

IDENTIFICATION AND REMEDIAL MEASURES OF COMMON SPELLING ERRORS IN PUNJABI AMONG ELEMENTARY SCHOOL STUDENTS

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ABSTRACT

Language plays a crucial role in human communication, cognitive development, and cultural identity. Among various languages spoken in India, Punjabi holds a significant place, particularly in the state of Punjab where it functions as both a medium of instruction and a cultural symbol. However, students at the elementary level often face difficulties in writing Punjabi correctly due to spelling errors arising from phonetic variation, similarities among characters in the Gurmukhi script, and the increasing dominance of English in education. The present study aimed to identify common spelling errors in Punjabi among elementary school students and to evaluate the effectiveness of remedial teaching in reducing these errors.

The study adopted one group pre-test post-test design. A sample of fifty students of Grade VIII from a government elementary school in Mansa district was selected through random sampling. A self-constructed diagnostic test consisting of sixty Punjabi words was administered to assess spelling ability. After conducting the pre-test, remedial teaching sessions were organized focusing on major areas of spelling difficulty including phonetic spelling, Naveen group characters, borrowed words, and multiple spellings of the same word.

Statistical techniques such as mean, standard deviation, percentage analysis, and t-test were used for data analysis. The findings revealed that the mean number of spelling errors decreased significantly from the pre-test to the post-test. The results indicate that remedial teaching plays a significant role in improving spelling accuracy and writing proficiency among elementary school students. The study highlights the importance of systematic spelling instruction and suggests that teachers should incorporate remedial teaching strategies in language classrooms to strengthen students' mastery of Punjabi spelling.

Keywords: Punjabi Language, Spelling Errors, Remedial Teaching, Elementary Education, Language Learning

INTRODUCTION

Language is one of the most fundamental tools of human communication and social interaction. It enables individuals to express their thoughts, emotions, and experiences while also facilitating the transmission of knowledge and cultural values. Linguists have emphasized that language plays a central role in shaping human cognition and identity. According to Noam Chomsky (1957), language is a structured system of rules that allows speakers to generate and understand an infinite number of sentences. Mastery of language therefore requires proficiency in various linguistic components, including pronunciation, grammar, and spelling.

The mother tongue plays a particularly important role in an individual's linguistic and cognitive development. It is the first language acquired by a child in the family environment and serves as the foundation for further learning. Research indicates that strong proficiency in the mother tongue supports the acquisition of additional languages and enhances overall academic achievement

(Cummins, 2000). In the context of Punjab, Punjabi serves not only as a medium of communication but also as a symbol of cultural identity and heritage. However, despite its importance, many students demonstrate weak proficiency in Punjabi writing skills, particularly in spelling.

Spelling accuracy is an essential component of written communication because incorrect spelling may distort meaning and reduce clarity. In the Punjabi language, spelling errors often occur due to several factors, including phonetic confusion, similarities among characters, lack of writing practice, and insufficient attention to spelling during classroom instruction. The Punjabi language is written in the Gurmukhi script, which consists of consonants, vowels, semi-vowels, and diacritical marks. Certain characters, particularly those belonging to the Naveen group, appear visually similar and often create confusion among students. Furthermore, Punjabi contains many borrowed words from languages such as Hindi, Urdu, and English, which further complicates spelling patterns.

Several studies have examined spelling errors and language learning difficulties among students. Joshi (1975) found that spelling mistakes were among the most frequent errors in the written work of middle school students, mainly due to poor pronunciation and inadequate practice. Similarly, Sethi (1976) reported that the effectiveness of spelling instruction depends on the method of presentation, and that auditory as well as visual reinforcement can significantly improve spelling performance. Research by Maiden and Ali (2002) highlighted the importance of error awareness activities, suggesting that students improve their language skills when they are encouraged to identify and correct their own mistakes. Kukreti (2004) also observed that heavy curricula and limited opportunities for language practice contribute to persistent language errors among students.

Ramamurthy (1992) noted that complex word structures and silent letters often lead to spelling errors among secondary school students, while Partikar (1991) found that confusion in vocabulary and syntax contributes to writing errors among college learners. In a diagnostic study of Hindi language errors, Oad (1980) demonstrated that remedial teaching programs significantly reduced the frequency of spelling errors. Similarly, Anand (1985) emphasized that spelling errors often result from weak mastery of basic language skills and recommended targeted remedial instruction.

Recent research continues to highlight the significance of error analysis and remedial teaching in improving spelling proficiency. Al-Saudi (2020) identified common spelling errors such as omission, substitution, insertion, and transposition among language learners and emphasized the importance of systematic error analysis in developing effective teaching strategies. Hamdi (2020) also reported that phonetic confusion and inadequate understanding of spelling rules contribute significantly to spelling mistakes among students. Furthermore, studies have shown that remedial instructional approaches, including structured practice, corrective feedback, and phonics-based teaching, can significantly improve spelling accuracy and literacy outcomes (Bataineh, 2024; Alamri, 2026).

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The objectives of the study are:

1. To find the percentage of spelling errors committed by elementary school students in different facets of spelling errors.
2. To study the effectiveness of remedial teaching in reducing spelling errors in Punjabi among elementary school students.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The present study employed an experimental research method using a single-group pre-test–post-test design to examine the effectiveness of remedial teaching in reducing spelling errors in Punjabi among elementary school students. In this design, the same group of participants was assessed before and after the implementation of the instructional intervention. The pre-test was administered to determine the existing level of spelling proficiency among students, while the post-test was conducted after the remedial teaching program to measure the improvement in students' spelling performance.

Pre-Test

At the initial stage of the study, a diagnostic pre-test was administered to the selected sample of students to identify the common spelling errors committed by them in Punjabi. The test consisted of commonly used Punjabi words representing different aspects of Punjabi orthography and spelling patterns. The purpose of the pre-test was to assess students' baseline level of spelling proficiency and to identify specific areas of difficulty. The results of the pre-test helped the researcher diagnose the types and frequency of spelling errors and served as a basis for planning the remedial teaching program.

Intervention (Remedial Teaching)

Following the administration of the pre-test, a remedial teaching program was implemented for a period of 21 working days. The intervention was designed to address the spelling difficulties identified during the pre-test and to strengthen students' understanding of the structural aspects of Punjabi language. During the intervention period, systematic instruction and practice were provided on various components of Punjabi orthography and word formation. The remedial instruction focused on the following areas:

1. **Consonants (Vianjans):**

Students were provided with guided practice to recognize and correctly write Punjabi consonants. Emphasis was placed on correct pronunciation and writing of letters to reduce confusion between visually similar characters.

2. **Vowels (Laga-Matras):**

Instruction was provided on the proper use of vowel symbols and their placement with consonants. Students practiced writing words containing different vowel sounds to improve their spelling accuracy.

3. **Semi Vowels:**

Special attention was given to the correct identification and use of semi-vowels in Punjabi words, as these characters often create confusion in spelling.

4. **Half Characters (Half Words):**

Students were trained in recognizing and correctly writing half characters used in Punjabi word formation. Exercises were conducted to familiarize students with their correct usage.

5. **Different Aspects of Word Formation in Punjabi:**

Remedial teaching also addressed specific linguistic aspects that commonly lead to spelling errors, including:

- **Multiple ways of writing the same word:** Students were taught standardized spellings of commonly used words to reduce confusion arising from multiple acceptable forms.

- **Phonetic utterance and corresponding spelling:** Activities were conducted to help students understand the relationship between pronunciation and correct spelling of words.
- **Naveen group characters:** Special exercises were designed to differentiate between characters of the Naveen group, which are often confused due to their similar appearance.
- **Words borrowed from other languages:** Students were provided practice in writing Punjabi spellings of commonly borrowed words from languages such as Hindi, Urdu, and English.

Various instructional techniques such as dictation exercises, guided writing practice, explanation of spelling rules, and immediate corrective feedback were used during the remedial sessions to reinforce learning.

Post-Test

After the completion of the 21 days remedial teaching program, a post-test was administered to the same group of students using a test similar in structure to the pre-test. The purpose of the post-test was to evaluate the effectiveness of the remedial teaching intervention in reducing spelling errors among students. The scores obtained in the post-test were compared with the pre-test scores to determine the extent of improvement in students' spelling proficiency.

Sampling

The sample for the present study was drawn from a total population of 68 students enrolled in the selected school. Initially, 57 students were identified on the basis of their academic performance in Punjabi in the final examination of their previous class. Only those students who had obtained less than 60% marks were included in the study, as they were considered to have comparatively lower proficiency in Punjabi spelling. The school was selected randomly from the list of government schools in the district. During the course of the study, some participants could not continue due to absence or withdrawal, resulting in sample attrition. Consequently, the final sample for the study consisted of 50 students.

Research Tool

A self-constructed diagnostic test consisting of sixty Punjabi words was used to assess students' spelling ability. The words included in the test represented various aspects of Punjabi spelling such as phonetic spelling, Naveen group characters, borrowed words, and words with multiple spellings. The content validity of the diagnostic test was established through expert review by language specialists and experienced Punjabi teachers. The experts evaluated the relevance and difficulty level of the test items to ensure its suitability for Grade VIII students.

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Objective 1: To find the percentage of spelling errors committed by elementary school students in different facets of spelling errors.

The collected data were analyzed using count and percentages to analyze the percentage of errors in Punjabi Spellings in Pre and Post Test.

Table 1: Percentage of Errors in Punjabi Spellings in Pre and Post Test

Sr. No.	Facets of spelling errors	Total words	Pre-test errors	%	Post-test errors	%
1	Multiple ways of writing the same word	6	193	64.33	110	36.66
2	Naveen group characters	14	528	75.42	99	14.14
3	Borrowed words	14	484	69.14	110	15.71
4	Phonetic utterance and corresponding spellings	26	788	60.61	179	13.76

Interpretation

The data presented in Table 1 clearly indicate that students committed a large number of spelling errors in the pre-test across all four facets of Punjabi spelling. The highest percentage of errors in the pre-test was observed in Naveen group characters (75.42%), followed by borrowed words (69.14%), multiple ways of writing the same word (64.33%), and phonetic utterance and corresponding spelling (60.61%). These findings suggest that students faced significant difficulties in identifying visually similar characters, understanding the correct spelling of borrowed words, and maintaining consistency in spelling patterns.

After the implementation of remedial teaching, a considerable reduction in spelling errors was observed in the post-test. The percentage of errors decreased to 36.66% in multiple spellings of the same word, 14.14% in Naveen group characters, 15.71% in borrowed words, and 13.76% in phonetic spelling. The reduction in error percentages across all categories indicates that the remedial teaching program was effective in improving students' spelling accuracy. The greatest improvement was observed in Naveen group characters, where the percentage of errors decreased from 75.42% to 14.14%, demonstrating that targeted instruction helped students differentiate between similar characters. Overall, the results show that remedial teaching significantly reduced spelling errors in all identified facets of Punjabi spelling.

Objective 2: To study the effectiveness of remedial teaching in reducing spelling errors in Punjabi among elementary school students.

Further, to compare the significant difference in means of sample in pre and post test, t-test was applied and results are tabulated as below:

Table 2: Effectiveness of Remedial Teaching in Punjabi

Errors in Multiple Ways of Same Word						
Test	N	Mean	df	SD	t-value	Remark
Pre-test	50	3.86	49	1.38	7.46	Significant
Post-test	50	2.20		1.19		

Errors in Phonetic Utterance and Corresponding Spelling						
Pre-test	50	15.76	49	5.70	17.42	Significant
Post-test	50	3.58		3.32		
Errors in Naveen Group Characters						
Pre-test	50	10.56	49	3.12	19.26	Significant
Post-test	50	1.98		1.84		
Errors in Borrowed Words						
Pre-test	50	9.68	49	2.67	20.94	Significant
Post-test	50	2.20		1.95		
Overall Effectiveness of Remedial Teaching						
Pre-test	50	49	40.08	10.79	20.39	Significant
Post-test	50		10.48	7.54		

Interpretation

Errors in Multiple Ways of Writing the Same Word

The mean number of errors in the pre-test was 3.86, with a standard deviation of 1.38, whereas the mean number of errors in the post-test decreased to 2.20, with a standard deviation of 1.19. The calculated t-value of 7.46 indicates a statistically significant difference between the pre-test and post-test scores. This suggests that the remedial teaching intervention was effective in reducing errors related to multiple spellings of the same word. The improvement can be attributed to the focused instruction provided during the intervention regarding standard spelling forms and correct word usage.

Errors in Phonetic Utterance and Corresponding Spelling

For errors related to phonetic utterance and corresponding spelling, the mean score in the pre-test was 15.76, with a standard deviation of 5.70, while the post-test mean decreased significantly to 3.58, with a standard deviation of 3.32. The t-value of 17.42 indicates a highly significant difference between the two tests. This result suggests that students benefited greatly from the remedial instruction related to pronunciation and spelling relationships. The structured activities focusing on phonetic awareness helped students understand the correct correspondence between spoken and written forms of words.

Errors in Naveen Group Characters

In the case of Naveen group characters, the mean number of errors in the pre-test was 10.56 with a standard deviation of 3.12, whereas in the post-test the mean decreased to 1.98 with a standard deviation of 1.84. The calculated t-value of 19.26 indicates a statistically significant reduction in errors. This substantial improvement suggests that students gained better understanding of the visual differences between characters belonging to the Naveen group after receiving remedial instruction. Exercises focusing on recognition and correct writing of these characters played an important role in reducing confusion among students.

Errors in Borrowed Words

For borrowed words, the mean number of errors in the pre-test was 9.68, with a standard deviation of 2.67, while the mean number of errors in the post-test reduced to 2.20, with a standard deviation of 1.95. The t-value of 20.94 indicates a significant difference between the pre-test and post-test scores. This improvement suggests that students became more familiar with the correct spelling of borrowed words after receiving targeted practice during the remedial sessions.

Overall Effectiveness of Remedial Teaching

The overall analysis of spelling errors indicates a substantial improvement in students' spelling performance after the remedial teaching intervention. The mean number of errors in the pre-test was 40.08, with a standard deviation of 10.79, while the mean number of errors in the post-test decreased to 10.48, with a standard deviation of 7.54. The calculated t-value of 20.39 shows that the difference between the pre-test and post-test scores is statistically significant.

The significant reduction in the mean number of errors clearly demonstrates that the remedial teaching program was highly effective in improving the spelling proficiency of elementary school students in Punjabi. The intervention helped students understand the structural aspects of Punjabi spelling, including consonants, vowels, semi-vowels, half characters, and various word formation patterns. Overall, the results of the study confirm that systematic remedial instruction can significantly reduce spelling errors and enhance students' writing skills in Punjabi language.

DISCUSSION

The findings of the present study highlight the importance of targeted instructional strategies in improving spelling accuracy among elementary school students. The high frequency of spelling errors observed in the pre-test suggests that students often lack a clear understanding of the rules governing Punjabi spelling. One of the most significant sources of errors identified in the study was confusion among Naveen group characters. These characters often appear visually similar and are therefore difficult for students to distinguish. This finding is consistent with previous research indicating that visual similarity among letters contributes to spelling errors (Ramamurthy, 1992). Another major source of difficulty was the mismatch between pronunciation and spelling. Punjabi, like many other languages, contains words whose pronunciation does not directly correspond to their written form. Students who rely solely on phonetic pronunciation may therefore produce incorrect spellings.

The results also demonstrate the effectiveness of remedial teaching in addressing these difficulties. By focusing on specific areas of error and providing structured practice, remedial teaching helped students develop a clearer understanding of spelling patterns. This supports the conclusions of Oad (1980) and Anand (1985), who also found that remedial instruction significantly improves language learning outcomes. The reduction in spelling errors observed in the post-test indicates that even a short period of focused instruction can produce measurable improvements in student performance. Teachers should therefore incorporate remedial teaching strategies into regular classroom instruction to support students who experience difficulties in language learning.

CONCLUSION

The present study aimed to identify common spelling errors in Punjabi among elementary school students and to evaluate the effectiveness of remedial teaching in reducing these errors. The findings revealed that students frequently make spelling errors due to phonetic confusion, similarity among characters, and lack of exposure to correct spelling patterns. The results of the study clearly demonstrate that remedial teaching can significantly reduce spelling errors and improve students'

writing skills. The comparison between pre-test and post-test scores showed a substantial improvement in spelling accuracy after the implementation of remedial teaching sessions.

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