

# Using ICT for Learning the Punjabi Language: A Case Study

Sandeep Kaur

Lovely Professional University. Email: [Sandeep.17245@lpu.co.in](mailto:Sandeep.17245@lpu.co.in)

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## Abstract

In the context of the relevance of regional languages in modern era, many modern tools have come into circulation. ICT has so far not been introduced in the realm of regional languages properly. It is widely assumed that computer based programs, software and web links do not support students in their learning of Punjabi. However, this paper offers a contesting yet positive view. This study is designed to prove that laptop, mobile phones, internet- connectivity and projector based learning is very effective for students in learning of Punjabi. This research paper is based on findings of qualitative nature. For this research purpose case studies have been used. Questionnaires are used to collect data. Data are analysed by using descriptive numerical techniques made to express frequency, percentage and mean. On the basis of findings few suggestions are made.

**Keywords:** Pedagogy, Learning, Language, ICT, Skills, technology.

## 1. Introduction

“Punjabi is a primitive Indo-Aryan language endorsed in (Indian and Pakistani) region of Punjab. It is the 11<sup>th</sup> most widely spoken language around the globe which has nearly 90 million speakers. There are many foreign populations of Punjabi language in Canada, America and United Kingdom. It is a well spoken language in Pakistani Punjab too but it does not have any official status as compared to Indian Punjab.”<sup>1</sup> Due to the status of primitive language a great tradition of “literature is also found in Punjabi language ranging from 840 A.D.-940 A.D. Baba Farid was the first prominent poet of Punjabi language.”<sup>2</sup> Spiritual and Poetic expression of Shri Adh Granth seems on similar lines but it enhances the beauty and popularity of Punjabi language too. Despite the inspiring history of literature and a good number of speakers, “UNSECO has reported that in the coming next 50 years Punjabi will be demolished”<sup>3</sup>. Some of the reasons are well defined such as it is being considered as the language of illiterates employed in unattractive kinds of job. In fact, it is believed that it is not a technology friendly language as compared to the English language.”<sup>4</sup>

Similar practices are evident in the field of education. It is widely assumed that computer based programs, software and web links do not support students in the learning of Punjabi. However, this paper refutes this myth. This study is designed to prove that laptop, mobile phones, internet connectivity and projector based learning is very effective for students of Punjabi. This research paper is based on findings of qualitative research. For this research case study is being used. Questionnaire is used to collect data. Data is analysed by using descriptive numerical technique to express frequency, percentage and mean. On the basis of findings few suggestions are given.

Numerous studies in the field of learning perspective claim that modern technologies like laptops, PC, mobile phones and create an ambient enhance students' skill towards language and enlarge learning environment. A formal education which creates expertise in modern gadgets is highly appreciable because this knowledge enhances opportunities for good employment. The technology advancements have created new areas of growth and spawned a host of career options. Arulsamy (2009) defines that "Computer knowledge has amalgamated to form the new field called Information and Communication Technology."<sup>5</sup> As technology changes, necessary skills do get changed too and to keep pace with the emerging needs and opportunities, it is needed to incorporate the technological developments in the teaching and learning process. According to Saxena J, Saxena M, Gihar S. (2009) "Information Technology (IT) is defined in the Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary as "the study or use of automatic equipment, especially computers for storing, analysing and sending out information."<sup>6</sup> In the view of (Passi) 2011, "Teaching has been promoted by PC machinery in innumerable methods and at numerous stages. It supplements knowledge setting and the apprentices to accomplish merchantable services. Even, language learning is benefited due to these machineries."<sup>7</sup>

When technology is used to convey specific information or skills, Zucchermaglia (1991) describes it as "full technology provides full information to the student".<sup>8</sup> Technologies include computer assisted instructions, integrated learning systems, software and web links. Jonassen (1996) describes that "Computer-assisted directives and cohesive learning systems have been repeatedly adopted in modern education structures and it enhances outmoded teaching system for languages too."<sup>9</sup> Vockell (1992) states that "Technology has often been used as an additional for exiting tools, such as books, rather than as an alternative medium through which different tasks might be performed and different objectives might be achieved."<sup>10</sup> Jonassen (1996) claimed that "computer assisted instructions can increase achievements for language students as well because it leads to automaticity of lower level skills through extended practice."<sup>11</sup> In the tutorial form of computer-assisted instruction, the computer provides additional information to the learner if an incorrect answer is supplied. This continues until the learner is successful. Maddux (1997) suggests that "Learning with technology initiates much of the current thinking about the use of technology to sustenance knowledge."<sup>12</sup>

When technology becomes an integral part of learning environment it provides a tool for both teachers and students that can facilitate new roles and new instructional strategies. Jonassen describes (1991) "Technology used as a tool can serve as a means to seek and process information, and to reflect on one's understanding, beliefs, and intellectual processes."<sup>13</sup> Jonassen (1996) proposes that "when pupils study with equipment, it converts a mind tool."<sup>14</sup> He defines mind tools as computer based tools and learning environments that have been adapted or developed to function as knowledgeable associates with learners in order to engage and assist critical thinking and sophisticated order learning.

Technology used as tool can serve as a means to seek and process information, and to reflect on one's understanding, beliefs, and thinking process. It enriches data too. Even, for language learning computer based tools assist to enhance teaching and learning experiences. Technology is providing not only speed but also it is giving convenience. Data is more saved in online mode rather than manual setup. There seems to be link between the technologies and authentic learning and collaborative learning. It provides a ground to share knowledge and information. The following discussions examine how technology can be used to enhance learning abilities.

## 2. Method

The overall focus of this study is to analyse the effect of ICT on the learning of a pupil particularly in the case of Punjabi language teaching. This question is investigated on the main premise that is there any difference in learning with the help of computers and online material as compared to traditional system for Punjabi students. This study is designed to observe how learners are getting benefits from ICT for Punjabi language. The primary purpose of this study is to know how computer can enrich a pupil's learning experience even for Punjabi subjects because it is a myth that computer application and web links generally do not support regional languages and ICT is out of reach relevance in the context of regional languages.

This study is a quantitative research and it is in quest of students' progress by using ICT in academic growth. A semi-structured interview was chosen as Creswell believes that "it is the most appropriate methodology to create visualizations towards obliged phenomena."<sup>15</sup> Students of MA Punjabi are chosen as participants because they are more concerned with learning Punjabi language and their replies are more valid. Sample of questions are given below in the table:

**Table 1: sample Questionnaire**

1. What change do you find in the preparation of your course material or task while working on computers/laptops?
2. Do you find any potential change in your typing speed while you work on an electronic system?
3. Does working on the system allow you more comfort in time saving as compared to manual work?
4. Do you find abundant course material on Punjabi websites relevant to your area of study?
5. Are available websites worthy source of course material?
6. Are websites are easily accessible to you?
7. What change do you feel in your thinking and comprehension while going through the websites?
8. Has reading on the web given you some approach to ponder differently?
9. Does a using ICT tool give you any professional enhancement?
10. How can you incorporate the overall benefit of ICT tools in your learning skills?
11. Do modern tools pertaining to ICT build confidence in you?
12. What challenge do you face and anticipate in using technology?
13. Has your confidence and acquaintance contributed in your outcomes of learning online?

## 3. Findings

Some themes are organised from the replies of respondents.

**Table 2: the advantages of ICT in learning of Punjabi language**

Number of students	Extracts from Manuscripts	Themes
8 66.67%	“When I use Punjabi font Anmollippi for assignments, my work is faster and safe.” (Respondent 3)	Improves Efficiency and speed
	“Speed is very important to completes academic tasks before due date and typing skills provides it.” (Respondent 2)	
	“Typing is more convenient than writing. Punjabi font particular anmollipi has made my working easier whether it is completion of CA or dissertation.” (Respondent 4)	
	“When I use computer software for my academic task and other writings, it’s give me opportunity to keep it safe for a long time as compared to manual set up.” (Respondent 5)	
	“Working on laptops offers an ease to complete all task more efficiently.” (Respondent 6)	
	“PC helps me to complete task on time and accurately.” (Respondent 8)	
	“Punjabi typing is a good tool for me to present myself as professional. I have earned some money too by typing some documents in Punjabi for our area’s Notary Club.” (Respondent 9)	
	“I try to complete my work always in a proper manner since childhood and an ICT tool assists to achieve it better.” (Respondent 10)	
4 33.33%	“Using ICT for access of Punjabi material is really useful. I can check online material to enhance my knowledge on any topic.” (Respondent 8)	More Information and Knowledge
	“Websites like Punjabi pedia and kavita.com are good source of Punjabi material online.” (Respondent 12)	
	“Rather than reading 2-3 books in library, I can check many books and chapters online.” (Respondent 3)	
	“It is a myth that there is lack of Punjabi material online but there are lots of Punjabi websites as ready resources.” (Respondent 4)	
5 41.67%	“More material gives more perspective. My views are getting more sharpened as I’m getting familiar with more Punjabi websites.” (Respondent 8)	Enhance Critical Approach
	“Many websites like Punjabi Pedia and Kavita.com provide writings of good authors which to shapes my thoughts.” (Respondent 12)	

	<p>“I have gone through web readings and find it very good in building a sound approach.” (Respondent 5)</p> <p>“Generally in a manual set up, I cannot get material of many writers but websites can provide hundreds of data base at one platform and it helps to broaden view.” (Respondent 3)</p> <p>“I find it articles available online such as in Punjabi pedia very relevant and it enhance my knowledge on many topic.” (Respondent 6)</p>	
3 25.0%	<p>“Today everyone is using modern tools and when I use it for Punjabi task, I feel good as professionals Akhar.” (Respondent 9)</p> <p>“In the modern world, I can present my work in a more professional manner by using PPT and MS word.” (Respondent 4)</p> <p>“Use of ICT tools is helping me be more professional.” (Respondent 3)</p>	Enhances Professional Approach
2 16.67%	<p>“Today everyone is using modern tools and when I use it for tasks in Punjabi, I feel good as a professionals while using software Akhar.” (Respondent 7)</p> <p>“To be familiar with modern software like Unicode offers enough confidence to face modern challenges.” (Respondent 11)</p>	Builds Confidence

### 3.1.1 An Analysis of factors discussed in Table 1

Many responses were discussed in table 1 which shows that ICT has a positive impact.

### 3.1.2 Improve Efficiency and speed

In modern times, speed is the key to success. To meet the challenges of modern times, it is essential to follow deadlines and ICT is a great tool to achieve targets on time. ICT is increasing working speed of students. 66.67% respondent have declare that typing fonts like anmollipi has made their academic tasks more accurate and they are now able to complete their tasks before due dates. They are doing it with a greater speed as compared to traditional approaches of working. Students are getting benefits in terms of speed by using computers for academic growth. Eventually, speed has transformed the academic scenario too.

### 3.1.3 More Information and Knowledge

Most important factor about online learning is the plenitude of resources. For Punjabi studies various academic websites like Punjabi pedia, kavita.com and so on are accessible online. These web links are providing a prodigious amount information and knowledge. Students are going through these materials and it sharpening their perspectives too. They are getting more viewpoints to understand concepts and questions. It enhances their level of knowledge. Teacher student learning is fixed for a time slot and independent reading in library also does not offer

access to unlimited resources but online resources prove supplementary assistance to improve understanding. Therefore, pupils are benefiting by using online material.

### **3.1.4 Enhances Critical Approach**

As compared to traditional approach of learning it provides a broader viewpoint to understand the phenomena because more academic readings are possible in a short time. Students can go through different intellectual opinions at a single click. It is an abundant instrument which provides knowledge immediately and reader can cultivate wider ground upon any academic subject. Moreover, Students are getting familiar with new online techniques and sharpening their view which leads them to build a critical approach.

### **3.1.5 Enhances Professional Approach**

In the modern world, professional appearance is a mandatory skill to be successful. Contemporary technology can boost students' professional abilities. 25.0% students assert that ICT tools are enhancing professional approach among them. Their abilities and efficiencies are also increased. In fact, they are more capable in presenting to the world at large. They are presenting their academic tasks by using PPTs, MS word, you tube videos and so on. Knowledge of Punjabi typing is an additional skill allowing professional growth and competence. The documents they prepare documents are full of information and latest techniques as compared to traditional working styles.

### **3.1.6 Builds Confidence**

Confidence is an added accomplishment. Student's performance gets boost with confidence by making ICT a part of learning process. 16.67% students believe that modern technologies especially competence in using laptops, internet and similar technologies are enhancing their potential and confidence level. Students' performance is heightened a lot by getting acquainted with ICT. They are able to present their self in a better manner. Therefore, it can be readily summarised that ICT is improving confidence levels among the learners.

## **4. Conclusion**

The ICT is in constant development and both as a medium and tool the potentials for teaching-learning are being constantly developed:

“The web and other related technology may be said to be still in infancy, and nobody can anticipate their future. But in view of open and closed access to all forms of information on a single converged medium a different type of system would be necessary for handling digital objects in post-Gutenberg period.”

The present study finds that,

1. ICT is an excellent tool for learning of Punjabi. There is software available which support Punjabi script like Akahr.
2. Many websites are supportive tools for learning of Punjabi like Punjabi pedia.
3. Unicode software makes easiest to type keywords to search in Punjabi script.

## Suggestions

On the basis of this research the following suggestions can be made:

1. Punjabi font program CA can be given to enhance students' skills. It will enhance their capability for Punjabi software and search engines.
2. Punjabi software and programme based workshop can contribute to train students in the use of technology for learning.
3. Mobile phones loaded with Punjabi software such as Gurbani Searcher and Akhar can contribute a lot in prompting the use of Punjabi script for web purposes and communication.
4. In order to advance the cause of the Punjabi language, there needs to be a institution-industry collaboration and new avenues should be explored.

Above all, teachers must come out of inhibition regarding using ICT for advancing the language of millions of people both in India and abroad. For, language too is a part of the cultural heritage and if we do not make use of the new medium and tools, we will remain responsible for our faults for the posterity.

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