

Ethnologue: Languages of Bhutan

Twenty-sixth edition data

David M. Eberhard, Gary F. Simons, and Charles D. Fennig, Editors

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List of Abbreviations

A	Agent in constituent word order
<i>alt.</i>	alternate name for
<i>alt. dial.</i>	alternate dialect name for
AOV	Agent-Object-Verb
C	Consonant in canonical syllable patterns
<i>Class</i>	Language classification
CSICH	Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage (2003)
<i>dial.</i>	primary dialect name for
km	kilometer(s)
L1 / L2	first language / second (or other additional) language
<i>Lg Dev</i>	Language development
<i>Lg Use</i>	Language use
m	meter(s)
P	Patient in constituent word order
PARADISEC	Pacific And Regional Archive for Digital Sources In Endangered Cultures
<i>pej.</i>	pejorative
pl.	plural
S	Subject in constituent word order
sg.	singular
SIL	SIL International
SOV	Subject-Object-Verb
<i>Type</i>	Typological information
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization
V	Vowel in canonical syllable patterns

How to Use This Digest

This *Ethnologue* country digest provides an extract of the information about the language situation in Bhutan that is published in the 26th edition of *Ethnologue: Languages of the World* (see <http://www.ethnologue.com>), including some ways of presenting the information that are not available in the online version. The digest begins with a “Country Overview” (page 6) and “Statistical Summaries” (page 8) of languages and number of speakers by language size, by language status, and by language family.

The “Alphabetical Listing of Languages” (page 10) provides detailed information on the 30 languages listed in the *Ethnologue* for the country of Bhutan. This includes languages that are indigenous to the country, languages that have developed well-established multigenerational speaker communities after immigrating in the past, and languages that have a significant presence in the country but are not established (that is, not being transmitted to the next generation within the country). A complete language entry has the following form and content:

Primary language name [ISO 639-3 code] (Alternate names). Autonym. *Users*: Country user population. Population stability comment. Population remarks. Monolingual population. Ethnic population. *Location*: Location. *Status*: EGIDS level. Special cases. Language function in country. *Class*: Linguistic classification. Macrolanguage membership. *Dialects*: Dialect names. Intelligibility and dialect relations. Lexical similarity. *Type*: Linguistic typology information. *Lg Use*: Remarks on use of the language. Domains of use. User age range. Language attitudes. Bilingualism remarks. Use as second language. *Lg Dev*: Literacy rates. Literacy remarks. Use in education. Publications and use in media. Revitalization efforts. Language development agencies. *DLS*: Digital support. *Writing*: Scripts used. *Other*: Non-indigenous. General remarks. Religion. *Map*: Map page. *Worldwide*: Total population in all countries. Other countries where used.

See <http://www.ethnologue.com/methodology/#languagePages> for a full description of these information elements. If the autonym contains the “?” character, this indicates a complex non-Roman character that the PDF-creating software we are using is not able to render. We regret the inconvenience.

The “Language Map” (page 18) shows the locations of the listed languages. If the location of a language is given on a map, the *Map* element of the language entry indicates the page number of the map. If the language is identified on a map by name, but that name differs from the primary name in the language entry, the name on the map is given in parentheses. If the language is represented on the map by an index number, rather than by its name, the index number is given following the page number (with a colon as separator).

Many ways of finding languages are provided. “Languages by Population” (page 19) lists the languages in order of their first-language speaker populations. “Languages by Status” (page 21) lists the languages by their level of development or endangerment as measured on EGIDS, the Expanded Graded Intergenerational Disruption Scale (Lewis and Simons 2010). “Languages by

District” (page 24) lists the top-level administrative subdivisions of Bhutan and the languages located within each. “Languages by Family” (page 25) lists the languages by their linguistic classifications. “Language Code Index” (page 26) gives an alphabetical listing of all the three-letter codes from ISO 639-3 that are used in this digest to uniquely identify languages. “Language Name Index” (page 27) lists every name that appears in the language listings as a primary or alternate name of a language or dialect. A total of 128 unique names are associated with the 30 languages described in this digest.

Finally, a listing of all the published sources cited within this digest is found in “Bibliography” (page 30). The published sources are cited using standard in-text citations enclosed in parentheses, consisting of the author’s or editor’s surname followed by the year of publication. Unpublished sources including personal communications and unpublished reports are also acknowledged when specific statements or facts are attributed to them. They are identified using in-text citations enclosed in parentheses in which the year of the communication is given first, followed by the source’s first initial and surname. In such a case, there is no corresponding entry in the bibliography.

This digest is designed for use in both digital and print formats. The cross-references are thus rendered as page numbers that are hyperlinks. When using the document in printed form, simply turn to the referenced page by number. When using it in digital form, click on the blue text to jump to the cross-referenced location.

If you believe any of the information about a language in this digest is in error or if you are able to supply missing information, please send your proposed change to the editor using one of the means given below. Provide as much information as possible about the source of your information. Full bibliographic details of published sources are especially helpful.

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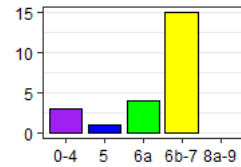
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Country Overview

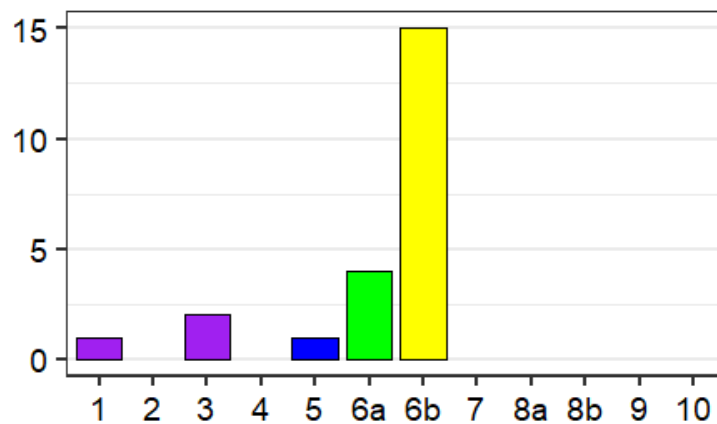
Name of country	Bhutan
Other names	Kingdom of Bhutan
Population	772,000 (2020 World Bank)
Principal languages	Dzongkha, English
Literacy rate	67% (2017 UNESCO)
Deaf population	6,170
International conventions	CSICH (2005)
General references	Coelho 1967, Matisoff 1991, Matisoff et al 1996, Singh 1972, Van Driem 1997, Van Driem 2007, White 1971
Language counts	<p>The number of established languages listed for Bhutan is 23. All are living languages. Of these, 21 are indigenous and 2 are non-indigenous. Furthermore, 3 are institutional, 1 is developing, 4 are vigorous, and 15 are in trouble. Also listed are 7 unestablished languages.</p>



See the next page for an explanation of the summary categories for language vitality used in the above counts and graph.

Language Status Profile

The following histogram gives a graphic profile of the established languages in Bhutan with respect to their status of language development versus language endangerment. This includes all of the languages appearing in the “Alphabetical Listing of Languages” (page 10) that report an EGIDS level after *Status*; macrolanguages and unestablished languages are not included in the profile. The horizontal axis plots the estimated level of development or endangerment as measured on the EGIDS scale (Lewis and Simons 2010). The height of each bar indicates the number of languages that are estimated to be at the given level. Consult “Languages by Status” (page 21) in order to see the specific languages for each level.



The color coding of the bars in the histogram above matches the color scheme used in the summary profile graph on the preceding page. In this scheme, the EGIDS levels are grouped as follows:

- Purple = Institutional (EGIDS 0–4) — The language has been developed to the point that it is used and sustained by institutions beyond the home and community.
- Blue = Developing (EGIDS 5) — The language is in vigorous use, with literature in a standardized form being used by some though this is not yet widespread or sustainable.
- Green = Vigorous (EGIDS 6a) — The language is in vigorous use among all generations and remains unstandardized.
- Yellow = In trouble (EGIDS 6b–7) — Intergenerational transmission is in the process of being broken, but the child-bearing generation can still use the language so it is possible that revitalization efforts could restore transmission of the language in the home.
- Red = Dying (EGIDS 8a–9) — The only fluent users (if any) are older than child-bearing age, so it is too late to restore natural intergenerational transmission through the home; a mechanism outside the home would need to be developed.
- Black = Extinct (EGIDS 10) — The language is no longer used and no one retains a sense of ethnic identity associated with the language.

Statistical Summaries

The “Alphabetical Listing of Languages” (page 10) provides a detailed listing of all the languages of Bhutan. This section steps back from the detail to offer a summary view of the language situation in the country. Specifically, it offers three numerical tabulations of the living established languages of Bhutan and their users: by language size, by language status, and by language family.

Summary by language size

Table 1 summarizes the distribution of living established languages in Bhutan by number of L1 speakers. The *Population range* column categorizes the sizes of the languages by order of magnitude (in terms of the number of digits in the population of first-language speakers). Consult “Languages by Population” (page 19) for a listing of the specific languages in each range category.

The *Count* column gives the number of living established languages within the specified population range. The *Percent* column gives the share of the count for that population range as a percentage of the total number of languages given at the bottom of the Count column. The *Cumulative* column gives the cumulative sum of the percentage of languages going from top to bottom in the column.

The *Total* column gives the total L1 population of all the languages in the given range category. The second *Percent* column gives the percentage of the total country population as estimated at the bottom of the Total column. Note that if the table has a row for Unknown, representing languages for which the *Ethnologue* does not have a population estimate, the calculation of population percentage is not able to take those languages into account. The final *Cumulative* column gives the cumulative sums of the population percentages going from top to bottom in the column.

Table 1: Distribution of languages by number of first-language speakers

Population range	Living languages			Number of speakers		
	Count	Percent	Cumulative	Total	Percent	Cumulative
100,000 to 999,999	2	8.7	8.7%	467,000	67.95495	67.95495%
10,000 to 99,999	8	34.8	43.5%	190,100	27.66218	95.61712%
1,000 to 9,999	9	39.1	82.6%	28,510	4.14860	99.76572%
100 to 999	3	13.0	95.7%	1,610	0.23428	100.00000%
Unknown	1	4.3	100.0%			
<i>Totals</i>	23	100.0		687,220	100.00000	

Summary by language status

Table 2 summarizes the distribution of living established languages in Bhutan by their status in

terms of language development or language endangerment. The *EGIDS* column categorizes the languages by their level on the EGIDS scale. Consult “Languages by Status” (page 21) for a listing of the specific languages that have been assigned to each level. Note that the EGIDS level reported here is for the status of the language in Bhutan. Languages that are also used in other countries may be assigned to a different EGIDS level in those countries.

The next six columns are as in Table 1. In addition, the *Mean* column gives the average L1 population of all the languages with the given EGIDS level and the *Median* column gives the median L1 population for the languages at that level, that is, half of the languages at that level have a higher population and half have a lower population. If there are any languages with an unknown population, these are ignored in the calculation of the mean and the median.

Table 2: Distribution of languages by vitality status

EGIDS	Living languages			Number of speakers				
	<i>Count</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Cumulative</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Cumulative</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Median</i>
1	1	4.3	4.3%	304,000	44.2362	44.2362%	304,000	304,000
3	2	8.7	13.0%	163,000	23.7188	67.9549%	81,500	163,000
5	1	4.3	17.4%	33,100	4.8165	72.7715%	33,100	33,100
6a	4	17.4	34.8%	105,000	15.2789	88.0504%	26,250	26,000
6b	15	65.2	100.0%	82,120	11.9496	100.0000%	5,475	2,610
<i>Totals</i>	23	100.0		687,220	100.0000			

Summary by language family

The genealogical classifications given in the language entries of the “Alphabetical Listing of Languages” (page 10) name 3 different top-level groups. Table 3 summarizes the distribution of living established languages and their L1 populations within these families. The columns are as for table 2, with the exception that *Cumulative* is excluded since there is no inherent ordering of the families.

Table 3: Distribution of languages by language family

Language family	Living languages		Number of speakers			
	<i>Count</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Median</i>
Dravidian	1	4.3	10,000	1.5	10,000	10,000
Indo-European	2	8.7	33,100	4.8	16,550	33,100
Sino-Tibetan	20	87.0	644,120	93.7	32,206	4,000
<i>Totals</i>	23	100.0	687,220	100.0		

Alphabetical Listing of Languages

Assamese [asm]. *Users:* 26,200 in Bhutan (2021 Joshua Project), based on ethnicity. *Location:* Scattered in south. *Status:* Unestablished. *Class:* Indo-European, Indo-Iranian, Indo-Aryan, Outer Languages, Eastern, Bengali-Assamese. *Type:* SOV; noun head final; gender (masculine/feminine); case-marking (6 cases); verb affixes mark person, number, gender of subject; passives; tense and aspect; 21 consonant and 16 vowel phonemes; non-tonal; free stress; honorifics. *Lg Dev:* Literature. Newspapers. Periodicals. Radio. TV. Videos. Dictionary. Grammar. Bible: 1833–1995. *Writing:* Bengali (Bangla) script. *Other:* Non-indigenous. Hindu, Muslim. *Worldwide:* Total users in all countries: 15,328,240 (as L1: 15,327,990; as L2: 250). Global EGIDS level: 2 (Provincial). Indigenous in: India. Unestablished in: Nepal, United States.

Bantawa [bap]. *Users:* 19,200 in Bhutan (2002). *Location:* Scattered in western border areas. *Status:* Unestablished. Used by Rai people dispersed in Bhutan. *Class:* Sino-Tibetan, Tibeto-Burman, Western Tibeto-Burman, Himalayan, Kiranti, Eastern. *Type:* SOV; postpositions; noun heads initial; no noun classes or genders; content q-word in situ; genitives, adjectives, numerals before noun heads; polar questions marked only with rising intonation; content questions same word order as assertive sentences or question word directly before the verb; up to 2 prefixes, 10 suffixes; clause constituents indicated by word order; affixes indicate case of noun phrases; verbal affixation mark person, number, object—obligatory; tense and aspect; no passives or voice; split ergative; comparatives use Nepali word, *bhanda*; 25 consonant and 6 vowel phonemes; numbers above 3 are borrowed from Nepali [npi]; CV, CVC, CVCC; nontonal. *Lg Dev:* Literature. Newspapers. Periodicals. Radio. Videos. Dictionary. Grammar. Texts. NT: 2020. *Writing:* Devanagari script. *Other:* Non-indigenous. Traditional religion, Christian, Hindu. *Worldwide:* Total users in all countries: 195,100 (as L1: 166,600; as L2: 28,500). Global EGIDS level: 6b (Threatened). Indigenous in: India, Nepal.

Bengali [ben]. *Users:* 20,100 in Bhutan (2021 Joshua Project), based on ethnicity. *Status:* Unestablished. *Class:* Indo-European, Indo-Iranian, Indo-Aryan, Outer Languages, Eastern, Bengali-Assamese. *Type:* SOV; postpositions; noun head both initial and final; 3 genders: male, female, neuter; content q-word initial and final; clause constituents indicated by case-marking (5 cases) and word order; verb affixes mark person, number; definite article affix; tense; passives and voice; causatives; comparatives; non-tonal; 35 consonant and 5 vowel phonemes; stress on first syllable. *Lg Dev:* Fully developed. Bible: 1832–2016. *Writing:* Bengali (Bangla) script, primary usage. Braille script. Newa script, no longer in use. *Other:* Non-indigenous. *Worldwide:* Total users in all countries: 272,828,760 (as L1: 233,808,880; as L2: 39,019,880). Global EGIDS level: 1 (National). Indigenous in: Bangladesh, India. Also established in: Nepal, Singapore. Unestablished in: Australia, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Kuwait, Malaysia, Mauritius, Myanmar, Netherlands, New Zealand, Oman, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sweden, Switzerland, Thailand, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom, United

States.

Brokkat [bro] (Brokskad, Jokay). *Users*: 300 (Van Driem 1993). *Location*: Bumthang district: north of Byakar Dzong monastery. *Status*: 6b (Threatened). *Class*: Sino-Tibetan, Tibeto-Burman, Western Tibeto-Burman, Bodish, Central Bodish, Central, Southern. *Lg Use*: Some young people, all adults. *DLS*: Still. *Writing*: Unwritten. *Other*: Different from Brokpake [sgt] (Van Driem 1993). *Map*: 18.

Brokpake [sgt] (Brokpa, Dakpa, Damilo, Dap, Drokpakay, Jobikha, Mera Sagtengpa, Meragsagstengkha, Mira Sagtengpa, Sagtengpa). *Users*: 5,000 (2006 census). *Location*: Trashigang district: Merak and Sakteng villages in east Sakteng valley. *Status*: 6b (Threatened). *Class*: Sino-Tibetan, Tibeto-Burman, Western Tibeto-Burman, Bodish, Central Bodish, Central, Southern. *Lg Use*: Some young people, all adults. *DLS*: Still. *Writing*: Unwritten. *Other*: Buddhist. *Map*: 18.

Bumthangkha [kjj] (Bhumtam, Bumtang, Bumtangkha, Bumtanp, Bumthang, Bumthapkha, Kebumtamp). *Users*: 20,000 (2011 SIL). *Location*: Bumthang district; southwest Lhuentse district; northwest Mongar district; north and west Trongsa district; possibly northeast border areas. *Status*: 6b* (Threatened). *Class*: Sino-Tibetan, Tibeto-Burman, Western Tibeto-Burman, Bodish, East Bodish, Bumthang. *Dialects*: Ura, Tang, Chogor, Chunmat. Some northern varieties of Khengkha [xkf] and some southern varieties of Bumthangkha are reported by one source to likely be mutually intelligible. Tawang Monpa [twm] in India (Tawan Monba in China) is the same as, or closely related to, Bumthangkha. Lexical similarity: 92% with Khengkha [xkf], 47%–65% with Dzongkha [dzo], 40%–50% with Tshangla [tsj], 75%–77% with Nyenkha [neh], 70%–73% with Kurtokha [xkz]. *Lg Use*: Used as L2 by Khengkha [xkf]. *Lg Dev*: Dictionary. Bible portions: 1938. *DLS*: Emerging (0.02). *Writing*: Tibetan script, Uchen style. *Other*: Buddhist. *Map*: 18.

Chalikha [tgf] (Chali, Chalipkha, Tshali, Tshalingpa). *Users*: 1,500 (2011 SIL). *Location*: Mongar district: Gorsum, Tormazhong, and Wangmakhar villages; Chali area, east bank of Kurichhu river. *Status*: 6b* (Threatened). *Class*: Sino-Tibetan, Tibeto-Burman, Western Tibeto-Burman, Bodish, East Bodish, Bumthang. *Dialects*: None known. Related to Bumthangkha [kjj] and Kurtokha [xkz]. *DLS*: Still. *Writing*: Unwritten. *Map*: 18.

Chocangacakha [cgk] (Chocangaca, Chocha Ngacha, Kursmadkha, Maphekha, Rtsamangpa'ikha, Tsagkaglingpa'ikha, Tsamang, rTsamangpa'i kha). *Users*: 30,000 (2011 SIL). *Location*: Lhuentse district: Autsho, Budur, Gorgen, Jarey, Karmashangshang, Kupinyelsa, Kurmet, Kurmey, Lingmithang, Minje, Tamochhu, Thridangbi, and Tormazhog; Mongar district: lower areas east of Dzongkha, Tsakaling, and Tsamang. *Status*: 6a* (Vigorous). *Class*: Sino-Tibetan, Tibeto-Burman, Western Tibeto-Burman, Bodish, Central Bodish, Central, Southern. *Dialects*: None known. Related to Dzongkha [dzo]. *DLS*: Still. *Writing*: Unwritten. *Map*: 18.

Dakpakha [dka] (Dakpa). *Users*: 2,000 (2011 SIL). *Location*: Trashigang district: Chaleng, Dangpholeng, Lengkhar, Phongmey, and Yobinang near Radhi; Brokpake area. *Status*: 6b*

(Threatened). *Class*: Sino-Tibetan, Tibeto-Burman, Western Tibeto-Burman, Bodish, East Bodish. *Dialects*: May be dialect of Brokpake [sgt]. Has been influenced by Dzalakha [dzl], and Brokpake has not. *DLS*: Still. *Writing*: Unwritten. *Map*: 18.

Dzalakha [dzl] (Dzala, Dzalamat, Yangtsebikha). *Users*: 22,000 (2011 SIL). *Location*: Lhuentse district: northeast; Trashy-Yangtse district: all except south. *Status*: 6a* (Vigorous). *Class*: Sino-Tibetan, Tibeto-Burman, Western Tibeto-Burman, Bodish, East Bodish, Bumthang. *Dialect*: Khomakha. *Lg Dev*: Dictionary. *DLS*: Still. *Writing*: Unwritten. *Map*: 18.

Dzongkha [dzo] (Bhotia of Bhutan, Bhotia of Dukpa, Bhutanese, Drukha, Drukke, Dukpa, Jonkha, Zongkhar). *Users*: 304,000 in Bhutan (2021 Joshua Project), based on ethnicity. *Location*: Haa, Paro, Punakha, and Wangdue Phodrang districts. *Status*: 1 (National). Statutory national language (2008, Constitution, Article 1(8)). *Class*: Sino-Tibetan, Tibeto-Burman, Western Tibeto-Burman, Bodish, Central Bodish, Central, Southern. *Dialects*: Wang-The (Thimphu-Punakha), Ha, Northern Thimphu, Adap. As different from Central Tibetan [bod] as Nepali [npi] is from Hindi [hin]. Partially intelligible with Sikkimese [sip] (Denjoke). Dialects may be separate languages. Lexical similarity: 77% with Adap dialect, 48% with Tshangla [tsj], 47%–52% with Bumthangkha [kjz]. *Lg Dev*: Literacy rate in L1: 54%. Literacy rate in L2: Below 5%. Taught in many primary schools in early grades and as subject thereafter. Taught as subject in all secondary schools. Taught as subject in some tertiary schools. Literature. Radio. Dictionary. Grammar. Bible: 2010. *DLS*: Ascending (0.36). *Writing*: Tibetan script, official usage. *Other*: Buddhist. *Map*: 18. *Worldwide*: Total users in all countries: 315,080. Also indigenous in: India. Unestablished in: Nepal.

English [eng]. Autonym: English. *Location*: Widespread. *Status*: 3 (Wider communication). De facto national working language. *Class*: Indo-European, Germanic, West, English. *Type*: SVO; prepositions; genitives after noun heads; articles, adjectives, numerals before noun heads; question word initial; word order distinguishes subject, object, indirect objects, given and new information, topic and comment; active and passive; causative; comparative; consonant and vowel clusters; 24 consonants, 13 vowels, 8 diphthongs; non-tonal; free stress; phrasal verbs. *Lg Use*: Education, government, commerce, media. Used as L2 by Khengkha [xkf]. *Lg Dev*: Taught in many primary schools, especially private schools. Used as language of instruction in all secondary schools. Taught in all tertiary schools. Fully developed. Bible: 1382–2002. *Writing*: Braille script. Deseret Alphabet, developed in 1854 with limited usage until 1877. Duployan shorthand. Latin script, primary usage. Shavian (Shaw) script, no longer in use. *Other*: Non-indigenous. *Worldwide*: Total users in all countries: 1,456,448,320 (as L1: 379,682,200; as L2: 1076,766,120). Global EGIDS level: 0 (International). Indigenous in: Ireland, United Kingdom. Also established in 167 other countries and unestablished in 16 more.

Gongduk [goe] (Gongdubikha). *Users*: 2,400 (2021 Joshua Project), based on ethnicity. *Location*: Mongar district: Gongdu Gewog division, Bala, Dagsa, Damkhar, Pam, Pangthang, and Yangbari. *Status*: 6b (Threatened). *Class*: Sino-Tibetan, Tibeto-Burman, Western Tibeto-Burman, Bodish. *Lg Use*: Some young people, all adults. *Lg Dev*: Texts. *DLS*: Still. *Writing*:

Unwritten. *Other*: Retains the complex verbal agreement system of Proto-Tibeto-Burman. Said to belong to an ancient population of Bhutan. *Map*: 18.

Gurung [gvr]. *Users*: 15,000 in Bhutan (2020). *Status*: Unestablished. *Class*: Sino-Tibetan, Tibeto-Burman, Western Tibeto-Burman, Bodish, West Bodish, Gurung-Tamang, Gurungic. *Type*: SOV; postpositions; genitives, adjectives, relative clauses precede noun heads; numerals after noun heads; noun head final; no noun classes or genders; content q-word in situ; rising intonation marks bipolar questions; one negative prefix on verbs; up to 2 suffixes; clause constituents indicated by case-marking; case of noun phrases is indicated by postpositions; no subject or object referencing in verbs; split ergative system according to tense; causatives; benefactives; aspect; no passives or voice; 24 consonant and 5 vowel phonemes; CV, CCV, CCCV; tonal: voice quality or register is part of the tone system. *Lg Dev*: Literature. Newspapers. Periodicals. Radio. TV. Videos. Dictionary. Grammar. Texts. NT: 1982. *Writing*: Devanagari script. *Other*: Non-indigenous. Traditional religion, Hindu. *Worldwide*: Total users in all countries: 396,800 (as L1: 374,000; as L2: 22,800). Global EGIDS level: 6b (Threatened). Indigenous in: Nepal. Also established in: India.

Khengkha [xkf] (Ken, Keng, Kenkha, Khen, Khenkha, Kyengkha). *Users*: 65,000, all users. L1 users: 50,000 (2003 SIL). L2 users: 15,000. 30,000 monolinguals. *Location*: Mongar district: southwest; eastern Sarpang and southeast Trongsa districts: smaller areas; Zhemgang district: widespread. *Status*: 6a (Vigorous). *Class*: Sino-Tibetan, Tibeto-Burman, Western Tibeto-Burman, Bodish, East Bodish, Bumthang. *Dialects*: Middle Kheng, Upper Kheng, Lower Kheng. Bumthangkha [kjz] reportedly most similar related language, but comprehension not sufficient for complex discourse. Comprehend Kurtokha [xkz] with difficulty. Lexical similarity: 75%–85% with Bumthangkha [kjz], 70% with Kurtokha [xkz] and Nyengkha [neh], 34% with Dzongkha [dzo], 40% with Tshangla [tsj], and 75%–100% between dialects. *Type*: SOV; postpositions; genitives, relatives before noun heads, articles, adjective after noun heads; maximum prefixes 1; maximum suffixes 4; affixes indicate case; ergative; passives; causatives; some comparatives; CCVC; tonal. *Lg Use*: Vigorous. Home, commerce, local politics, traditional religion, but not allowed in school. Used by all. Negative attitudes, especially toward Gonphu village speaking style. Lower Kheng considered most backward; Middle Kheng most prestigious. Also use Bumthangkha [kjz], especially those who travel or have intermarried. Also use Dzongkha [dzo], but only by educated people and some older men. Also use English [eng], especially some (10%) of the educated young people. Also use Kurtokha [xkz], especially those who travel or have intermarried. Also use Nepali [npi], especially some (20%) of those who live near the road. Also use Nyenkha [neh], especially those who travel or have intermarried. Also use Tshangla [tsj], especially those who travel east of Kheng area. *Lg Dev*: Literacy rate in L2: 20% in Dzongkha [dzo]. Bible portions: 2008. *DLS*: Emerging (0.02). *Writing*: Tibetan script, Uchen style, unofficial usage. *Other*: Middle Kheng region strongest and most developed economically; Lower Kheng least developed. Buddhist. *Map*: 18.

Kurtokha [xkz] (Gurtü, Kurteopkha, Kurthopkha, Kurtobikha, Kurtopakha, Kurtotpkha, Kürthöpka). Autonym: Kurtöp. *Users*: 15,000 (2011 SIL). *Location*: Lhuentse district:

bounded by Kurichhu river east and north, Tangmachhu village south, and Rudong La pass west. *Status*: 6b* (Threatened). *Class*: Sino-Tibetan, Tibeto-Burman, Western Tibeto-Burman, Bodish, East Bodish, Bumthang. *Dialects*: The dialect around Tangmachhu is more divergent. Lexical similarity: 69% with Nyengkha [neh], 70%–73% with Bumthangkha, 66%–74% with Khengkha. *Lg Use*: Most also use Tshangla [tsj]. Many also use Dzongkha [dzo]. Used as L2 by Khengkha [xkf]. *DLS*: Still. *Writing*: Latin script. Tibetan script, Uchen style. *Map*: 18.

Kurux [kru] (Kurukh, Oraon, Uraon). *Users*: 10,000 in Bhutan (2021 Joshua Project), based on ethnicity. *Location*: Chhukha and Samtse districts: probably scattered small groups. *Status*: 6b* (Threatened). *Class*: Dravidian, Northern. *Type*: SOV; postpositions; noun head final; 2 noun classes (human, non-human); content q-word initial; 1 prefix, up to 6 suffixes; clause constituents indicated by case-marking; verbal affixation marks person, number and genders of subject and object; ergativity; tense and aspect; passives and voice; nontonal; 29 consonant and 10 vowel phonemes. *Lg Dev*: Literature. Newspapers. Radio. Videos. Dictionary. Grammar. Texts. Bible: 2000. *Writing*: Devanagari script. *Other*: Non-indigenous. *Worldwide*: Total users in all countries: 2,084,390 (as L1: 2,083,700; as L2: 690). Global EGIDS level: 6a (Vigorous). Indigenous in: Bangladesh, India, Nepal.

Lakha [lkh] (Tshangkha). *Users*: 8,000 (Van Driem 1993). *Location*: Wangdue Phodrang district: central west, into Trongsa district. *Status*: 6b (Threatened). *Class*: Sino-Tibetan, Tibeto-Burman, Western Tibeto-Burman, Bodish, Central Bodish, Central, Southern. *Lg Use*: Some young people, all adults. *DLS*: Still. *Writing*: Unwritten. *Map*: 18.

Layakha [lya]. *Users*: 1,100 (2003). *Location*: Gasa district; Punakha district: Laya area; Thimphu district: Lingzhi Gewog. *Status*: 6b* (Threatened). *Class*: Sino-Tibetan, Tibeto-Burman, Western Tibeto-Burman, Bodish, Central Bodish, Central, Southern. *Dialects*: None known. Reportedly similar to Dzongkha [dzo], but many divergent grammatical features significantly limit mutual intelligibility. Spoken by Layabs, alpine yakherds in northern Bhutan, and Lingzhibs in Western Bhutan. *DLS*: Still. *Writing*: Unwritten. *Map*: 18.

Lepcha [lep] (Lapcha, Nünpa, Rongke, Rongpa, Róng, Róng-ríng, Róngkup). *Users*: 2,900 in Bhutan (2021 Joshua Project), based on ethnicity. *Location*: Samtse district: Amo river area, east and south lower valleys. *Status*: 6b (Threatened). *Class*: Sino-Tibetan, Tibeto-Burman, Central Tibeto-Burman, Lepcha. *Dialects*: Ilammu, Tamsangmu, Rengjongmu. *Type*: SOV; postpositions; dual number; definite article; 32 consonants and 8 vowels. *Lg Use*: Some young people, all adults. *Lg Dev*: Radio. Dictionary. Grammar. NT: 1989. *Writing*: Lepcha (Róng) script. Tibetan script. *Other*: Traditional religion, Buddhist. *Map*: 18. *Worldwide*: Total users in all countries: 57,930 (as L1: 57,700; as L2: 230). Also indigenous in: India, Nepal (Lapcha).

Lhokpu [lhp] (Lhobikha, Lokpu, Taba-Damey-Bikha). *Users*: 2,610 (Van Driem 2007). *Location*: Samtse district: Dramte, Loto Kucu, Lotok, Sanglung, Sataka, and Tâba villages between Samtsi and Phüntsho'ling. *Status*: 6b (Threatened). *Class*: Sino-Tibetan, Tibeto-Burman, Western Tibeto-Burman, Bodish. *Lg Use*: Some young people, all adults. All also use Nepali [npi] (Van Driem 2007). *DLS*: Still. *Writing*: Unwritten. *Other*: An ancient population of Bhutan. *Map*: 18.

Limbu [lif]. *Users*: 22,400 in Bhutan (2020). *Status*: Unestablished. *Class*: Sino-Tibetan, Tibeto-Burman, Western Tibeto-Burman, Himalayan, Kiranti, Eastern. *Type*: SOV; postpositions; genitives, articles, adjectives, numerals before noun heads; noun head final; content question word in situ; bipolar question word final; maximum of 3 prefixes, 6 suffixes; affixes indicate case of noun phrases; verb affixes mark subjects, objects, indirect objects—obligatory; verbal affixation marks person and number; split ergativity; reflexes conjugated intransitively can be used as a kind of passive; passives and voice; antipassives; causatives; comparatives; 16 consonant and 13 vowel phonemes; V, CV, CVC, CCV, CCVC; nontonal. *Lg Dev*: Literature. Newspapers. Periodicals. Radio. TV. Videos. Dictionary. Grammar. NT: 2009. *Writing*: Devanagari script, primary usage. Limbu (Kiranti, Sirijonga) script, dating from early 18th century. *Other*: Non-indigenous. *Worldwide*: Total users in all countries: 429,400 (as L1: 407,200; as L2: 22,200). Global EGIDS level: 4 (Educational). Indigenous in: India, Nepal.

Lunanakha [luk]. *Users*: 810 (2014 census), based on ethnicity. *Location*: Gasa district: Lunana, on Pho Chhu river north from Punakha, right fork halfway up the valley. *Status*: 6b* (Threatened). *Class*: Sino-Tibetan, Tibeto-Burman, Western Tibeto-Burman, Bodish, Central Bodish, Central, Southern. *Dialects*: None known. Reportedly similar to Dzongkha [dzo], but many divergent grammatical features limit intelligibility between them. *DLS*: Still. *Writing*: Unwritten. *Other*: Take herds over to Gasa District, north from Punakha up the Mo Chhu River. *Map*: 18.

Magar, Eastern [mgp]. *Users*: 7,500 in Bhutan (2020). *Status*: Unestablished. *Class*: Sino-Tibetan, Tibeto-Burman, Western Tibeto-Burman, Himalayan, Central Himalayan, Kham-Magar, Magar. *Lg Dev*: Literature. Dictionary. Texts. NT: 1991. *Writing*: Brahmi script. Devanagari script. *Other*: Non-indigenous. *Worldwide*: Total users in all countries: 541,200. Global EGIDS level: 6b (Threatened). Indigenous in: Nepal. Also established in: India.

Nepali [npi] (Eastern Pahari, Gorkhali, Gurkhali, Khaskura, Lhotshammikha, Nepalese, Parbatiya). *Users*: 33,100 in Bhutan (2021 Joshua Project), based on ethnicity. *Location*: Chhukha district: small border area; southwest Dagana district; especially west (Samtse), central (Sarpang) and east (southern Samdrup Jongkhar) districts; south Tsirang district. *Status*: 5* (Dispersed). De facto language of provincial identity in entire length of foothills, especially south central region. *Class*: Indo-European, Indo-Iranian, Indo-Aryan, Intermediate Divisions, Eastern, Eastern Pahari. *Type*: SOV; postpositions; noun head final; 11 noun classes or genders; no articles; content q-word in situ; 1 prefix, up to 5 suffixes; clause constituents indicated by case-marking (4 cases); verbal affixation marks person, number and gender of subject; split ergativity; both tense and aspect; passives and voice; causatives; non-tonal; 29 consonant and 11 vowel phonemes. *Lg Use*: Used as L2 by Khengkha [xkf], Lhokpu [lhp]. *Lg Dev*: Fully developed. Bible: 1914–2004. *Writing*: Braille script. Devanagari script, primary usage. *Other*: May be majority language of the south. Many are Bhutanese citizens. Hindu. *Map*: 18. *Worldwide*: Total users in all countries: 25,587,570 (as L1: 16,903,270; as L2: 8,684,300). Global EGIDS level: 1 (National). Also indigenous in: India, Nepal. Unestablished in: Australia, Bahrain, Brunei, Canada, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Japan, Kuwait, Malaysia, Myanmar, New Zealand, Norway, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, South Korea, Spain, United

Arab Emirates, United Kingdom, United States.

Nupbikha [npb] (Nupbi, Trongsakha). *Users*: 3,000 (2022 Joshua Project), based on ethnicity.

Location: Trongsa district: enclave south of Trongsa Dzong. *Status*: 6a* (Vigorous). *Class*:

Sino-Tibetan, Tibeto-Burman, Western Tibeto-Burman, Bodish, East Bodish, Bumthang.

Dialects: None known. Phonological similarities to Khengkha [xkf]. *DLS*: Still. *Writing*:

Unwritten. *Other*: View their language as different from Bumthangkha [kjz]. *Map*: 18.

Nyenkha [neh] (Henkha, Lap, Mangdhika, Mangsdekha, Upper Mangdep). *Users*: 10,000 (2006

Royal Government of Bhutan). *Location*: Trongsa district: Tangsibji sub-district and western

areas; Wangdue Phodrang district: east. *Status*: 6b* (Threatened). *Class*: Sino-Tibetan, Tibeto-

Burman, Western Tibeto-Burman, Bodish, East Bodish, Bumthang. *Dialects*: Phobjikha,

Chutobikha. Lexical similarity: 69% with Kurtokha [xkz], 75%–77% with Bumthangkha [kjz],

65%–78% with Khengkha [xkf]. *Lg Use*: Used as L2 by Khengkha [xkf]. *DLS*: Still. *Writing*:

Unwritten. *Map*: 18.

Olekha [ole] (Black Mountain Language, Monkha, Monpa, Ole Mönpa). *Users*: 500 (Van Driem

2007). *Location*: Trongsa district: 3 enclaves west of Mangde river; Wangdue Phodrang

district: Adha, Jangji, Rukha, Thrumzur, and Wangling villages; dialects separated by the

Black mountains. *Status*: 6b (Threatened). *Class*: Sino-Tibetan, Tibeto-Burman, Western

Tibeto-Burman, Bodish. *Dialects*: None known. Retained complex verbal system of Proto-

Tibeto-Burman. *Lg Use*: Some young people, all adults. *DLS*: Still. *Writing*: Unwritten. *Other*:

Reportedly an ancient population of Bhutan. *Map*: 18.

Santhali [sat]. Autonym: Har Rar. *Users*: 5,300 in Bhutan (2021 Joshua Project), based on

ethnicity. *Status*: Unestablished. *Class*: Austro-Asiatic, Munda, North Munda, Kherwari,

Santali. *Type*: SOV; postpositions; noun head final; no noun classes or genders; content q-word

in situ; 1 prefix, up to 3 suffixes; clause constituents indicated by case-marking; verbal

affixation marks person and number; non-ergative; both tense and aspect; passives and voice;

nontonal; 33 consonant and 6 vowel phonemes. *Lg Dev*: Literature. Periodicals. Radio. Videos.

Dictionary. Grammar. Texts. Bible: 1914–2005. *Writing*: Bengali (Bangla) script. Devanagari

script, used in Nepal. Latin script, used in Bangladesh. Ol Chiki (Ol Cemet', Ol, Santali)

script. Oriya (Odia) script. *Other*: Non-indigenous. *Worldwide*: Total users in all countries:

7,621,180 (as L1: 7,620,200; as L2: 980). Global EGIDS level: 4 (Educational). Indigenous in:

Bangladesh, India, Nepal.

Tshangla [tsj] (Central Monpa, Menba, Monpa, Sangla, Sarchapkkha, Shachobiikha, Shachopkha,

Sharchagpakha, Sharchhokpa, Sharchhop, Sharchokpa-lo, Tsangla, Tschanglo, Tshalingpa).

Users: 163,000 in Bhutan (2021 Joshua Project), based on ethnicity. *Location*: Mongar

district: east; Pemagatshel district: east; Samdrup Jongkhar and Trashigang districts; Trashi-

Yangtse district: south. *Status*: 3 (Wider communication). De facto language of provincial

identity in eastern and southeastern Bhutan. *Class*: Sino-Tibetan, Tibeto-Burman, Western

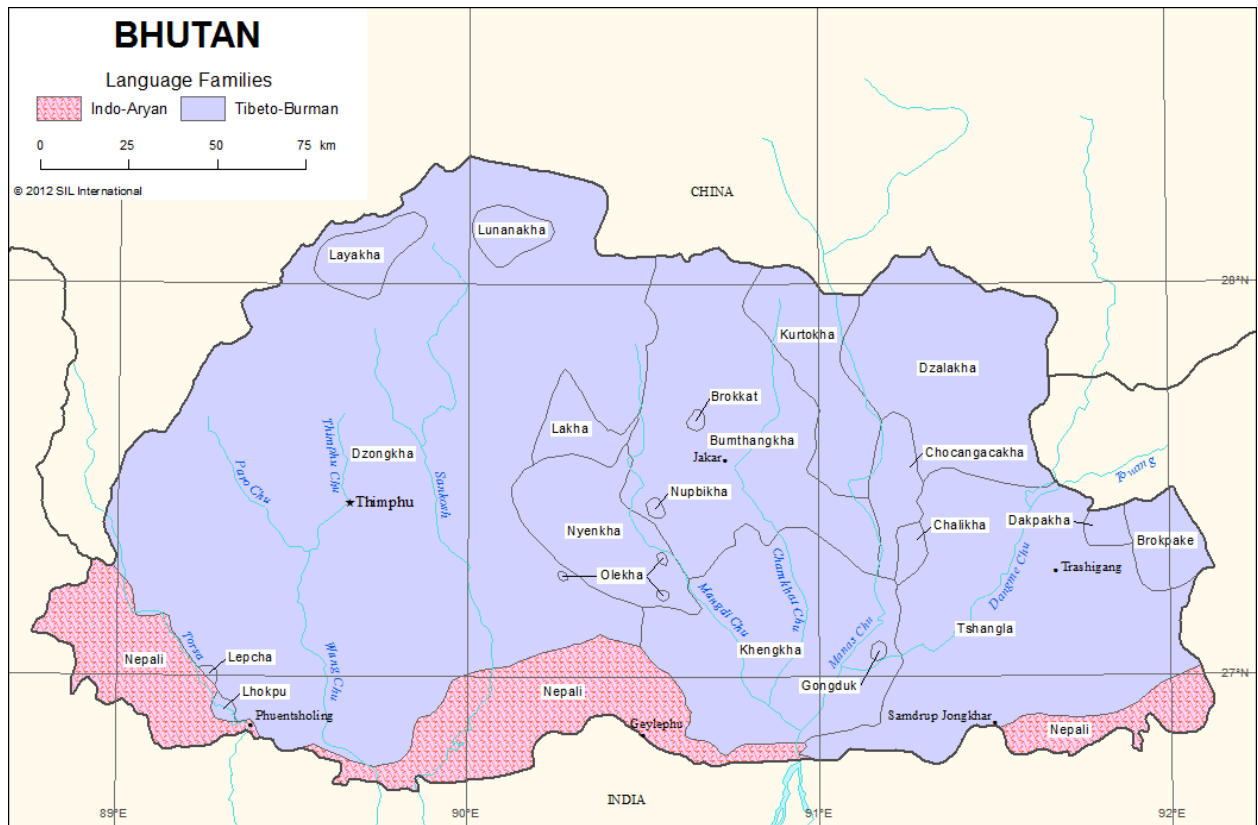
Tibeto-Burman, Bodish. *Dialects*: None known. Standard variety in Tashigang. Tshangla is

nearly identical to that of eastern Bhutan, except for the loss of initial voicing and tonogenesis

in Tibet. Differs from Tawan Monba [twm] in phonology, vocabulary, and grammar, and

Tawan Monba and Tshangla are not mutually intelligible. Lexical similarity: 40%–50% with Bumthangkha [kjz], 41%–48% with Dzongkha [dzo]. *Type*: SOV; singular-dual-plural personal pronouns; case-marking (3 cases); tense and aspect; 31 consonants and 5 vowels; nontonal; evidentiality (mirativity). *Lg Use*: Also use Dzongkha [dzo]. Used as L2 by Khengkha [xkf], Kurtokha [xkz]. *Lg Dev*: Literacy rate in L1: 47% (2003 SIL). Literacy rate in L2: Below 1%. Radio. Grammar. Bible portions: 2000. *DLS*: Emerging (0.02). *Writing*: Tibetan script, Uchen style, used in India. *Other*: Not the same as Tsanglo (Angami Naga) of Assam, India. May also be classified as North Assam, Monpa. Buddhist. *Map*: 18. *Worldwide*: Total users in all countries: 181,200. Also indigenous in: China, India.

Language Map



Languages by Population

In this section the languages of Bhutan are listed in order of their population of first-language speakers within the country, from highest to lowest. The entries report just the population and status elements.

100,000 to 999,999

Dzongkha [[dzo](#)] *Users:* 304,000 in Bhutan (2021 Joshua Project), based on ethnicity. *Status:* 1 (National). Statutory national language (2008, Constitution, Article 1(8)). *Worldwide:* Total users in all countries: 315,080.

Tshangla [[tsj](#)] *Users:* 163,000 in Bhutan (2021 Joshua Project), based on ethnicity. *Status:* 3 (Wider communication). De facto language of provincial identity in eastern and southeastern Bhutan. *Worldwide:* Total users in all countries: 181,200.

10,000 to 99,999

Khengkha [[xkf](#)] *Users:* 50,000 (2003 SIL). 65,000, all users. L2 users: 15,000. 30,000 monolinguals. *Status:* 6a (Vigorous).

Nepali [[npi](#)] *Users:* 33,100 in Bhutan (2021 Joshua Project), based on ethnicity. *Status:* 5* (Dispersed). De facto language of provincial identity in entire length of foothills, especially south central region. *Worldwide:* Total users in all countries: 25,587,570 (as L1: 16,903,270; as L2: 8,684,300).

Chocangacakha [[cgk](#)] *Users:* 30,000 (2011 SIL). *Status:* 6a* (Vigorous).

Assamese [[asm](#)] *Users:* 26,200 in Bhutan (2021 Joshua Project), based on ethnicity. *Status:* Unestablished. *Worldwide:* Total users in all countries: 15,328,240 (as L1: 15,327,990; as L2: 250).

Limbu [[lif](#)] *Users:* 22,400 in Bhutan (2020). *Status:* Unestablished. *Worldwide:* Total users in all countries: 429,400 (as L1: 407,200; as L2: 22,200).

Dzalakha [[dzl](#)] *Users:* 22,000 (2011 SIL). *Status:* 6a* (Vigorous).

Bengali [[ben](#)] *Users:* 20,100 in Bhutan (2021 Joshua Project), based on ethnicity. *Status:* Unestablished. *Worldwide:* Total users in all countries: 272,828,760 (as L1: 233,808,880; as L2: 39,019,880).

Bumthangkha [[kjz](#)] *Users:* 20,000 (2011 SIL). *Status:* 6b* (Threatened).

Bantawa [[bap](#)] *Users:* 19,200 in Bhutan (2002). *Status:* Unestablished. *Worldwide:* Total users in all countries: 195,100 (as L1: 166,600; as L2: 28,500).

Gurung [[gvr](#)] *Users:* 15,000 in Bhutan (2020). *Status:* Unestablished. *Worldwide:* Total users in

all countries: 396,800 (as L1: 374,000; as L2: 22,800).

Kurtokha [xkz] *Users:* 15,000 (2011 SIL). *Status:* 6b* (Threatened).

Kurux [kru] *Users:* 10,000 in Bhutan (2021 Joshua Project), based on ethnicity. *Status:* 6b* (Threatened). *Worldwide:* Total users in all countries: 2,084,390 (as L1: 2,083,700; as L2: 690).

Nyenkha [neh] *Users:* 10,000 (2006 Royal Government of Bhutan). *Status:* 6b* (Threatened).

1,000 to 9,999

Lakha [lkh] *Users:* 8,000 (Van Driem 1993). *Status:* 6b (Threatened).

Magar, Eastern [mgp] *Users:* 7,500 in Bhutan (2020). *Status:* Unestablished. *Worldwide:* Total users in all countries: 541,200.

Santhali [sat] *Users:* 5,300 in Bhutan (2021 Joshua Project), based on ethnicity. *Status:* Unestablished. *Worldwide:* Total users in all countries: 7,621,180 (as L1: 7,620,200; as L2: 980).

Brokpake [sgt] *Users:* 5,000 (2006 census). *Status:* 6b (Threatened).

Nupbikha [npb] *Users:* 3,000 (2022 Joshua Project), based on ethnicity. *Status:* 6a* (Vigorous).

Lepcha [lep] *Users:* 2,900 in Bhutan (2021 Joshua Project), based on ethnicity. *Status:* 6b (Threatened). *Worldwide:* Total users in all countries: 57,930 (as L1: 57,700; as L2: 230).

Lhokpu [lhp] *Users:* 2,610 (Van Driem 2007). *Status:* 6b (Threatened).

Gongduk [goe] *Users:* 2,400 (2021 Joshua Project), based on ethnicity. *Status:* 6b (Threatened).

Dakpakha [dka] *Users:* 2,000 (2011 SIL). *Status:* 6b* (Threatened).

Chalikha [tgf] *Users:* 1,500 (2011 SIL). *Status:* 6b* (Threatened).

Layakha [lya] *Users:* 1,100 (2003). *Status:* 6b* (Threatened).

100 to 999

Lunanakha [luk] *Users:* 810 (2014 census), based on ethnicity. *Status:* 6b* (Threatened).

Olekha [ole] *Users:* 500 (Van Driem 2007). *Status:* 6b (Threatened).

Brokkat [bro] *Users:* 300 (Van Driem 1993). *Status:* 6b (Threatened).

Unknown

English [eng] *Status:* 3 (Wider communication). De facto national working language. *Worldwide:* Total users in all countries: 1,456,448,320 (as L1: 379,682,200; as L2: 1076,766,120).

Languages by Status

In this section the languages of Bhutan are listed in order of their status within the country as represented by their level on the EGIDs scale (Lewis and Simons 2010). The language entries are reduced to just the information elements that are relevant to assessing the EGIDS level: population, status, language use, language development, and writing.

1 (National)

Dzongkha [[dzo](#)] *Users*: 304,000 in Bhutan (2021 Joshua Project), based on ethnicity. *Status*: Statutory national language (2008, Constitution, Article 1(8)). *Lg Dev*: Literature. Radio. Dictionary. Grammar. Bible: 2010. *Writing*: Tibetan script, official usage. *Worldwide*: Total users in all countries: 315,080.

3 (Wider communication)

English [[eng](#)] *Status*: De facto national working language. *Lg Use*: Education, government, commerce, media. Used as L2 by Khengkha [[xkf](#)]. *Writing*: Braille script. Deseret Alphabet, developed in 1854 with limited usage until 1877. Duployan shorthand. Latin script, primary usage. Shavian (Shaw) script, no longer in use. *Worldwide*: Total users in all countries: 1,456,448,320 (as L1: 379,682,200; as L2: 1076,766,120).

Tshangla [[tsj](#)] *Users*: 163,000 in Bhutan (2021 Joshua Project), based on ethnicity. *Status*: De facto language of provincial identity in eastern and southeastern Bhutan. *Lg Use*: Also use Dzongkha [[dzo](#)]. Used as L2 by Khengkha [[xkf](#)], Kurtokha [[xkz](#)]. *Lg Dev*: Radio. Grammar. Bible portions: 2000. *Writing*: Tibetan script, Uchen style, used in India. *Worldwide*: Total users in all countries: 181,200.

5 (Dispersed)

Nepali [[npi](#)] *Users*: 33,100 in Bhutan (2021 Joshua Project), based on ethnicity. *Status*: De facto language of provincial identity in entire length of foothills, especially south central region. *Lg Use*: Used as L2 by Khengkha [[xkf](#)], Lhokpu [[lhp](#)]. *Writing*: Braille script. Devanagari script, primary usage. *Worldwide*: Total users in all countries: 25,587,570 (as L1: 16,903,270; as L2: 8,684,300).

6a (Vigorous)

Chocangacakha [[cggk](#)] *Users*: 30,000 (2011 SIL). *Writing*: Unwritten.

Dzalakha [[dzl](#)] *Users*: 22,000 (2011 SIL). *Lg Dev*: Dictionary. *Writing*: Unwritten.

Khengkha [[xkf](#)] *Users*: 65,000, all users. L1 users: 50,000 (2003 SIL). L2 users: 15,000. 30,000 monolinguals. *Lg Use*: Vigorous. Home, commerce, local politics, traditional religion, but not

allowed in school. Used by all. Negative attitudes, especially toward Gonphu village speaking style. Lower Kheng considered most backward; Middle Kheng most prestigious. Also use Bumthangkha [kjz], especially those who travel or have intermarried. Also use Dzongkha [dzo], but only by educated people and some older men. Also use English [eng], especially some (10%) of the educated young people. Also use Kurtokha [xkz], especially those who travel or have intermarried. Also use Nepali [npi], especially some (20%) of those who live near the road. Also use Nyenkha [neh], especially those who travel or have intermarried. Also use Tshangla [tsj], especially those who travel east of Kheng area. *Lg Dev*: Bible portions: 2008. *Writing*: Tibetan script, Uchen style, unofficial usage.

Nupbikha [npb] *Users*: 3,000 (2022 Joshua Project), based on ethnicity. *Writing*: Unwritten.

6b (Threatened)

Brokkat [bro] *Users*: 300 (Van Driem 1993). *Lg Use*: Some young people, all adults. *Writing*: Unwritten.

Brokpake [sgt] *Users*: 5,000 (2006 census). *Lg Use*: Some young people, all adults. *Writing*: Unwritten.

Bumthangkha [kjz] *Users*: 20,000 (2011 SIL). *Lg Use*: Used as L2 by Khengkha [xkf]. *Lg Dev*: Dictionary. Bible portions: 1938. *Writing*: Tibetan script, Uchen style.

Chalikha [tgf] *Users*: 1,500 (2011 SIL). *Writing*: Unwritten.

Dakpakha [dka] *Users*: 2,000 (2011 SIL). *Writing*: Unwritten.

Gongduk [goe] *Users*: 2,400 (2021 Joshua Project), based on ethnicity. *Lg Use*: Some young people, all adults. *Lg Dev*: Texts. *Writing*: Unwritten.

Kurtokha [xkz] *Users*: 15,000 (2011 SIL). *Lg Use*: Most also use Tshangla [tsj]. Many also use Dzongkha [dzo]. Used as L2 by Khengkha [xkf]. *Writing*: Latin script. Tibetan script, Uchen style.

Kurux [kru] *Users*: 10,000 in Bhutan (2021 Joshua Project), based on ethnicity. *Writing*: Devanagari script. *Worldwide*: Total users in all countries: 2,084,390 (as L1: 2,083,700; as L2: 690).

Lakha [lkh] *Users*: 8,000 (Van Driem 1993). *Lg Use*: Some young people, all adults. *Writing*: Unwritten.

Layakha [lya] *Users*: 1,100 (2003). *Writing*: Unwritten.

Lepcha [lep] *Users*: 2,900 in Bhutan (2021 Joshua Project), based on ethnicity. *Lg Use*: Some young people, all adults. *Writing*: Lepcha (Róng) script. Tibetan script. *Worldwide*: Total users in all countries: 57,930 (as L1: 57,700; as L2: 230).

Lhokpu [lhp] *Users*: 2,610 (Van Driem 2007). *Lg Use*: Some young people, all adults. All also use Nepali [npi] (Van Driem 2007). *Writing*: Unwritten.

Lunanakha [luk] *Users:* 810 (2014 census), based on ethnicity. *Writing:* Unwritten.

Nyenkha [neh] *Users:* 10,000 (2006 Royal Government of Bhutan). *Lg Use:* Used as L2 by Khengkha [xkf]. *Writing:* Unwritten.

Olekha [ole] *Users:* 500 (Van Driem 2007). *Lg Use:* Some young people, all adults. *Writing:* Unwritten.

Unestablished

Assamese [asm] *Users:* 26,200 in Bhutan (2021 Joshua Project), based on ethnicity. *Writing:* Bengali (Bangla) script. *Worldwide:* Total users in all countries: 15,328,240 (as L1: 15,327,990; as L2: 250).

Bantawa [bap] *Users:* 19,200 in Bhutan (2002). *Status:* Used by Rai people dispersed in Bhutan. *Writing:* Devanagari script. *Worldwide:* Total users in all countries: 195,100 (as L1: 166,600; as L2: 28,500).

Bengali [ben] *Users:* 20,100 in Bhutan (2021 Joshua Project), based on ethnicity. *Writing:* Bengali (Bangla) script, primary usage. Braille script. Newa script, no longer in use. *Worldwide:* Total users in all countries: 272,828,760 (as L1: 233,808,880; as L2: 39,019,880).

Gurung [gvr] *Users:* 15,000 in Bhutan (2020). *Writing:* Devanagari script. *Worldwide:* Total users in all countries: 396,800 (as L1: 374,000; as L2: 22,800).

Limbu [lif] *Users:* 22,400 in Bhutan (2020). *Writing:* Devanagari script, primary usage. Limbu (Kiranti, Sirijonga) script, dating from early 18th century. *Worldwide:* Total users in all countries: 429,400 (as L1: 407,200; as L2: 22,200).

Magar, Eastern [mgp] *Users:* 7,500 in Bhutan (2020). *Writing:* Brahmi script. Devanagari script. *Worldwide:* Total users in all countries: 541,200.

Santhali [sat] *Users:* 5,300 in Bhutan (2021 Joshua Project), based on ethnicity. *Writing:* Bengali (Bangla) script. Devanagari script, used in Nepal. Latin script, used in Bangladesh. Ol Chiki (Ol Cemet', Ol, Santali) script. Oriya (Odia) script. *Worldwide:* Total users in all countries: 7,621,180 (as L1: 7,620,200; as L2: 980).

Languages by District

This index gives an alphabetical listing of the top-level administrative subdivisions within Bhutan. Under the name of each district is a list of the language communities that are located within its area.

Bumthang

- Brokkat [bro], 11
- Bumthangkha [kjz], 11

Chhukha

- Kurux [kru], 14
- Nepali [npi], 15

Dagana

- Nepali [npi], 15

Gasa

- Layakha [lya], 14
- Lunanakha [luk], 15

Lhuentse

- Bumthangkha [kjz], 11
- Chocangacakha [cggk], 11
- Dzalakha [dzl], 12
- Kurtokha [xkz], 13

Mongar

- Bumthangkha [kjz], 11
- Chalikha [tgf], 11
- Chocangacakha [cggk], 11
- Gongduk [goe], 12
- Khengkha [xkf], 13
- Tshangla [tsj], 16

Pemagatshel

- Tshangla [tsj], 16

Samdrup Jongkhar

- Nepali [npi], 15
- Tshangla [tsj], 16

Samtse

- Kurux [kru], 14

- Lepcha [lep], 14

- Lhokpu [lhp], 14

- Nepali [npi], 15

Sarpang

- Khengkha [xkf], 13
- Nepali [npi], 15

Trashigang

- Brokpake [sgt], 11
- Dakpakha [dka], 11
- Tshangla [tsj], 16

Trash-Yangtse

- Dzalakha [dzl], 12
- Tshangla [tsj], 16

Trongsa

- Bumthangkha [kjz], 11
- Khengkha [xkf], 13
- Lakha [lkh], 14
- Nupbikha [npb], 16
- Nyenkha [neh], 16
- Olekha [ole], 16

Tsirang

- Nepali [npi], 15

Wangdue Phodrang

- Dzongkha [dzo], 12
- Lakha [lkh], 14
- Nyenkha [neh], 16
- Olekha [ole], 16

Zhemgang

- Khengkha [xkf], 13

Languages by Family

This index gives an alphabetical listing of the linguistic classifications used for the established languages of Bhutan. The entries in this index represent the full path in the linguistic family tree from the highest level grouping down to the lowest. All the languages listed in the same entry are members of the same lowest-level subgroup. The referenced page contains the main entry that describes the language.

Dravidian, Northern

Kurux [kru], 14

Indo-European, Germanic, West, English

English [eng], 12

Indo-European, Indo-Iranian, Indo-Aryan, Intermediate Divisions, Eastern, Eastern Pahari

Nepali [npi], 15

Sino-Tibetan, Tibeto-Burman, Central Tibeto-Burman, Lepcha

Lepcha [lep], 14

Sino-Tibetan, Tibeto-Burman, Western Tibeto-Burman, Bodish

Gongduk [goe], 12

Lhokpu [lhp], 14

Olekha [ole], 16

Tshangla [tsj], 16

Sino-Tibetan, Tibeto-Burman, Western Tibeto-Burman, Bodish, Central Bodish, Central, Southern

Brokkat [bro], 11

Brokpake [sgt], 11

Chocangacakha [cgk], 11

Dzongkha [dzo], 12

Lakha [lkh], 14

Layakha [lya], 14

Lunanakha [luk], 15

Sino-Tibetan, Tibeto-Burman, Western Tibeto-Burman, Bodish, East Bodish

Dakpakha [dka], 11

Sino-Tibetan, Tibeto-Burman, Western Tibeto-Burman, Bodish, East Bodish, Bumthang

Bumthangkha [kjz], 11

Chalikhha [tgf], 11

Dzalakha [dzl], 12

Khengkha [xkf], 13

Kurtokha [xkz], 13

Nupbikhha [npb], 16

Nyenkha [neh], 16

Language Code Index

This index gives an alphabetical listing of all 30 three-letter codes that are used in this work to uniquely identify languages. The referenced page contains the main entry that describes the language. All codes listed are part of the ISO 639-3 standard; see <http://www.sil.org/iso639-3/>.

asm	Assamese, 10	lif	Limbu, 15
bap	Bantawa, 10	lkh	Lakha, 14
ben	Bengali, 10	luk	Lunanakha, 15
bro	Brokkat, 11	lya	Layakha, 14
cgk	Chocangacakha, 11	mgp	Magar, Eastern, 15
dka	Dakpakha, 11	neh	Nyenkha, 16
dzl	Dzalakha, 12	npb	Nupbikha, 16
dzo	Dzongkha, 12	npi	Nepali, 15
eng	English, 12	ole	Olekha, 16
goe	Gongduk, 12	sat	Santhali, 16
gvr	Gurung, 13	sgt	Brokpake, 11
kjz	Bumthangkha, 11	tgf	Chalikha, 11
kru	Kurux, 14	tsj	Tshangla, 16
lep	Lepcha, 14	xkf	Khengkha, 13
lhp	Lhokpu, 14	xkz	Kurtokha, 13

Language Name Index

This index lists every name that appears in the language listings as a primary or alternate name of a language or dialect. The following abbreviations are used in the index entries: *alt.* ‘alternate name for’; *alt. dial.* ‘alternate name for a dialect of’; *dial.* ‘primary name for a dialect of’; *pej. alt.* ‘pejorative alternate name for’; and *pej. alt. dial.* ‘pejorative alternate name for a dialect of’. Each index entry resolves to the primary name for the language with which the indexed name is associated, followed by square brackets containing the unique three-letter language code from ISO 639-3. The referenced page contains the main entry that describes the language. If the language appears on a map, the entry for the primary name also lists page numbers for the maps on which the language occurs.

- Adap**, *dial.* Dzongkha [dzo], 12
- Bhotia of Bhutan**, *alt.* Dzongkha [dzo], 12
- Bhotia of Dukpa**, *alt.* Dzongkha [dzo], 12
- Bhumtam**, *alt.* Bumthangkha [kjz], 11
- Bhutanese**, *alt.* Dzongkha [dzo], 12
- Black Mountain Language**, *alt.* Olekha [ole], 16
- Brokkat** [bro], 11, 18
- Brokpa**, *alt.* Brokpake [sgt], 11
- Brokpake** [sgt], 11, 18
- Brokskad**, *alt.* Brokkat [bro], 11
- Bumtang**, *alt.* Bumthangkha [kjz], 11
- Bumthangkha**, *alt.* Bumthangkha [kjz], 11
- Bumtanp**, *alt.* Bumthangkha [kjz], 11
- Bumthang**, *alt.* Bumthangkha [kjz], 11
- Bumthangkha** [kjz], 11, 18
- Bumthapkha**, *alt.* Bumthangkha [kjz], 11
- Central Monpa**, *alt.* Tshangla [tsj], 16
- Chali**, *alt.* Chalikha [tgf], 11
- Chalikha** [tgf], 11, 18
- Chalipkha**, *alt.* Chalikha [tgf], 11
- Chocangaca**, *alt.* Chocangacakha [cgk], 11
- Chocangacakha** [cgk], 11, 18
- Chocha Ngacha**, *alt.* Chocangacakha [cgk], 11
- Chogor**, *dial.* Bumthangkha [kjz], 11
- Chunmat**, *dial.* Bumthangkha [kjz], 11
- Chutobikha**, *dial.* Nyenkha [neh], 16
- Dakpa**, *alt.* Brokpake [sgt], 11
alt. Dakpakha [dka], 11
- Dakpakha** [dka], 11, 18
- Damilo**, *alt.* Brokpake [sgt], 11
- Dap**, *alt.* Brokpake [sgt], 11
- Drokpakay**, *alt.* Brokpake [sgt], 11
- Drukha**, *alt.* Dzongkha [dzo], 12
- Drukke**, *alt.* Dzongkha [dzo], 12
- Dukpa**, *alt.* Dzongkha [dzo], 12
- Dzala**, *alt.* Dzalakha [dzl], 12
- Dzalakha** [dzl], 12, 18
- Dzalamat**, *alt.* Dzalakha [dzl], 12
- Dzongkha** [dzo], 12, 18
- Eastern Pahari**, *alt.* Nepali [npi], 15
- English** [eng], 12
- Gongdubikha**, *alt.* Gongduk [goe], 12
- Gongduk** [goe], 12, 18
- Gorkhali**, *alt.* Nepali [npi], 15
- Gurkhali**, *alt.* Nepali [npi], 15
- Gurtü**, *alt.* Kurtokha [xkz], 13
- Ha**, *dial.* Dzongkha [dzo], 12
- Henkha**, *alt.* Nyenkha [neh], 16
- Ilammu**, *dial.* Lepcha [lep], 14
- Jobikha**, *alt.* Brokpake [sgt], 11
- Jokay**, *alt.* Brokkat [bro], 11

- Jonkha**, *alt.* Dzongkha [dzo], 12
- Kebumtamp**, *alt.* Bumthangkha [kτζ], 11
- Ken**, *alt.* Khengkha [xkf], 13
- Keng**, *alt.* Khengkha [xkf], 13
- Kenkha**, *alt.* Khengkha [xkf], 13
- Khaskura**, *alt.* Nepali [npi], 15
- Khen**, *alt.* Khengkha [xkf], 13
- Khengkha** [xkf], 13, 18
- Khenkha**, *alt.* Khengkha [xkf], 13
- Khomakha**, *dial.* Dzalakha [dzl], 12
- Kursmadkha**, *alt.* Chocangacakha [cgk], 11
- Kurteopkha**, *alt.* Kurtokha [xkz], 13
- Kürthöpka**, *alt.* Kurtokha [xkz], 13
- Kurthopkha**, *alt.* Kurtokha [xkz], 13
- Kurtobikha**, *alt.* Kurtokha [xkz], 13
- Kurtokha** [xkz], 13, 18
- Kurtöp**, *alt.* Kurtokha [xkz], 13
- Kurtopakha**, *alt.* Kurtokha [xkz], 13
- Kurtotpiikha**, *alt.* Kurtokha [xkz], 13
- Kurukh**, *alt.* Kurux [kru], 14
- Kurux** [kru], 14
- Kyengkha**, *alt.* Khengkha [xkf], 13
- Lakha** [lkh], 14, 18
- Lap**, *alt.* Nyenkha [neh], 16
- Lapcha**, *alt.* Lepcha [lep], 14
- Layakha** [lya], 14, 18
- Lepcha** [lep], 14, 18
- Lhobikha**, *alt.* Lhokpu [lhp], 14
- Lhokpu** [lhp], 14, 18
- Lhotshammikha**, *alt.* Nepali [npi], 15
- Lokpu**, *alt.* Lhokpu [lhp], 14
- Lower Kheng**, *dial.* Khengkha [xkf], 13
- Lunanakha** [luk], 15, 18
- Eastern Magar**, *see* Magar, Eastern [mgp], 15
- Mangdhika**, *alt.* Nyenkha [neh], 16
- Mangsdekha**, *alt.* Nyenkha [neh], 16
- Maphekha**, *alt.* Chocangacakha [cgk], 11
- Menba**, *alt.* Tshangla [tsj], 16
- Mera Sagtengpa**, *alt.* Brokpake [sgt], 11
- Meragsagstengkha**, *alt.* Brokpake [sgt], 11
- Middle Kheng**, *dial.* Khengkha [xkf], 13
- Mira Sagtengpa**, *alt.* Brokpake [sgt], 11
- Monkha**, *alt.* Olekha [ole], 16
- Monpa**, *alt.* Olekha [ole], 16
alt. Tshangla [tsj], 16
- Nepalese**, *alt.* Nepali [npi], 15
- Nepali** [npi], 15, 18
- Northern Thimphu**, *dial.* Dzongkha [dzo], 12
- Nünpa**, *alt.* Lepcha [lep], 14
- Nupbi**, *alt.* Nupbikha [npb], 16
- Nupbikha** [npb], 16, 18
- Nyenkha** [neh], 16, 18
- Ole Mönpa**, *alt.* Olekha [ole], 16
- Olekha** [ole], 16, 18
- Oraoan**, *alt.* Kurux [kru], 14
- Parbatiya**, *alt.* Nepali [npi], 15
- Phobjikha**, *dial.* Nyenkha [neh], 16
- Rengjongmu**, *dial.* Lepcha [lep], 14
- Róng**, *alt.* Lepcha [lep], 14
- Rongke**, *alt.* Lepcha [lep], 14
- Róngkup**, *alt.* Lepcha [lep], 14
- Rongpa**, *alt.* Lepcha [lep], 14
- Róng-ríng**, *alt.* Lepcha [lep], 14
- rTsamangpa'i kha**, *alt.* Chocangacakha [cgk],
11
- Rtsamangpa'ikha**, *alt.* Chocangacakha [cgk],
11
- Sagtengpa**, *alt.* Brokpake [sgt], 11
- Sangla**, *alt.* Tshangla [tsj], 16
- Sarchapkkha**, *alt.* Tshangla [tsj], 16
- Shachobiikha**, *alt.* Tshangla [tsj], 16
- Shachopkha**, *alt.* Tshangla [tsj], 16
- Sharchagpakha**, *alt.* Tshangla [tsj], 16
- Sharchhokpa**, *alt.* Tshangla [tsj], 16

- Sharchhop**, *alt.* Tshangla [tsj], 16
Sharchokpa-lo, *alt.* Tshangla [tsj], 16
Taba-Damey-Bikha, *alt.* Lhokpu [lhp], 14
Tamsangmu, *dial.* Lepcha [lep], 14
Tang, *dial.* Bumthangkha [kjz], 11
Thimphu-Punakha, *alt. dial.* Dzongkha [dzo],
12
Trongsakha, *alt.* Nupbikha [npb], 16
Tsagkaglingpa'ikha, *alt.* Chocangacakha
[cgk], 11
Tsamang, *alt.* Chocangacakha [cgk], 11
Tsangla, *alt.* Tshangla [tsj], 16
Tschanglo, *alt.* Tshangla [tsj], 16
Tshali, *alt.* Chalikha [tgf], 11
Tshalingpa, *alt.* Chalikha [tgf], 11
alt. Tshangla [tsj], 16
Tshangkha, *alt.* Lakha [lkh], 14
Tshangla [tsj], 16, 18
Upper Kheng, *dial.* Khengkha [xkf], 13
Upper Mangdep, *alt.* Nyenkha [neh], 16
Ura, *dial.* Bumthangkha [kjz], 11
Uraon, *alt.* Kurux [kru], 14
Wang-The, *dial.* Dzongkha [dzo], 12
Yangtsebikha, *alt.* Dzalakha [dzl], 12
Zongkhar, *alt.* Dzongkha [dzo], 12

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