (*N* = 35)

| Challenges in learning Dzongkha   | Pretest (SD) | M | Posttest (SD) | M | Interpretation                             |
|---|--------------|---|---------------|---|--|
| I find Dzongkha lessons difficult compared to other subjects.                 | 3.74 (0.817) |   | 3.75 (0.819)  |   | Moderate motivation                        |
| I struggle with understanding Dzongkha grammar and sentence structure.        | 5.14 (6.792) |   | 5.18 (7.882)  |   | High support, but highly variable          |
| The teaching methods used in Dzongkha class help me learn effectively.        | 4.00 (0.767) |   | 6.19 (0.769)  |   | Strong increase in perceived effectiveness |
| I receive adequate support from my teacher when I face challenges in Dzongkha | 3.20 (1.079) |   | 3.24 (1.081)  |   | Persistent difficulty                      |
| I feel motivated to continue learning Dzongkha outside the classroom.         | 3.14 (1.264) |   | 3.14 (1.287)  |   | Moderately difficult, no change            |

**Table 4:** Descriptive statistics showed that students generally had positive views about the teaching methods and learning opportunities in Dzongkha classes during both pretest and posttest assessments. Students stated that their Dzongkha teacher used engaging and interactive techniques that made learning enjoyable. Mean scores went up from 4.17 (SD = 0.747) on the pretest to 4.67 (SD = 0.872) on the posttest. Similarly, students felt they had enough chances to practice speaking and writing in Dzongkha during class. This was reflected in an increase from a mean of 3.91 (SD = 0.702) on the pretest to 4.21

(SD = 0.782) on the posttest.

Students expressed moderate agreement about the effectiveness of multimedia tools, such as videos, games, and digital resources, in increasing interest in learning Dzongkha. Mean scores rose from 3.91 (SD = 0.612) to 4.12 (SD = 0.721). They also viewed group discussions and peer learning as helpful for improving language skills, with scores increasing slightly from 4.00 (SD = 0.686) on the pretest to 4.12 (SD = 0.689) on the posttest. In addition, students agreed that extra support programs, like tutoring, would help improve their Dzongkha skills, with mean scores growing from 3.89 (SD = 0.631) on the pretest to 4.12 (SD = 0.721) on the posttest.

The lower standard deviations and standard errors, which ranged from 0.103 to 0.126, indicate moderate variability and consistent responses among students. Overall, these findings show that students have a positive attitude toward current teaching methods, while highlighting the opportunity for improvement through better use of multimedia resources and additional support programs.

**Table 4:** Improving Dzongkha teaching strategies. (*N* = 35)

| <b>Improving Dzongkha teaching strategies</b>   | Pretest M<br>(SD) | Posttest M<br>(SD) | Interpretation                                |
|---|-------------------|--------------------|---|
| My Dzongkha teacher uses engaging and interactive methods that make learning enjoyable.                             | 4.17<br>(0.747)   | 4.67<br>(0.872)    | Increased enjoyment of Dzongkha learning      |
| I receive enough opportunities to practice speaking and writing Dzongkha in class.                                  | 3.91<br>(0.702)   | 4.21<br>(0.782)    | Improved practice opportunities               |
| The use of multimedia tools (videos, games, digital resources) would enhance my interest in learning Dzongkha.      | 3.91<br>(0.612)   | 4.12<br>(0.721)    | Moderate increase in multimedia effectiveness |
| Group discussions and peer learning help me improve my Dzongkha skills.   | 4.00<br>(0.686)   | 4.12<br>(0.689)    | Slight improvement in peer learning benefits  |
| I would benefit from additional support programs, such as tutoring, to strengthen my Dzongkha language proficiency. | 3.89<br>(0.631)   | 4.12<br>(0.721)    | Greater recognition of support needs          |

The research findings show that the intervention effectively improved Grade VII students' positive attitudes and interest in learning Dzongkha. Students demonstrated noticeable growth in their

enthusiasm for developing Dzongkha language skills. They recognized its importance for their academic and professional futures and enjoyed Dzongkha as a school subject. Researchers also observed significant gains in students' active participation during lessons and their cultural motivation. The study revealed consistent positive views of teacher encouragement, effective teaching methods, and peer support. This environment further boosted students' confidence and motivation. Although some challenges remained, especially in understanding grammar and lesson difficulty, the overall improvement in interactive teaching, the use of multimedia tools, and practice opportunities led to greater engagement and interest. These results emphasize the importance of targeted teaching strategies and supportive learning environments in fostering a lasting positive attitude toward Dzongkha language learning among Grade VII students at Khasadrapchu MSS.

## CONCLUSION

The findings of this study clearly show that targeted interventions can significantly improve Grade VII students' attitudes and interest in learning Dzongkha at Khasadrapchu Middle Secondary School. The improvements in students' enthusiasm for developing their Dzongkha language skills highlight the effectiveness of using interactive teaching methods, multimedia tools, and supportive classroom environments. These strategies change students' learning experiences from passive reception to active engagement, fostering a positive and lasting interest in the national language.

Additionally, the study emphasizes the important role of teacher encouragement and peer support in motivating students. Positive feedback from teachers and collaborative learning opportunities helps build students' confidence in their language skills. When students see their learning environment as supportive and engaging, they are more likely to participate actively and seek additional learning resources, which further improves their proficiency and enthusiasm for Dzongkha. Despite the positive results, some challenges remain, especially in students' understanding of Dzongkha grammar and the perceived difficulty of lessons compared to other subjects. This indicates that while we can improve attitude and motivation through teaching innovations, addressing deeper language challenges requires

ongoing attention. Adapting instructional material and providing specific support are crucial to help students overcome these hurdles and master Dzongkha.

In conclusion, this study confirms that combining engaging, student-centered teaching practices and resources with a supportive learning environment is essential for encouraging positive attitudes and interest in Dzongkha among Grade VII students. The findings offer useful insights for educators and policymakers looking to enhance Dzongkha education in Bhutan. Maintaining these methods and addressing persistent challenges will help preserve and promote Dzongkha as both a cultural heritage and an academic subject.

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