Panjabi Language and Script for the Coming Panjabi Generations on the International Stage

ਆਉਣ ਵਾਲ਼ੀਆਂ ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਪੀੜ੍ਹੀਆਂ ਲਈ ਅੰਤਰ-ਰਾਸ਼ਟ੍ਰੀ ਮੰਚ 'ਤੇ ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਬੋਲੀ ਅਤੇ ਲਿਪੀ

Mangat Rai Bhardwaj

European Panjabi Sath,
Walsall, UK

PANJABI (GURMUKHI) "ALPHABET"

Vowel Bearers

ੳ	ਅ	ੲ

Older Fricatives

ਸ	s	ਹ	h

Consonant Square (Stops)

	Voiceless Unaspirate	Voiceless Aspirate	Voiced Unaspirate	Voiced Aspirate	Nasal
ਕ Group	ਕ k	ਖ k^h	ਗ g	ਘ g^h	ਙ ṅ
ਚ Group	ਚ c	ਛ c^h	ਜ j	ਝ j^h	ਞ ñ
ਟ Group	ਟ ṭ	ਠ $ṭ^h$	ਡ ḍ	ਢ $ḍ^h$	ਣ ṇ
ਤ Group	ਤ t	ਥ t^h	ਦ d	ਧ d^h	ਨ n
ਪ Group	ਪ p	ਫ p^h	ਬ b	ਭ b^h	ਮ m

Frictionless Continuants

ਯ	y	ਰ	r	ਲ	l	ਵ	v	ੜ ṛ

New Fricatives

ਸ਼	ś	ਖ਼	x	ਗ਼	ɣ	ਜ਼	z	ਫ਼	f

More Recent Additions

ਕ਼	q	ਲ਼	ļ

PANJABI (GURMUKHI) "ALPHABET"

Vowel Bearers

ੳ	ਅ	ੲ

Older Fricatives

ਸ	s	ਹ	h

Consonant Square (Stops)

	Voiceless Unaspirate	Voiceless Aspirate	Voiced Unaspirate	Voiced Aspirate	Nasal
ਕ Group	ਕ k	ਖ k^h	ਗ g	ਘ g^h	ਙ ṅ
ਚ Group	ਚ c	ਛ c^h	ਜ j	ਝ j^h	ਞ ñ
ਟ Group	ਟ ṭ	ਠ $ṭ^h$	ਡ ḍ	ਢ $ḍ^h$	ਣ ṇ
ਤ Group	ਤ t	ਥ t^h	ਦ d	ਧ d^h	ਨ n
ਪ Group	ਪ p	ਫ p^h	ਬ b	ਭ b^h	ਮ m

Frictionless Continuants

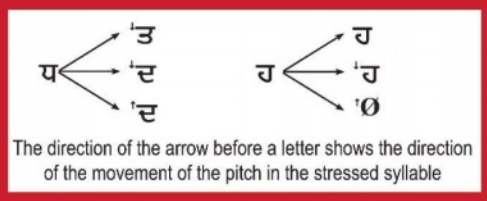
ਯ	y	ਰ	r	ਲ	l	ਵ	v	ੜ ṛ

New Fricatives

ਸ਼	ś	ਖ਼	x	ਗ਼	ɣ	ਜ਼	z	ਫ਼	f

More Recent Additions

ਕ਼	q	ਲ਼	ļ



The direction of the arrow before a letter shows the direction of the movement of the pitch in the stressed syllable

The Author

Mangat Rai Bhardwaj was educated in Sikh National College, Banga, Government College, Ludhiana, and University of Manchester, UK. He holds an M.A. degree in English from Panjab University, and a Ph.D. in Linguistics from Manchester. His publications include internationally known *Colloquial Panjabi*, *Colloquial Panjabi 2* and *Panjabi: A Comprehensive grammar*, and several journal articles in Panjabi.

bhardwajmangat@googlemail.com

Panjabi Language and Script for the Coming Panjabi Generations on the International Stage

Panjabi Language and Script for the Coming Panjabi Generations on the International Stage

ਆਉਣ ਵਾਲ਼ੀਆਂ ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਪੀੜ੍ਹੀਆਂ ਲਈ ਅੰਤਰ-ਰਾਸ਼ਟ੍ਰੀ ਮੰਚ 'ਤੇ ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਬੋਲੀ ਅਤੇ ਲਿਪੀ

Mangat Rai Bhardwaj

European Panjabi Sath,
Walsall, UK

First published in 2020 for European Panjabi Sath by

Mota Singh Sarai
11 Queens Road
Walsall, WS5 3NF, UK.
Phone: +44 785 075 0109
Email: *singh_m_sarai@hotmail.com*

Dr Nirmal Singh
Secretary Panjabi Sath
Lambra, Jalandhar, Panjab, India (144026)
Phone: 0181-2791036, 98152-56266
Email: *drnirmalsinghlambra@gmail.com*

Other Contacts

Pri. Kulwinder Singh Sarai
Manjaki Panjabi Sath, Bhangala,
Jalandhar, Panjab, India (144033)
Phone: 01826-275633, 98141-60642
Email: ksarai@gmail.com

Jagtar Singh Deol
Naujawan Panjabi Sath
Chandigarh, India (160055)
Phone 99149-08751
Email: jartarsinghdeol@gmail.com

The book is also available in the PDF format on ***www.panjabisath.co.in*** from where it can be downloaded and printed by anyone. The fonts used in the body text are Times New Roman, Arial and Anmol Lipi (developed by Dr Kulbir Singh Thind).

ISBN 978-93-85648-22-9

Design and typesetting

Mangat Rai Bhardwaj

ਪਰਮ ਪਿਤਾ ਪਰਮੇਸ਼ਵਰ ਦੇ ਚਰਨਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਸਮਰਪਿਤ, ਜਿਹਨੇ ਇਸ ਕੰਮ ਲਈ ਸਾਧਨ ਦੇ ਤੌਰ ਤੇ ਮੇਰੀ ਚੋਣ ਕਰ ਕੇ ਮੇਰੇ ਇਸ ਤੁੱਛ, ਖਿਣਭੰਗੁਰ ਅਤੇ ਨਾਸ਼ਵਾਨ ਜੀਵਨ ਨੂੰ ਸਾਰਥਕ ਕਰ ਦਿੱਤਾ।

Dedicated to the Almighty Father, Who, by choosing me as His instrument in this work, made this humble, frail and mortal life of mine meaningful.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

A WORD FROM THE PUBLISHERS

During the year 2019-2020, various types of events to celebrate Sri Guru Nanak Dev's 550th birthday are being organised all over the world. The events at the more intellectual side of the spectrum include the seminars and discussions and the publication of articles and books on different facets of Guru Nanak's thought – such as his political, social and religious philosophy. But the subject is so vast that no single scholar's point of view can do justice to all its facets. Guru Nanak endeavoured all his life to creat a rational society of people united by love and respect for one another's beliefs and free from all types of exploitation, oppression, dogmas, blind faith, superstitions and empty ritualism.

Buddha, Zarathustra, Jesus and Mohammad, other founders of great religious traditions, did not write down their thoughts and ideas. Their followers did the job for them. However, Guru Nanak and his contemporary Martin Luther themselves wrote down their ideas. But the similarity ends here. We have not read Luther. He is said to have written a dry, bland and argumentative prose. On the other hand, Guru Nanak wrote extremely musical and sublime *Gurbāṇī*, the sublimest hymns composed in the Land of Five Rivers thousands of years after the *Vedas* and the *Upanishads,* and deserving to be included among the finest gems of world literature. His own writings and the other writings included in *Sri Guru Granth Sahib* are often referred to as "poetry" by the scholars writing about them in English. The reason is that Guru Nanak describes himself as a **ਸਾਇਰ** or "poet" more than once in *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*. (See page 152 of this book). Five of his nine successor Gurus whose writings appear in this Sikh holy scripture simply elaborated his ideas and teachings. He would have been an undisputed winner of the Nobel Prize for Literature had he lived in our times. He was one of the most learned men of his

time and he had carefully studied the ancient Indian religious literature in Sanskrit as well as the religious literature of Islam in Arabic and Persian. This is evidenced in his writings. He was also a fluent speaker of the various dialects of Hindi as well as Persian and Arabic.

In search of and to exchange great ideas with the learned men of all faiths, he travelled in many countries for about 30 years, covering great distances on foot. But in the depths of his heart he was a staunch nationalist. He despised the Indians who were blindly and sycophantically copying the dress, language and mannerisms of the foreign invaders who had occupied and enslaved his motherland.

Guru Nanak could read and write in the then fashionable Perso-Arabic script. But he chose (or most probably *assembled*) a script for his writings. He took letters and symbols from the scripts used in and around his native area and created a system of writing suitable for him. He knew that the Perso-Arabic script was a good one *for Arabic and Persian*. But as an astute linguist, he knew that it was most certainly not suited to the phonological and grammatical system of his languages and his poetic compositions set to music. The scripts which historically developed in the areas where Panjabi also developed were ideal for writing this language. We do not know what name he gave to the writing system which he developed and taught to Bhai Lehna (who later became his successor Guru Angad Dev), but it came to be known as the Gurmukhi script later.

Guru Nanak knew fully well the phonetic analysis of Indian languages made by Sanskrit scholars thousands of years earlier in the Punjab region itself (earlier known as the Saptasindhu region or the Land of Seven Rivers). Even today, his script is the best one for learning and writing Panjabi because the phonological and grammatical features of this language can be best represented in this script. *This is argued and exemplified in this book.*

But there is an additional reason for learning Panjabi through Gurmukhi. The Panjabi-speaking people, especially Guru Nanak's devotees or Sikhs, are now

settled in many parts of the world (in 141 countries according to our estimate). If their future generations are going to have a link language for use among themselves and between them and the centres of Sikhism in India, this language can be no other than Panjabi. In spite of the tall claims made for English, it is *not* an international language.

And Panjabi is best learnt through Gurmukhi. We can safely assume that the future generations of the Panjabi-speaking people will have very logical and analytical minds. They will like to know not only the *how* side of learning Panjabi, but also the *why* side: why the spellings of many Panjabi words written in Gurmukhi do not actually sound as they really should in a script claimed to be a "phonetic" one. Reasons for the "peculiar" spellings of some words in *Sri Guru Granth Sahib* will also be asked. Any unsatisfactory "explanations" will be frowned upon and rejected as illogical.

Guru Nanak wrote in the language people actually spoke. But 500 years have taken their toll on it. It can be fully understood with the help of commentaries. But it is hoped that at least four or five of the future generations of the Sikhs will be able to understand it fairly well, if not perfectly, if they know modern Panjabi well. *Strange, illogical and "circular" as it may sound, the best way to approach Guru Nanak's language is to approach it through modern Panjabi. And the reverse is also equally true.*

Translating *Sri Guru Granth Sahib* into another language and using this translation for daily *prakaash, paath, kirtan* and performing the marriage ceremony, as some Sikhs are said to be doing in Panama, Peru, Argentina and some other Latin American countries, is a grotesque travesty of Guru Nanak's writings. This also means cutting yourself off from the centres of Sikh philosophy in the Punjab. The billions of pounds, or dollars or euros or rials spend on creating magnificient buildings of Sikh Gurdwaras must not result in the creation of centres of English

Sikhism, Spanish Sikhism, Portuguese Sikhism, French Sikhism, German Sikhism, Dutch Sikhism, and so on.

As any teacher of a second/foreign language can tell you, speakers of different languages have different types of problems and difficulties in learning a second/foreign language. Often, special learning materials, practice materials and teaching strategies have to be prepared for the speakers of each language. For example, speakers of English, speakers of French, speakers of German and speakers of Norwegian may encounter different types of problems and difficulties in learning the salient feature of Panjabi presented in this book.

Luckily, the writer of this book, Dr Mangat Rai Bhardwaj, is a seasoned and internationally known linguist who has made an in-depth study of modern Panjabi, Guru Nanak's Panjabi, English and several European languages. He explains the salient features Panjabi (as learnt through Gurmukhi): what they *really* are like. We hope that there will be good Sikh linguists in many countries in the future who should be able to get guidance from this book in understanding Guru Nanak's Panjabi and also for creating suitable materials for the learning and teaching modern Panjabi in their countries by taking into account the special problems their young men and women are likely to face. *We will be happy to help them as much as we can.* Learning materials imported from India may not work at the initial stages because the writers of these materials will not know what, for example, the problems of German learners or Norwegian learners can be.

We must say something about the title of the book. The inclusion of the expressions "comimg Panjabi generations" and "international stage"in the title is deliberate. Dr Bhardwaj has told us that although English is the most studied and analysed language in the world, detailed *scholarly grammars* of English have been appearing at an approximate interval of twenty-five years for more than a century. This is also the case with French and German, languages of two other great nations. The ancient Indian and the ancient Greek societies and the Arab society during its

golden era did the same for their languages in their great centres of learning. The reason is that any self-respecting civilised nation would like to preserve a record of an analysis of its greatest and proudest asset – its language – in different periods and from different theoretical angles. *Scholarly grammars*, which are intended to provide reference material to contemporary and future scholars, differ from *pedagogical grammars* intended to help the teachers and learners of the language. Now the record of what the three major universities in the state of the Punjab have done for their language Panjabi is depressing, to use the mildest expression. Over the past decades (and even before) they did not produce any reputable, original and insightful phonological and grammatical analyses of Panjabi, which could match the work being done for many other languages (including some spoken by far fewer people) at the international level. The reasons for what is happening in these universities are too well known to be mentioned here. Talented linguists are certainly there, but the corrupt political system does not allow their talents to blossom fruitfully. Moreover, the Panjabi scholars in India, who have little or no experience of working outside, and thus lag decades behind the developments taking place in the more advanced educational institutions outside India, will be ill-equipped to understand and deal with the needs and problems of the *future* teachers and learners of Panjabi at the *international* level.

Dr Bhardwaj, the UK-based author of this book, is already an internationally acclaimed published linguist working with Panjabi. He has already published internationally selling books like *Colloquial Panjabi* and *Panjabi: A Comprehensive Grammar*. He uses his own time and resources without taking a single penny or paisa from any Indian university or any other agency. The book is intended for the *future* Panjabi language teachers and writers of teaching materials at an *international level* and to make them better equipped for their work with the young learners of Panjabi and Gurmukhi.

This book is designed in such a way that it should be possible to translate it into any language. It can be found in the PDF form on the website ***www.panjabisath.co.in***. It should be possible to edit this PDF document carefully in order to translate it into any language. Even the wording given in the pictures and the tables should be easy to overwrite. It should also be possible to dub the accompanying brief videos into any language. They have been prepared very carefully to make this possible with the minimum possible effort.

This generation of ours will have been cremated long before the future generations of the Panjabi families settled in different countries start learning Panjabi as their link language. They will surely need it for communicating with one another and with the centres of Sikhism in the Punjab. We (the author and the publishers of the book) will not be there to take heed the *harvest*; all that we can do is to take heed of *proper sowing*, hoping that there will be a good harvest!

We will not be there to see the success of our enterprise, but Guru Nanak's spirit is certainly going to be there as an *inspiration* for them, as he is now here as an *inspiration* for us. May he inspire the future generations to come to him for his great message by learning his language, as he is inspiring us now to do our humble service to him by propagating the teaching and learning of his language through his writing system!

Mota Singh Sarai
European Panjabi Sath, Walsall,
UK

Dr Nirmal Singh
Panjabi Sath, Lambra,
Punjab, India

17 September 2020

We are deeply grateful to Parish Councillor Raj Kumar Sood of Bristol, UK for being involved with the publication of this book. He is a pillar of European Panjabi Sath, Walsall. The noble deeds he has rendered towards the community are highly praiseworthy. He has volunteered to contribute in the loving memory of his beloved mother Mrs Pushpa Devi Sood, who sadly passed away on 22nd August 2020. We are all moved by the sudden death of his respected mother and pray that God bless her departed soul. Our future generations will be proud of Councillor Raj Kumar Sood and his family's acts of service.

Prolix explication astonishes the philosopher, who would prefer to believe that explication is always limited to unfolding the complex, to demonstrating the simple within the composite. But true scientific thought is metaphysically inductive; ... it reads the complex in the simple, states the law that covers the fact, the rule that applies to the example.

— Gaston Bachelard

THE AUTHOR'S PREFACE

Mr Mota Singh Sarai and Dr Nirmal Singh, the publishers of this book, have summed up its purpose so well that I need not repeat anything from or add anything to what they have said. So I proceed straightaway to the basic assumptions guiding my endeavour.

(1) Sri Guru Nanak Dev Ji is not *physically* present now, but the light of his spirit keeps guiding us and will keep guiding and inspiring *the future generations* as well. But the responsibility lies upon us and our future generations to realise his dream of creating "a rational society of people united by love and respect for one another's beliefs and free from all types of exploitation, oppression, dogmas, blind faith, superstitions and empty ritualism." His devotees (including but not confined to those who formally describe themselves as Sikhs) who have now spread almost all over the civilised world must first of all ensure that they properly understand him through his own words and keep on passing this understanding to *their* future generations as far into the future time as they can. *The best source of information on Guru Nanak is Guru Nanak himself.*

(2) This book is a humble endeavour towards this goal. While anybody is welcome to read and use it, it is aimed mainly at the *serious, responsible* and *visionary* Panjabi intellectuals (especially Sikhs) who can look into the future and take their responsibility towards their future generations seriously. In the different parts of the world where these generations will be born and growing up, Panjabi is not going to be their home language or even their main

language. But they must learn it as their *link language* if they are to keep in touch with one another all over the world and with the centres of Sikhism in India.

(3) My experience as a linguist and language teacher has convinced me that the best way to learn Panjabi as a *second* language (as opposed to a *foreign* language) is to start with the Gurmukhi script and how it represents proper Panjabi pronunciation. If they want to move further to a serious study of Gurbani and Sikhism, this solid foundation is indispensable. Strange as it may seem, a study of the language of Gurbani leads to a deeper understanding of modern Panjabi. At least this is my experience. Great in-depth analyses of European languages such as English, French, German, Spanish, Norwegian, Swedish and others have been published. There is no reason why my language should not be among them. I have already published a grammar of my language on modern lines. But still a separate book on Gurmukhi and Panjabi phonetics is needed for non-linguists. But there cannot be any compromise on details of facts.

(4) This book deals with the Panjabi pronunciation as represented by the Gurmukhi script. Later on, it moves from modern Panjabi to some conventions of spelling and pronunciation of Gurbani which are not *explained* but *explained away* by the Sikh priests and *granthis*, sometimes leading to less than desirable results. But learning the script and the pronunciation is simply the *first indispensable* step towards mastering Panjabi as a second or foreign language. You also need to learn grammar, amass a lot of appropriate vocabulary and learn how to understand and use the language meaningfully in different situations. I have already published books about this. The list of my books is given at the end of this preface. Some great Sikh scholars like Sahib Singh and Harkirat Singh

have written in great details about Gurbani grammar and spelling system. But their books are in modern Panjabi, which you need to know well in order to make use of them.

(5) I anticipate criticism from some quarters which must be addressed here. Some readers may say that what I present in this book is "totally unnecessary". Some may even accuse me of "showing off my learning". My polite response to all this is that it is all a matter of *motivation*. An analogy from medical education is apt here. The first-year medical students (mostly aged 18-20) are made to digest the complicated information about human anatomy and physiology given in huge tomes like *Gray's Anatomy* and *Ganong's Review of Medical Physiology.* They diligently grasp all this stuff because they are *motivated* to do this in order to become doctors. The "technical linguistic stuff" presented in this book is no more difficult and abstract than what is taught to the first-year university students of Language and Linguistics and also of Speech Therapy. My fellow Panjabi linguist Narinder Singh and I have a happy and pleasant experience of teaching phonetics/linguistics of this level of complexity to 18-year old young men and women at the university level in the UK. I cannot predict why someone may like to read the book – to become a better teacher of Panjabi and Gurmukhi from the primary school level to the postgraduate level in a college or university. Or someone may read it for a "*non-utilitarian*" reason – simply for intellectual pleasure and satisfaction. Suddenly discovering beautiful patterns in something which you had taken for granted (Gurmukhi writing system in our case) is great *intellectual* pleasure. Among the modern languages of the Indian sub-continent, Panjabi has a unique phonetic character. If an intelligent reader is given information about why this is so and what features make this character unique, it can be a matter of great intellectual satisfaction for him or her. As for Gurbani, you can derive

a spiritual benefit from reading it or listening to it even without trying to understand the Gurbani grammar, correct pronunciation and spelling system. But many sensible persons love to go for this information too. Books on this subject written by respected scholars like Sahib Singh, Bhai Randhir Singh, Harkirat Singh and others are sold and read. Many entries in Bhai Kahn Singh Nabha's *Mahān Kosh* also give "linguistic" details. You can have, or develop, a *motivation* to learn anything, including what is presented in this book, at any age and at any time. If the subject of Panjabi phonetics and phonology and its relation to Gurmukhi is complicated, it *is* so. I cannot make this description "simpler" by sacrificing the truth. To sum up: ***this book is aimed at the readers with a specific intellectual background, motivation and aspirations who are prepared to indulge in a little bit of mild intellectual exercise.*** Such people are known as *sikhs* ("learners") with a small *s*. Whether or not they are also *Sikhs* with a capital *S* is irrelevant.

(6) Studying the *phonetics* (articulation of the sounds) and *phonology* (organisation of these sounds within the system) of a language has been recognised in India as the first step towards understanding the language. The great Sanskrit grammar of Pāṇini, written about 2800 years ago in an area which is now known as Pothohar in Western Punjab starts with fourteen formulas which sum up the phonology of Sanskrit. So I am not doing anything new in this book by presenting some aspects of the phonology of Panjabi as revealed in the system of Gurmukhi script which, as far as my knowledge goes, was assembled and first used in the present from by Guru Nanak Dev. He passed it on to his successor Guru Angad Dev, who tirelessly propagated it. Needless to say, Guru Nanak fully understood the phonology of Panjabi and the fact that this script was ideal for representing it. Gurmukhi is not a random collection of letters like the Roman script or an assemblage of letters grouped simply on

the basis of their visual shapes as the Arabic script is. Gurmukhi (like its sister scripts of the Brahmi family, some of which he certainly knew and understood well) is organised on the basis of an intensive analysis of the phonetics and phonology of the language, a system of analysis whose roots go back almost 3000 years into the intellectual history of his motherland.

(7) Panjabi language has undergone some changes in the last 500 years, so the fit between its phonology and the system of Gurmukhi has altered slightly. But Gurmukhi is still an ideal script for learning and writing Panjabi. I am going to demonstrate this in the rest of this book. Learning modern Panjabi through Gurmukhi and then moving to Gurbani may seem slightly odd. But I regard this as an ideal way of studying Gurbani. This will provide access to the great work done on Gurbani grammar by Sahib Singh, Harkirat Singh and some other scholars. As I have said above, *studying the phonology and script of a language is necessary but not sufficient.*

(8) As any *serious* teacher of Panjabi in the UK knows, teaching this language properly here faces serious problems unheard of in the Indian Punjab. So any teaching materials imported from India do not properly work here. Admirable teaching/learning materials have indeed been developed for this purpose (mostly by Dr Jagat Singh Nagra in the UK, but some other serious writers have also contributed). *But the basic assumption behind this great effort is that Panjabi is the home language of the young learners, so they have to learn mainly* ***literacy****. But this is not going to be the case after another two generations.* We cannot confidently predict the situation in each country where the Panjabi families will be living, or indeed whether they will like to keep their religion, language and culture alive. *All that we can do is to have a positive faith – that all will be well!*

(9 Even if my dream of writing for the future generations of the Panjabi people remains a pure wishful utopian dream, my effort is still worth making. The use of both the phonetic transcription and the Gurmukhi script in Part 1 of the book is a deliberate and calculated move to let the international community of linguists know how rich and unique the phonological structure of my native language is, and why it should be taken seriously in the science of linguistics. The readers will see that throughout the book my emphasis is a lot more on giving the maximum possible relevant information within the available space of the book and considerably less on how this informatiom can be practically used. I leave the latter to the intelligence of the more serious members of the teaching community.

(10) Learning the language and script of Gurbani are important for *different reasons* for different people. They are dealt with in the second part of the book.

(11) *Now the leap of my hope and imagination into the future* – "Believing where we cannot prove". I believe (without any "proof") that serious Panjabi scholars will keep appearing in the future generations (especially as the products of the healthy educational systems in the advanced countries, which encourage innovation and critical thinking) who will dedicate themselves to keeping Guru Nanak's language, script and message alive and spreading its light as far as possible. I am fully convinced that Guru Nanak's spirit can and will inspire some of his devotees to do this. I spent all my working life in studying my native language and script. It will be a criminal offence for me not to share whatever little new knowledge I have obtained. *Even if* ***one*** *Panjabi scholar after, say, fifty or sixty years gets inspired by this book to carry this work further and do something to propagate a better understanding*

and teaching of Panjabi and promote a better understanding of Gurbani with this understanding, my spirit will be satisfied.

Among the numerous gifts bestowed by Sri Guru Nanak Dev Ji, I, concentrate on just two here, *as a linguist* – giving Panjabi a place of honour in an age when it was being submerged by Persian and Arabic, and giving us a simple script now known as Gurmukhi most suitable for the phonological structure of this language. So I offer this book to the Panjabi people as very humble time- and space-bound *guru dakṣhiṇā* to him.

I have also published a few books to help learners of *modern* Panjabi.

1. *Panjabi: The 100 Word Exercise Book* (2002). Gaffer and Wightwick (Oxford).
2. *Colloquial Panjabi* (2nd edition 2012). Routledge (London and New York).
3. *Colloquial Panjabi 2* (2014). (Downloadable free from the Internet).
4. *Panjabi: A Comprehensive Grammar* (2016). Routledge (London and New York).

I am sure that more scholars will be working in this field in the future and that new publications (better and more comprehensive than mine) will appear.

God knows better than I do!

Mangat Rai Bhardwaj
September 2020

Acknowledgments:

I must express my heartfelt gratitude to these friends (mentioned in the alphabetical order) for the moral support I received from them:

Amandeep Singh, Gurtej Singh, Kirpal Singh Pooni, Manmohan Singh Maheru, Dr Mohinder Singh Gill, Mota Singh Sarai and Nirmal Singh Kandhalvi.

A living human language is a self-organising dynamical evolutionary system in which structuration processes are always going on, and structures are simply temporary islands of relative stability in a sea of constant change.

Part 1

Modern Panjabi Language
&
Gurmukhi Script

PANJABI (GURMUKHI) "ALPHABET"

Vowel Bearers

ੳ	ਅ	ੲ

Older Fricatives

ਸ s	ਹ h

Consonant Square (Stops)

	Voiceless Unaspirate	Voiceless Aspirate	Voiced Unaspirate	Voiced Aspirate	Nasal
ਕ Group	ਕ k	ਖ k^h	ਗ g	ਘ g^h	ਙ ṅ
ਚ Group	ਚ c	ਛ c^h	ਜ j	ਝ j^h	ਞ ñ
ਟ Group	ਟ ṭ	ਠ $ṭ^h$	ਡ ḍ	ਢ $ḍ^h$	ਣ ṇ
ਤ Group	ਤ t	ਥ t^h	ਦ d	ਧ d^h	ਨ n
ਪ Group	ਪ p	ਫ p^h	ਬ b	ਭ b^h	ਮ m

Frictionless Continuants

ਯ y	ਰ r	ਲ l	ਵ v	ੜ ṛ

New Fricatives

ਸ਼ ś	ਖ਼ x	ਗ਼ ɣ	ਜ਼ z	ਫ਼ f

More Recent Additions

ਕ਼ q	ਲ਼ ļ

GURMUKHI: A VERY BRIEF INTRODUCTION

The Gurmukhi script used to represent the pronunciation of Panjabi words in a *fairly systematic* manner (but not "perfectly" – no known writing system does this) about 400-500 years ago. Since then, some very significant changes in the system of pronunciation of Panjabi words have been taking place. But the spelling system in Gurmukhi has not kept pace with these changes. However, a *systematic relation* still exists between the pronunciation of Panjabi words and their representation in the Gurmukhi script. This is explored in this book. So the use of some technicalities of phonetics, phonology and grammar has become inevitable. Phonetics of this level of complexity is taught to the first-year degree students of linguistics and speech therapy in the UK. If you approach the book as a dedicated and patient user in order to become a better teacher of Panjabi or wish to achieve a better understanding of the grammar of Gurbani, or simply for your intellectual satisfaction, you are most welcome. But you are expected to learn all these technicalities patiently. Languages *are* complex, and this complexity cannot be wished away or ignored by a responsible scholar or language teacher.

Before we discuss what the Gurmukhi writing system is, we need to clear some of the prevailing misconceptions about it – (1) The Gurmukhi writing system is not an "alphabet". In this picture on page 18, the word "alphabet" for the repertoire of Gurmukhi letters is put within quotation marks. We discuss in a later chapter why this repertoire is not an alphabet; (2) Contrary to a popular belief, Gurmukhi was *not* "invented" by Sri Guru Angad Dev Ji, the second guru of the Sikh faith; (3) It is *not* a "phonetic script" in which (as the claim goes) "you write exactly as you speak

and read aloud exactly as you write"; (4) The name Gurmukhi does not mean (as is claimed) "from the Guru's mouth" or "the Guru's speech". Some scholars believe that the name Gurmukhi means the "script used by the Gurmukh (devout) Sikhs" who used it in preference to the then fashionable Perso-Arabic script.

It appears that Guru Nanak Dev simply *assembled* this script by taking letters and other symbols from the writing systems (such as Takri, Siddh Matrika, Bhat Achhari, Sharda, Landa and others) belonging to the Brahmi family which had been in use for centuries in and around the Panjabi-speaking area, set the spelling rules, wrote his compositions in this script and taught it to his disciple Bhai Lehna, who later, as the second Guru Angad Dev, tirelessly propagated it. He certainly knew the then fashionable Perso-Arabic script and the Devanagari script (used for writing Sanskrit), but as an astute linguist, he assembled the script best suited for the phonological structure of the language he was using *and* for his compositions meant to be sung. This is a tremendous linguistic achievements. We will discuss all this in Part 2 of the book. He mentions the first thirty-five letters of this writing system in one of his compositions known as *Paṭī Likhī* on page 432 of *Sri Guru Granth Sahib.* Thirty-three of these names are still is use, and the writing system is known as **Pa^{i}ntī** ("thirty-five").

 You can hear the **modern names of all the Gurmukhi letters** from the video accompanying this book. The symbol  used in the book indicates this video recording. But you are advised to read the description carefully before going to the video. It will be better for you to hear the names from an educated native speaker of Panjabi (if you yourself are not one).

The system is not complete with just these letters. It has ***other symbols*** as well which have names. They are introduced later in the book. The names of these symbols can also be heard from the video or from an educated native speaker.

In this era of word processors and printers, you may not be interested in ***learning how to write*** these letters and symbols. But if you are, you can find instruction on pages 103-110.

The Gurmukhi writing system is not just a random assemblage of letters.

If you are used to the Roman writing system (used for writing the Western European languages), which is a random collection of letters or the Arabic writing system, in which letters are arranged according to their shapes, you can be forgiven for expecting Gurmukhi to be a similar system. But no. Gurmukhi is based on a great and in-depth analysis of the **phonetics** (the oral articulation and auditory perception of these sounds) and **phonology** (their distribution and use in the language) of the sounds represented by these letters and symbols. Such a **phonetic** and **phonological** analysis of Panjabi's ancestor languages Vedic and Sanskrit started in India about 3000 years ago in the very land where Panjabi is spoken these days. The brilliant Sanskrit grammar of Pāṇini starts with an analysis of the phonology and phonological processes in the language. To some extent, we are going to do the same for Panjabi in this book. Now look at the table on page 18. You will find that the letters are grouped into different rows and columns. Each row and column has a **descriptive name**. The sounds represented by the letters in each row/column share a certain phonetic feature or features. The names given by our great ancestors (who also wrote manuals of pronunciation) have been translated into English and other languages and adopted by modern linguists all over the world.

As far as the writing of Panjabi is concerned, this book is going to demonstrate that the Roman script can never be used in an adequate, unambiguous, responsible and sensible manner for this purpose, though it is used in all sorts of arbitrary ways on mobile phones by some users.

PANJABI (GURMUKHI) "ALPHABET"

Vowel Bearers

ੳ	ਅ	ੲ

Older Fricatives

ਸ s	ਹ h

Consonant Square (Stops)

	Voiceless Unaspirate	Voiceless Aspirate	Voiced Unaspirate	Voiced Aspirate	Nasal
ਕ Group	ਕ k	ਖ k^h	ਗ g	ਘ g^h	ਙ ṅ
ਚ Group	ਚ c	ਛ c^h	ਜ j	ਝ j^h	ਞ ñ
ਟ Group	ਟ ṭ	ਠ $ṭ^h$	ਡ ḍ	ਢ $ḍ^h$	ਣ ṇ
ਤ Group	ਤ t	ਥ t^h	ਦ d	ਧ d^h	ਨ n
ਪ Group	ਪ p	ਫ p^h	ਬ b	ਭ b^h	ਮ m

Frictionless Continuants

ਯ y	ਰ r	ਲ l	ਵ v	ੜ ṛ

New Fricatives

ਸ਼ ś	ਖ਼ x	ਗ਼ ɣ	ਜ਼ z	ਫ਼ f

More Recent Additions

ਕ਼ q	ਲ਼ ɭ

GURMUKHI AND PANJABI CONSONANTS –1: PLACE OF ARTICULATION

Before we discuss the diagram on the opposite page, we need to understand the difference between a **Vowel** and a **Consonant sound**. The letters of the script simply *visually represent* the **vowel** and the **consonant** sounds. The letters themselves are not **vowels** and **consonants**. Pronunciation and script are different entities. They must not be confused. In the diagram, each Gurmukhi letter (except the first three called **vowel bearers**) is accompanied by its transcription in a modified Roman alphabet). The **superscripted h** (as in **g^{h}**) is intended to show that the sound represented by **g^{h}** is a *single* sound, and not a *sequence* of **g** and **h** sounds in the phonological *system* of Panjabi.

Vowels and Consonants

A **Vowel** sound is produced when the **voiced** airstream produced by the vibrating vocal cords in the throat is neither blocked nor obstructed in the mouth, but the shape of the resonance chamber in the mouth is changed by moving different parts of the tongue to different heights and sometimes also by rounding or spreading the lips to different degrees. If the nasal passage is also open to let the air pass through the nose, the resulting vowel sounds are said to be **nasalised**. For the articulation of **consonant** sounds, the outgoing **voiced** or **voiceless** airstream is blocked or obstructed at different places and in different manners in the throat and/or the mouth. If the nasal passage is open, the airstream goes on passing through the nose. This is one way of characterising **vowels** and **consonants** from the *phonetic* point of view.

Another point of view is their *role in the* ***syllable***. The results of viewing **vowels** and **consonants** from these two points of view may sometimes vary slightly. We will discuss this later.

Now look at the picture on page 16. We will discuss later the *ten* Panjabi **vowels** and how the *three* Gurmukhi **vowel bearer** letters represent them with the help of special symbols.

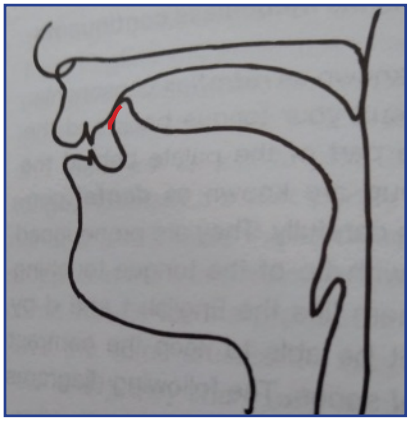
Place of articulation

All the five sounds (known as **stop consonants**) in each coloured *row* in the picture have a same **place of articulation**, the place *in the mouth* where the outgoing breath is *completely stopped* and then released. For the **nasal** sound in each row, the breath is stopped *in the mouth*, but it goes on escaping through the open *nasal passage*.

ਕ k Group. The airstream is stopped by the contact of the back part of the tongue with the soft palate (velum). These consonants are called **velar**.

ਚ c Group. The front part of the tongue touches the hard palate. These consonants are called **palatal.** You have to careful here. The Panjabi **ਚ** sound is represented as **c** (And not as **ch** as in the transcription). We transcribe **ਛ** as **c^{h}.** These consonants are called **palatal**.

ਟ ṭ Group. Note the dot under **ṭ**. The airstream is stopped by the contact of *underside of the curled tongue* touching the back part of the upper gum ridge (or the front-most part of the hard palate). These **consonants** are called **retroflex**. Study the this diagram carefully, in which the part of the tongue touching the gum ridge is coloured **red.** It is important to remember that there also are **retroflex consonants** outside this row. **ṛ ੜ** and **ḷ**



ਲ਼ are also **retroflex** consonants produced in the same way. In the picture, we have put all the **retroflex** consonants in red boxes. ***Take this as a red alert***. It cannot be over-emphasised that these consonants should be pronounced in the **retroflex** way described here. You cannot correctly pronounce these **flap** consonants, especially one of the most significant Panjabi sounds ੜ **ṛ**, if you do not learn this. You do this with the *underside* of the curled tongue, and not with the *tip* of the tongue. If you use the tip of the tongue, you will not be able to keep the consonants of this group distinct from those of the ਤ **t Group** described below.

ਤ **t Group**. The place of articulation of the consonants of this group is the same as that of their counterparts in French, Spanish and Italian (but not in English). The **tip of the tongue** touches the upper teeth. It is important *not* to pronounce them in the English style by touching the upper gum ridge. These consonants are called **dental**.

ਪ **p Group**. As the upper and the lower lip join to stop the airstream, this group is know as the **bilabial** group.

The Flap consonants

ਣ **ṇ**, ੜ **ṛ** and ਲ਼ **ḷ** are known as **flap** consonants. They all belong to the **retroflex** family, as the dot in the phonetic transcription shows. They are pronounced by *quickly flapping the* ***underside of the curled lax*** *tongue* against the back part of the gum ridge. (Look at the picture on page 22 again). In order to flap quickly, the tongue must be *very lax*. ੜ **ṛ** is actually a flapped version of ਡ **ḍ**. ਣ **ṇ**, though included among the **stop** consonants for historical reasons, is actually a **flap**. You can regard ਣ **ṇ** as a *nasalised* ੜ **ṛ**. (Or ੜ **ṛ** as the purely **oral** version of ਣ **ṇ**, or both as different avatars of ਡ **ḍ** – the choice is yours!). But it has important consequences for Panjabi pronunciation and spelling, as we will see later. It is hoped that you are learning the shapes of the Gurmukhi letters very carefully (if you do not already know them). It takes some time to learn them.

PANJABI (GURMUKHI) "ALPHABET"

Vowel Bearers

ੳ	ਅ	ੲ

Older Fricatives

ਸ s	ਹ h

Consonant Square (Stops)

	Voiceless Unaspirate	Voiceless Aspirate	Voiced Unaspirate	Voiced Aspirate	Nasal
ਕ Group	ਕ k	ਖ k^h	ਗ g	ਘ g^h	ਙ ṅ
ਚ Group	ਚ c	ਛ c^h	ਜ j	ਝ j^h	ਞ ñ
ਟ Group	ਟ ṭ	ਠ $ṭ^h$	ਡ ḍ	ਢ $ḍ^h$	ਣ ṇ
ਤ Group	ਤ t	ਥ t^h	ਦ d	ਧ d^h	ਨ n
ਪ Group	ਪ p	ਫ p^h	ਬ b	ਭ b^h	ਮ m

Frictionless Continuants

ਯ y	ਰ r	ਲ l	ਵ v	ੜ ṛ

New Fricatives

ਸ਼ ś	ਖ਼ x	ਗ਼ ɣ	ਜ਼ z	ਫ਼ f

More Recent Additions

ਕ਼ q	ਲ਼ ɭ

GURMUKHI AND PANJABI CONSONANTS – 2 : MANNER OF ARTICULATION

This chapter deals with the Panjabi **Stop** consonants' *manner of articulation* – the way the airstream for the articulation of these consonants is pushed out by the lungs, is modified by the vocal cords in the throat and whether it passes out through the nose as well. This chapter is more significant than the previous one because it is related to the traits of Panjabi which give this language a unique character among the languages of the Indian sub-continent. The **consonant sounds** in each *column* (coloured for easy identification) belong to a single class in terms of **manner of articulation** irrespective of their **place of articulation**. The unique identity of each consonant depends on its place in the grid we have described as the **Consonant Square**. For example, **ਜ j** is **voiced unaspirate palatal stop consonant.**

The term **aspirate** means "spoken with a strong breath force". **Unaspirate** is its opposite i.e., with a weak breath force. **Voiced** means "spoken with the **vocal cords** in the throat vibrating". Its opposite is **voiceless**, vocal cords not vibrating. **Nasal** means the "**voiced** airstream passing through the nose while it is blocked in the mouth."

So far, so good. But the trouble started with the so-called **voiced aspirated stop** consonants **ਘ g^h**, **ਝ j^h**, **ਢ $ḍ^h$**, **ਧ d^h** and **ਭ b^h**, which include **ਹ h** as well. The older *sounds* of these five **stop consonants** have disappeared from modern Eastern Panjabi, but the letters representing the older lost sounds are still there in the Gurmukhi script. In the diagram these letters are shown in white against a black

background. But white **ਹ h** is shown against a grey background. Its plight differs in different dialects of Panjabi. The full or partial loss of these **consonant sounds** is accompanied by the arrival of two **tones** – the **low tone** and the **high tone**, thus making Panjabi a **tone language**, in which changing the **pitch of voice** used in the pronunciation of a words can sometimes change its meaning.

We have called **ਘ g^h**, **ਝ j^h**, **ਢ $ḍ^h$**, **ਧ d^h** and **ਭ b^h** the **voiced aspirate** consonants. Some modern linguists (e.g., Ladefoged 2001) argue that true voicing and aspiration are not involved in the pronunciation of these consonants. But we can safely put aside this issue.

Panjabi is the only major **tone language** in the Indian sub-continent. But some other significant phonetic features also accompany **tone** in Panjabi. This a highly complicated subject. We have tried to present in the simplest possible manner.

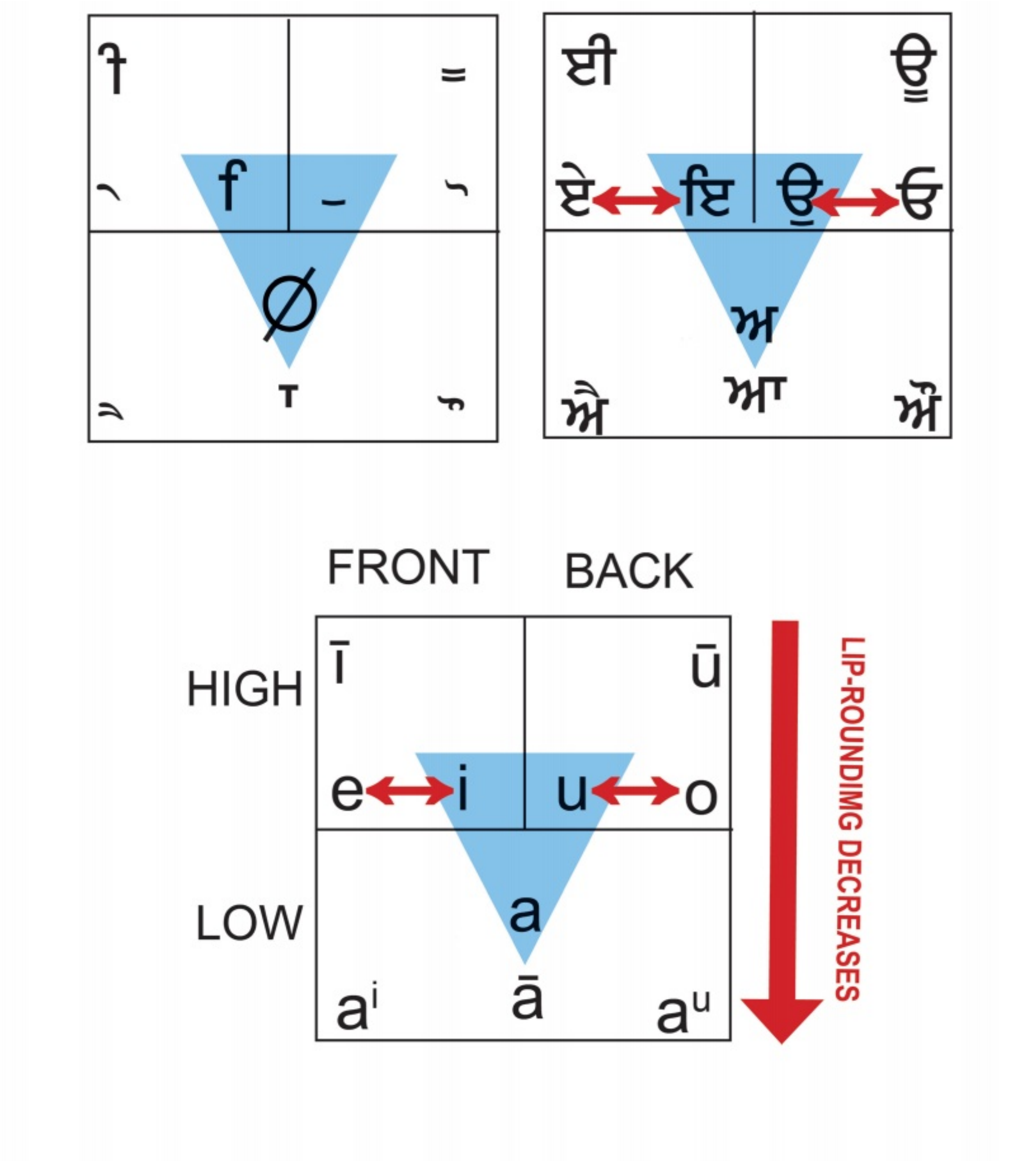
We need to understand the Panjabi **vowels, syllable** and **word stress** in order to understand the tones in Panjabi. We do this in the following chapters.

In the video, the *popular* pronunciation of **ਘ g^h**, **ਝ j^h**, **ਢ $ḍ^h$**, **ਧ d^h** and **ਭ b^h** is demonstrated. But always keep in mind the that the *real* **tonal** pronunciation of these **consonants** can vary in different positions. This pronunciations will be described and explained later.

There is something common in the **nasal stops** and the **frictionless continuants** as well. So they are shown against the same coloured background on page 44. They are known as the **liquid consonants**. No details can be given here. Just remember the name until we reveal its significance for the spellings of some words involving **ਹ h**.

Deep in the human unconscious is a pervasive need for a logical universe that makes sense. But the real universe is always one step beyond logic.

— Frank Herbert


ਈ
ਊ
ਏ
ਇ
ਉ
ਓ
ਅ
ਐ
ਆ
ਔ
FRONT
BACK
HIGH
LOW
ī
ū
e
i
u
o
a
a^i
ā
a^u
LIP-ROUNDIMG DECREASES

GURMUKHI SCRIPT AND PANJABI VOWEL SOUNDS

This chapter and some of the following ones as well are going to be a little bit technical and slightly demanding, but not impossible to grasp, if you try to understand them with concentration and determination. If something is complex, it *is* so. And that is that! We cannot change the reality.

You are advised to keep referring to the pictures on the opposite page again and again, especially if you are interested in studying Gurbani spelling. These pictures present a sort of *topological map* of the Panjabi vowels, in which the *relative position* of the entities is important, the distance between them is ignored and direction is also compromised. Examples of two very familiar and frequently used topological maps are the London Underground map and the Paris Metro map.

If you look at the picture of the Panjabi sounds and letters on page 16, you will find that phonetic equivalents of the first three – **ੳ**, **ਅ** and **ੲ** – are not given. They are called **vowel bearers**, and not simply **vowels**. The simple reason is that each of these *letters* can represent (or "bear") three or four **vowel sounds** in combination with **vowel symbols** (called **ਲਗਾਂ lagā̃** in Panjabi – see below what **ā̃** stands for). So there are *three* **vowel bearer** *letters* to represent *ten* **vowel sounds**. Never say from now onwards that "Panjabi has three vowels". One of the **vowel symbols** (for the **vowel sound ਅ**) is *invisible*. Do not make the mistake of saying that "there is no symbol to represent the vowel sound **ਅ**." There is great difference between "invisible symbol" and "no symbol". This will become clear later. In the first picture on page 28, the "zero" symbol **Ø** is used in place the invisible symbol for the sound **ਅ**. If a *visible* **vowel symbol** is added to a **consonant letter**, it must be understood that this *visible* symbol has replaced the *invisible* **symbol** for the **Vowel a.**

High, Low, Front and Back Vowels

Vowel *sounds* are more basic than **consonant** *sounds* in human speech. **Consonants** can be regarded as *interruption*s in the **vowel** airstream. In the history of the evolution of the human languages, **consonants** must have evolved later than the **vowels**. If you study spectrograms ("voiceprints") of human speech, **consonants** as interruption in the **voiced vowel** stream can be seen clearly. Another interesting fact is that it is very often the neighbouring **vowel** sounds which help us recognise the **consonant** sounds. For example, the sounds **p, k** and **t** appear as simple empty white gaps in the picture of the airstream. Whether a sound is heard as **p** or **k** or **t** depends on the changes in the quality (known as "formant transitions") of the preceding and/or following **vowel(s)**. Details cannot be given here. Interested readers are referred to Ladefoged (2001).

As has already been said several times, **vowel** sounds are produced by changing the shape of the resonance chamber in the mouth by changing the shape of the tongue by raising or lowering its different parts to different heights in order to change the quality (timbre) of the **voiced** sound. The *most basic* **vowel** sound in Panjabi and most other languages is **a**, for which the tongue is in a position of rest or in the *normal breathing position.* The Gurmukhi symbol for this vowel sound (known as the **ਮੁਕਤਾ muktā vowel**) is *invisible.* In the first picture on page 30, it is represented by the symbol **Ø**. We can say that the *sound* of every **consonant letter** of Gurmukhi contains the **a** sound. For example the real sound of the letter **ਕ** is not **k** but **ka** i.e., **k+a**. The combination of **connsonant+vowel** *sounds* is known as a **syllable**. So the **consonant letters** in Gurmukhi actually represent **syllables**. We will discuss all this later on. The Panjabi word **ਅੱਖਰ akk^{h}ar** for a letter of the script comes from the Sanskrit word *akṣara* (syllable). If a syllable has a vowel sound other than **a**, the *visible* symbol for that particular **vowel sound** is added to the **consonant letter.** But if the **syllable** consists of a **vowel sound** only and has no **consonant sound**,

an appropriate **vowel bearer** *letter* is used with a **vowel symbol** added to it. The *invisible* symbol for the **vowel sound a** is added to the **vowel bearer letter** ਅ.

Why does Gurmukhi have *three* **vowel bearer** letters to represent *ten* **vowel** sounds? The reason is historical. But the picture on page 28 gives a partial answer. The Panjabi **vowel** *sounds* are divided into three types on the basis of being first of all **high vowels** or **low vowels**. The **high vowels** are further divided into **front high vowels** and **back high vowels**. Symbols for all the **front high vowels** go with ੲ, those for the **back high vowels** go with ੳ, and symbols for all the **low vowels** (irrespective of their **back** or **front** position) go with ਅ. For typographical reasons, ੳ+ੱ is written as ੴ. The invisible symbol for **a** is added to ਅ.

The terms **high**, **low**, **front** and **back** indicate which part of the tongue is raised to what height in order to produce that particular **vowel sound**. Lips are **rounded** for the **back vowels**. But the amount of this rounding goes on decreasing with the decreasing height of the vowels. For **a^{u}**, some speakers round their lips only slightly, or do not round them at all. In **a^{u}** the **^{u}** is **superscripted** (raised in print) to indicate that in the phonological system of Panjabi **a^{u}** is a **single** sound, and *not a sequence* of **a** and **u**. This is the case with **a^{i}** as well.

Now study *all* the pictures on page 30 in order to understand what we have said above. You can ignore the double-headed red arrow ↔ joining **e** and **i** and also **u** and **o** until you come to study Gurbani spelling in Part 2 of the book. The position of each **vowel** on the map is the *most likely* one. But actually each **vowel sound** is a bundle of acoustic possibilities. In some positions in a word or sentence, one of **vowel** may sound like another. The **centralised lax vowels i** and **u** very often sound like **a** in **weak syllables**. We will discuss all this later.

"Short" and "Long" Vowels in Panjabi

Traditionally, it has been believed that Panjabi has three "short" vowels – **a** (with the *invisible* symbol), **i** (with the symbol ਿ, placed *before* a letter) and **u** (with the

symbol ੁ, placed *below* a letter). They had their "long" counterparts **ā** (with the symbol ਾ, placed *after* a letter), **ī** (with the symbol ੀ, placed *after* a letter) and **ū** (with the symbol ੂ, placed *below* a letter). The remaining four vowels were all "long". This classification was valid until important changes started taking place in the pronunciation of the language. Linguistic changes start almost imperceptibly and spread slowly in space and time. So no definite time for their beginning can be determined with certainty. The vowels traditionally regarded as "long" are **e** (with the symbol ੇ placed *above* a letter), **a^{i}** (with the symbol ੈ placed *above* a letter), **o** (with the symbol ੋ, placed *above* a letter) and **a^{u}** (with the symbol ੌ placed *above* a letter). We will explain below why the phonetic symbols **a^{i}** and **a^{u}** have a *superscripted* letter. The use of **ai** and **au** to represent the Sanskrit equivalents of the Panjabi vowel sounds was started in the nineteenth century. We have superscripted the second letter to emphasise that the sounds involved are *phonologically single* distinct elements in the system of Panjabi (as in Sanskrit), though they *phonetically* sound as sequences in some Panjabi dialects.

In the following chapters, we will discuss why it makes more sense to classify the Panjabi **Vowel** sounds as **lax** (or **centralised**) and **tense** (or **peripheral**) respectively. The pictures on page 30 visually illustrate the terms **centralised** and **peripheral**. But this can be discussed in detail only when we discuss **syllable** and **stress** in a later chapter. Things are interwoven in a complex manner, and a few things have to taken for granted for some time until a detailed discussion.

Nasalised vowels in Panjabi.

A **vowel Sound** in Panjabi (and in many other languages like French as well) is described as **nasalised** when, during its articulation in the *mouth*, the **voiced** airstream passes through the nose as well because of the open **nasal passage**. In our phonetic transcription, **nasalisation** is symbolised by he squiggle above the

symbol, as in **ã**, **ã̃**, **ĩ**, **ĩ̃**, **ũ**, **ũ̃**, **ẽ**, **ãⁱ**, **õ** and **ãᵘ**. In Gurmukhi, either ◌ੰ (called **Tippi**) or ◌ਂ (called **Bindi**) is used. We will discuss the choice between the two later.

Summing up the use of the Gurmukhi Vowel Bearers and Vowel Symbols

Study the following table carefully. In this table **C** means a **consonant sound** and **V** means a **vowel sound**. We have chosen the Panjabi **consonant sound** represented by the **consonant letter ਕ** in these examples. But any other **consonant letter** could have been chosen. We will deal with the concept of the **syllable** later. But here we take **CV** (a **consonant sound** plus a **vowel sound**) as the *most basic* type of **syllable** in Panjabi. A **single vowel sound** by itself can also constitute a **syllable**. These syllables are meaningless in Panjabi and are given here simply to illustrate the rules.The invisible symbol for the **vowel sound a** is presented in the table as **Ø**.

CV		V only		VC	
k+a	ਕ	Ø	ਅ	ak	ਅਕ
k+ā	ਕਾ	ā	ਆ	āk	ਆਕ
k+i	ਕਿ	i	ਇ	ik	ਇਕ
k+ī	ਕੀ	ī	ਈ	īk	ਈਕ
k+u	ਕੁ	u	ਉ	uk	ਉਕ
k+ū	ਕੂ	ū	ਊ	ūk	ਊਕ
k+e	ਕੇ	e	ਏ	ek	ਏਕ
k+aⁱ	ਕੈ	aⁱ	ਐ	aⁱk	ਐਕ
k+o	ਕੋ	o	ਓ	ok	ਓਕ
k+aᵘ	ਕੌ	aᵘ	ਔ	aᵘk	ਔਕ

All these ten **vowel symbols** (shown in first picture on page 28) have traditional names. If you are interested in knowing these names, watch the video recording. But you are advised to learn the names from an experienced user of Gurmukhi as well.

These names are **muktā ਮੁਕਤਾ [invisible], kannā ਕੰਨਾ [ਾ], sihāri ਸਿਹਾਰੀ [ਿ], bihāri ਬਿਹਾਰੀ [ੀ], aᵘnkaṛ ਔਂਕੜ [ੁ], dulaⁱnkaṛ ਦੁਲੈਂਕੜ [ੂ], lāṁ ਲਾਂ[ੇ], dulāṁ ਦੁਲਾਂ [ੈ], hoṛā ਹੋੜਾ [ੋ], kanaᵘṛā ਕਨੌੜਾ [ੌ]**.

There is a time-honoured tradition of starting primers for language teaching to children with pictures indicating the sounds of the letters of the alphabet, such as "A for Apple", "B for Bat", "C for Cat" and so on upto Z. This tradition copied from English is also followed for in Panjabi primers in and outside India. It starts with **"ਊੜਾ ਊਠ", "ਐੜਾ ਅਨਾਰ", "ਈੜੀ ਇਮਲੀ"** etc. *There is nothing wrong with the tradition. But since each of these letters can carry more than one **vowel symbol**, there is a scope for improvement and experimentation in the future.*

(1) **ੳ** is the most complex character in Gurmukhi. It is the only character that partly goes above the line. (See page 104). **ੳ** cannot be combined with the symbol **ੋ** for the sound **o**. The combination is written as **ੴ**. So it is better to start with the **consonant letter** and **sound ਸ** and come to the **vowel bearer letters** and the associated complexities last of all.

(2) As we have seen, the letter **ੳ** can carry *three* vowels sounds **u (ਉ)**, **ū (ਊ)** and **o (ਓ)**, **ਅ** can carry *four* vowels sounds **a (ਅ)**, **ā (ਆ)**, **aⁱ (ਐ)** and **aᵘ (ਔ)**, and **ੲ** can carry *three* vowels sounds **i (ਇ)**, **ī (ਈ)** and **e (ਏ)**. So, technically, there can be **"ਊੜਾ ਉਂਨ, ਊੜਾ ਊਠ, ਊੜਾ ਓਂਕਾਰ", "ਐੜਾ ਅਨਾਰ, ਐੜਾ ਆਸਣ, ਐੜਾ ਐਨਕ, ਐੜਾ ਔਰਤ", "ਈੜੀ ਇਮਲੀ, ਈੜੀ ਈਸ਼ਵਰ, ਈੜੀ ਏਕਾ"**, and so on. Not all these concepts can be pictorially represented. But they are close to the linguistic reality. The teacher should decide what to do. *They should not give the impression that each **vowel bearer letter**, can carry only one **vowel sound.***

SYLLABLE IN PANJABI AND GURMUKHI

Among the modern languages of the Indian sub-continent, Panjabi has a unique phonetic and phonological character. Any educated and intelligent user of this language should be aware of this – what is known as "Panjabi Accent". But what are the constituent elements of this "Panjabi Accent"? And how did they develop? What factors are responsible for this? Is there any connection between these factors and the changes in Panjabi spelling (in Gurmukhi) which have taken place over the past four or five hundred years? These questions should be answered for a better understanding Panjabi and its writing system Gurmukhi.

Guru Nanak Dev knew the then fashionable Perso-Arabic script very well. Now this script is also called the Urdu script and the Shahmukhi script when it is used or writing Panjabi in Pakistan. But he chose what has since come to be known as the Gurmukhi script. His writings reveal him as a staunch *nationalist*. But this is not the only reason why he preferred a native Indian script. He was not only a fine *linguist* but a great classical composer and singer as well. He knew that the structure of the Perso-Arabic script was such that it was unsuitable for writing his compositions which were meant to be sung.

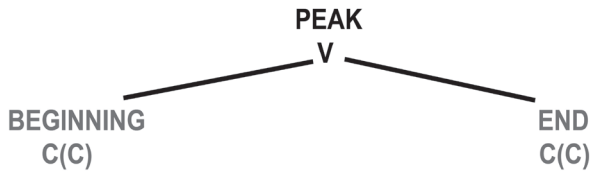
Syllable in Panjabi

It is not without significance that a letter of the Gurmukhi "alphabet" is called an **akk^{h}ar ਅੱਖਰ** or "syllable". This word comes from the Sanskrit word *akṣara* ("imperishable"), which was first used for the syllable *om*, meaning the Imperishable Being (God). Later on, it came to be used for *any* type of **syllable** in the language. In a script of the Brahmi family (such as Gurmukhi), a letter was called *varṇa* ("colour"). The "alphabetic" table is known as *varṇa mālā* ("garland of coloured

letters"). Over the past centuries, the Brahmi letters have been evolving into different shapes in different areas inside and outside India, but the phonetic and phonological analysis behind the system has not changed.

The **syllable** is t*he most basic unit of speech in every human language*. The reason why linguists have not been able to give a "universal" definition of the syllable applicable to all human languages is that each language organises its system is a slightly different way. Each language, like each human being, shares lots of features with others, but is also unique at the same time. The most basic structure of the syllable in Panjabi is **CV** (**consonant** *plus* **vowel**). Each **consonant letters** in the "alphabet" visually represents a **CV** type **syllable**, as we have already said. But its structure can be (and very often is) more elaborate than this. But it is still much simpler than in the case of languages like Sanskrit and English. The following picture graphically represents this structure.

BASIC SYLLABLE STRUCTURE IN PANJABI

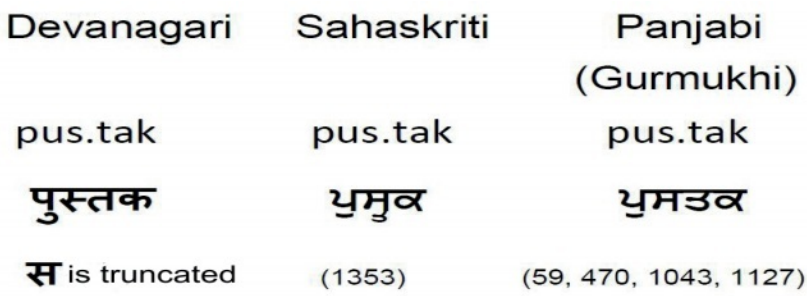


A **syllable** in Panjabi must have a **peak**, constituted by a **vowel sound**. Additionally, it can have one or two (but no more) **consonant sound(s)** *before* the **peak** (known as the *beginning* of the **syllable**, or *after* the **peak** (known as the *end* of the syllable. The beginning and the end of the syllable are shown in grey in the above diagram. Two **consonant sounds** coming together *within* the **syllable** are known as a **consonant cluster**. But if one **consonant sound** follows another *across the syllable boundary*, they are together known as a **consonant sequence**. Any two

consonants can come together in a **consonant sequence**. But there are only three Panjabi Consonants (**ਯ੍**, **ਰ੍** and **ਵ੍**) one of which can be the second member in one type of **consonant cluster**. We will see later what these three **consonants** are. The second member of the other type of **consonant cluster** can be **ਹ੍** only. It can cluster only with what are known as **liquid consonants**. We explain all this later on. (Also see below what the symbol ◌ stands for)

A new typographical convention

We saw in the last chapter that a Gurmukhi **consonant letter** (**ਕ**, for example) represents a **CV syllable ka**. But if a **consonant letter** comes immediately before the *syllable boundary* or at the end of a word, it represents only the **consonant sound** without the **vowel sound a**. We will write this **consonant letter** with the *halant mātrā* ◌ *under* the letter. For example, the word **gardan** ("neck"), written in Gurmukhi as **ਗਰਦਨ**, has two syllables **gar.dan ਗਰ.ਦਨ**. While pronouncing a word, it is *mostly* possible to pause at a syllable boundary. (There is one exception discussed in a later chapter). The letter **ਰ** in the first syllable **ਗਰ–** stands *not* for the **syllable ra**, but for the **consonant sound r**. When we wish to emphasise this fact, we will write such a **consonant letter** with the *halant mātrā, as* **ਰ੍**, to indicate that it stands for the **consonant r**, and *not* for the **syllable ra**. The letter **ਨ** at the end of the word stands for the Consonant **ਨ੍**. Here, the Gurmukhi writing system differs from the *Devanāgarī* writing system (used for writing Sanskrit, Hindi, and some other languages). In *Devanāgarī*, when a **consonant sound** occurs without a **vowel sound** following it at the beginning of a word or within it, but not at the end, the letter for the **consonant sound** is truncated (or mutilated in some other way, depending upon the shape of the letter). The syllable boundary is irrelevant. (See



the above picture. This picture shows how the word **pus.tak** "book") is spelt in Devanagari and how it is spelt by Guru Nanak Dev in two different ways in Gurmukhi. The first **syllable** ends in **s**. In Devanāgarī, the letter for this sound is truncated. This word occurs five times in *Sri Guru Granth Sahib* (*SGGS*) The picture shows the page numbers where the word occurs (spelt by Guru Nanak Dev in every case). In Gurmukhi, when used for writing Panjabi, it is not truncated. It is spelt as we spell it today. But Nanak also used it in the language known as Sahaskriti (which is a mixture of Sanskrit and some later local dialects). Devanāgari, was used for writing this language (also known as Hybrid Sanskrit). The "truncation" method differs in Devanāgarī and Gurmukhi. In writing a **CC cluster** in Gurmukhi, the *first* member is not truncated (as happens in Devanagari). It is the *second member* that is truncated and subscripted (put below the first letter). So Nanak follows Devanagari as much as possible and spells **pus.tak** as ਪੁਸ੍ਤੁਕ in Sahaskriti written in Gurmukhi. We will see in Part 2 of the book that some other Gurmukhi letters are also truncated and subscripted in *SGGS.*

In Gurmukhi used for writing Modern Panjabi, only four **consonant letters** (**ਯ**, **ਰ**, **ਵ**, and **ਹ**) can be truncated or mutilated in this way, as we will see.

Important Note: In Gurbani, the *halant mātrā* ੍ has been put to a very different use, which we will discuss in Part 2 of this book dealing with Gurbani.

Reconsidering Vowels and Consonants

We have said that *phonetically* (taking into account the production of the sounds) the **vowel sounds** are produced when the outgoing **voiced** airstream is neither stopped nor obstructed in the mouth. Different parts of the tongue are raised to different heights and sometimes the lips are rounded in different degrees to give a distinct acoustic shape to each **vowel sound**. For the **nasalised vowels**, the nasal passage is also kept open to let a part of the airstream pass through the nose while it is stopped or obstructed in the mouth. We will transcribe the **nasalised vowels** with a squiggle – as **ã, ã̃, ĩ, ĩ̃, ũ, ũ̃, ẽ , ãʲ, õ** and **ãʷ**. In Gurmukhi the symbols ੰ (known as **Tippi**) and ਂ (known as **Bindi**) are used, as we going to see later.

Now we look at the classification *phonologically* (the way the sounds are *organised* by the language. (A sound's "place value", so to say). For the production of the **high vowels i**, **ī**, **u** and **ū** (**ਇ**, **ਈ**, **ਉ** and **ਊ**), the airstream flows free of course. But the passage is *narrower* than for the other six vowels because the tongue is raised high. So these **high vowels** have *less* **acoustic energy** (known as **sonority**) than the other **vowels** have. So when one of these **high vowels** occurs *in the immediate neighbourhood* of a *non*-**high vowel**, it is treated like a **consonant**. because it ceases to be a **syllable peak**. The **Vowels i**, **ī** (**ਇ**, **ਈ**) become the **consonant ਯ੍**, and the **vowels ਉ** and **ਊ** become the **consonant ਵ੍**. So these **vowels sounds** become **consonant sounds**. (The situation is now slightly more complicated in Modern Panjabi, as will see in a later chapter). This happens in Sanskrit also. But the opposite also happens in Sanskrit – when the **consonant sounds r** and **l** become **vowels sounds** (**syllable peaks**) because they have *more* **sonority** (or are more **sonorous**) than the immediately neighbouring **consonant sounds**. But we are not concerned with Sanskrit here. In Panjabi, no **consonant** ever becomes a **vowel**. This should be kept in mind when we later deal with Gurbani in Part 2 of the book.

Non-syllabic i ਇ (ਯ੍) and u ਉ (ਵ੍) in Panjabi and Gurmukhi

While it is true that for the articulation of the **high vowel** *sounds*, the tongue is raised high and the flow of the airstream is not interrupted, it is equally true that the passage for the flow of the airstream is narrower than for the other **vowels**. The result is that the **high vowels** have less **sonority** (are less **sonorous** and have less acoustic energy) than the **low vowels**. When in a word a **high vowel** is immediately followed by a **low vowel**, it does not become the **syllable peak** and thus becomes a **consonant sound.** In this way, **ī ਇ** becomes **y ਯ੍** and **u ਉ** becomes **u ਵ੍**. Older Panjabi writers like Vir Singh and Kahn Singh Nabha took account of this while spelling Panjabi words, (also shown in Part 2 of the book).

giān → **gyān** **ਗਜਾਨ** (**ਯ** was truncated as **ਜ**)
suād → **svād** **ਸ੍ਵਾਦ** (**ਵ** was truncated as ੍ and subscripted)

But most modern Panjabi writers do not use **ਜ** and ੍ , and spell these words as **ਗਿਆਨ** and **ਸੁਆਦ** respectively. But still the *pronunciation* is **gyān** and **svād** respectively. Gurbani uses ੱ (called the *Yaksh Matra*) in place of **ਜ**. We will discuss this in Part 2

Spelling Rules in Modern Panjabi

As has been pointed out a number of times before, the syllabic structure of Panjabi is very simple. The Gurmukhi "alphabet" itself actually an "alphasyllabic" writing system. Each letter either represents a **CV** (**consonant+vowel**) **syllable**, or is capable of representing a syllable with the addition of a **vowel symbol**. So **CV** is the structure of the *most basic syllable* in Panjabi.

So these are spelling rules for writing Panjabi in Gurmukhi. ***They are applicable in this order.***

Rule 1. Start dividing the word into CV sequences, starting from the beginning.

(i) A **CV** sequence is written as a **consonant letter** *plus* **a vowel symbol** (including the *invisible* **Mukta** symbol).

(ii) A lone **V** is written with the appropriate **vowel bearer letter** plus a **vowel symbol** (including the *invisible* **Mukta** symbol).

(iii) A lone **C** is written as a **consonant letter**. (It occurs at the end of a **syllable** within the word or at the end of a word).

But see and follow Rule 2 as well.

Rule 2. Look for nasalised vowels and homorganic nasal consonants.

And see and follow Rule 3 as well.

Rule 3. Look for "double consonants".

And see and follow Rule 4 as well.

Rule 4. Look for the sounds which can become the second member of a consonant cluster.

Important Note: If a syllable ends in a **vowel sound**, it is known as an **open syllable**, If it ends in a **consonant sound** it is known as a **closed syllable**. It is *usually* possible to pause at a **syllable boundary**. But also read the next chapter.

Below, we give examples of the application of each rule:

Rule 1. Start dividing the word into CV sequences, starting from the beginning.

amarjīt → **a. ma. r. jī. t** (a name)

ਅ. ਮ. ਰ. ਜੀ. ਤ

ਅ.ਮਰ.ਜੀਤ (three syllables)

ਅਮਰਜੀਤ

(i) The *lone* **V a** (without any preceding **C**) is written as **ਅ** with the *invisible* **vowel symbol** added. It is a **syllable** in itself.

(ii) The **C m** followed by following **a** is written as **ਮ** with the *invisible* **vowel symbol** added.

(iii) The *lone* **C r**, though it becomes a part of the syllable, ends a **closed syllable**. It is written as full **ਰ** with *no* symbol added (not even the *invisible* one, because there is *no* **V** after it).

(iv) **jī** is a **CV sequence**, written **ਜੀ** with a **consonant letter** with a **vowel symbol** added

(v) The lone **C t**, though it becomes a part of the **syllable ਜੀਤ**, comes at the end of the syllable (and the word). It is wriiten **ਤ** with *no* symbol added (not even the invisible one).

upjāū → **u. p. jā. ū** (“fertile”)

ਉ. ਪ. ਜਾ. ਊ

ਉਪ. ਜਾ. ਊ (three syllables)

ਉਪਜਾਊ

Rule 2. Look for Nasalised Vowels and Homorganic Nasal Consonants

A **nasalised vowel** is produced when the **voiced airstream** passes through the mouth and the nose at the same time. In Gurmukhi spelling, such a vowel sound is shown by adding one of the two symbols known as **Tippi** (ੰ) and **Bindi** (ਂ). Examples are

ḍãg → **ḍã. g** (“large stick”)

ਡਾਂ. ਗ

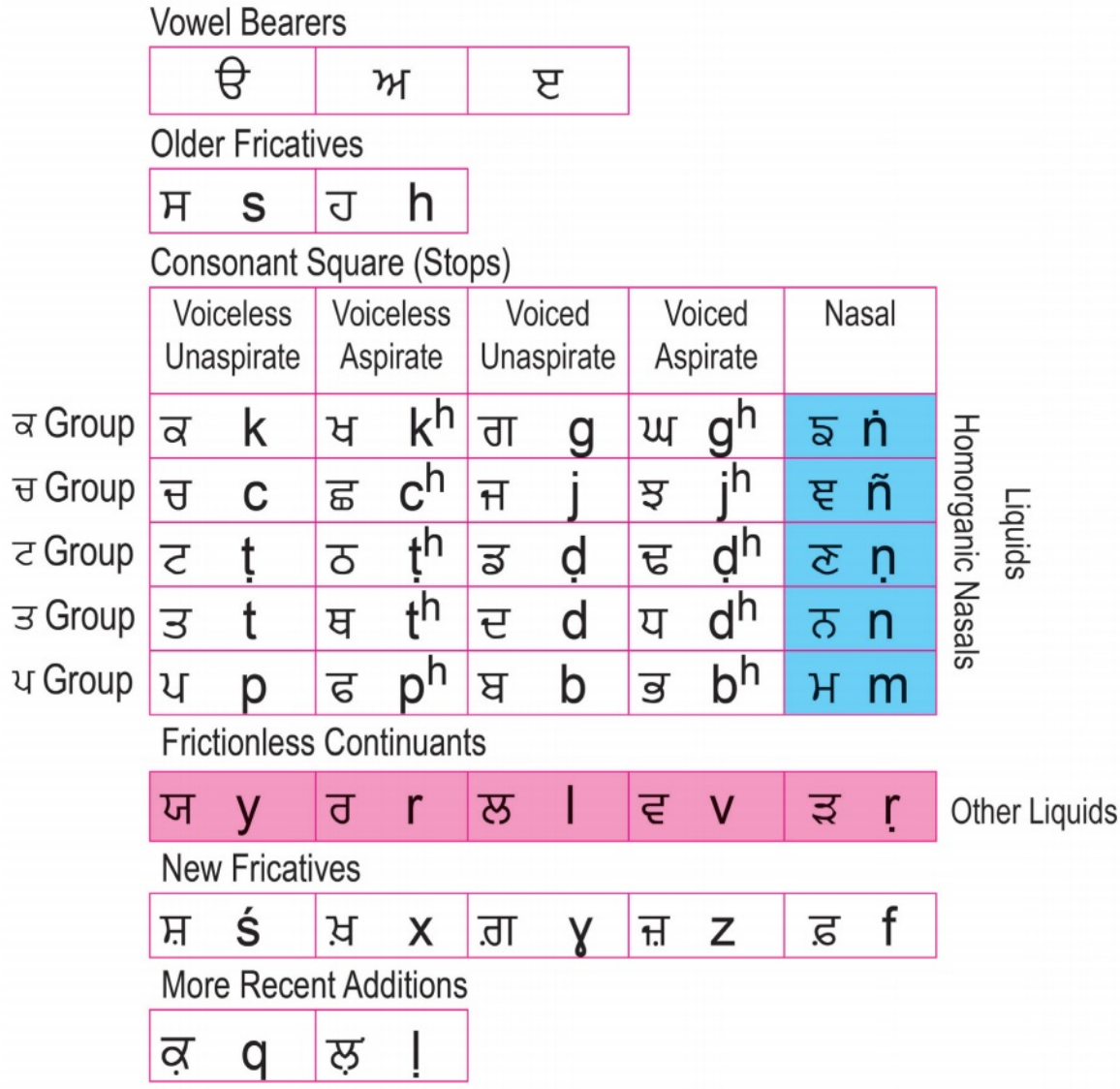
ਡਾਂਗ (one syllable)

bĩḍā → **bĩ. ḍā** (“the insect cricket”)

ਬੀਂ. ਡਾ

ਬੀਂਡਾ (two syllables)
(Written as one word)

PANJABI (GURMUKHI) "ALPHABET"



gũd → **gũ. d** (“glue”)

ਗੁੰ. ਦ

ਗੁੰਦ (One syllable)

The choice between **Tippi** (ੰ) and **Bindi** (ਁ) is largely a matter of established convention. The general rule is that the **Tippi** should be used, but not when it can touch the **vowel symbol** or a part of the **consonant letter**. These symbols and the letter are ਁ, ਾ, ਿ, ੀ, ੁ, ੂ and ੋ.

For **homorganic nasals**, see the rightmost column in the **Consonant Square** in the picture on the facing page. The term **homorganic** means “produced by the same organs”. All the **consonant sounds** shown in any single *row* in the **Consonant Square** are **homorganic**. For example, all the five **consonants** in the **ਕ**-Group are produced by touching the **soft palate** with the back part of the tongue. All the five Consonants in the **ਚ**-Group are produced by touching the **hard palate** with the front part of the tongue. The togue is curled against the back part of the upper gum ridge for the production of the **consonants** of the **ਟ**-Group. For all the **consonants** of the **ਤ**-Group, the tip of the tongue touches the upper teeth. For the **consonants** of the last **ਪ**-Group, the upper and the lower lip join. In each group, the last **nasal consonant** is the **homorganic nasal** to the rest of the group. So we have five **homorganic nasals** – **ṅ ਙ**, **ñ ਞ**, **ṇ ਣ**, **n ਨ** and **m ਮ**. Now let us see some examples of how **homorganic Nasals** feature in the syallabic structure relevant to Gurmukhi spelling.

kaṅgaṇ → **kaṅ.gaṇ** (“bracelet”)

Here, the **nasal ṅ** is homorganic to **g**. The **syllable boundary** (according to the rules of **syllabification** discussed earlier in the chapter) lies between the two. So they form a **consonant sequence** (two neighbouring consonants separated by a **syllable boundary**). When a **homorganic consonant** is involved in such a **sequence**, it is written as a **Tippi** (ੰ) or a **Bindi** (ਁ) in Gurmukhi.

Now let us see how this word is spelt in Gurmukhi

kaṅgaṇ → kaṅ.gaṇ

ਕੰ . ਗਣ (ਙ is written as ੰ)

Sometimes there are interesting results in pronunciation. The **nasal passage** is open for the production of ਙ (witten as **Tippi** here) closed for the production of **ਗ** and again open for **ਣ**. Very often, in the speech of some speakers, **nasalisation spreads** over the rest of the word after **ਙ**. The **uvula** has to be lowered for **ਙ** to open the **nasal passage**, raised for **ਗ** and lowered again for **ਣ**. But because of human inertia, called **assimilation** by linguists, the **uvula** is kept lowered for the rest of the word, resulting in the **nasalisation** of **ਗ** into ਙ. So the pronunciation becomes **kaṅṅan ਕੰਙਣ**. **ਗ** thus turned into ਙ is written as full **ਙ**, and not as a **Tippi**.

The same process takes place in the case of

iñjaṇ → iñ.jaṇ ("engine")

ਇੰ.ਜਣ (ਞ is written as ੰ)

Tippi is used in place of **ਞ**. You can easily guess why some people pronounce the word as **iññaṇ ਇੰਞਣ**. There are some other words as well in which "full" **ਙ** and **ਞ** are used because of **nasalisation** spreading over the whole word, turning the **oral**

ਗ or **ਜ** into **nasal** **ਙ** or **ਞ** respectively. These words are **ਲੰਙਾ** ("lame"), **ਞਿਆਨ** ("knowledge") (This spelling has been used by Guru Nanak on page 432 of *SGGS*), **ਕੰਙਣ** ("bracelet"), **ਜੰਞ** ("marriage party"), **ਸੁੰਞਾ** ("deserted"), **ਅੰਞਾਣਾ** ("ignorant") and a few other words. But such spellings are going out of fashion and **ਙ** and **ਞ** are being replaced by **ਗ** and **ਜ** respectively in these words. But we should not spend too much time on this topic.

As has been pointed out earlier, it is mostly possible to pause at the boundary of a closed syllable (ending in a **consonant** sound). Try this while pronouncing the words dealt with in this section, and you will realise what **ਙ** and **ਞ** sound like. It is wrong to say that "Panjabi has no **ਙ** and **ਞ** sounds." These *sounds* are definitely there. But since they are nearly always written as **Tippi** or **Bindi**, the letters for these sounds are rarely (if ever) used by modern writers. Many Panjabi writers cannot tell which is which or describe exactly what their pronunciation is.

Before we move on to **ਣ**, **ਨ** and **ਮ**, which are represented by a **Tippi** or **Bindi** as well as by their full forms in different position, let us deal with a mysterious and enigmatic sound represented by the **Tippi** in

sa?sār → **sa?.sār** (the world)

ਸੰ.ਸਾਰ (The mysterios sound is written as ੰ)

The sound represented by a question mark above is **homorganic nasal** to **s ਸ**. Start speaking **s ਸ**. Then open your **nasal passage** and redirect the airstream through it. *Do not worry if you cannot do this. It would need a trained linguist to do this **consciously**, but every speaker of Panjabi does this **unconsciously**.* The resulting **consonant sound** is the **homorganic nasal** to **s**. It occurs in the word **ਸੰਸਦ**

("parliament") as well. The IPA (International Phonetic Alphabet) has no symbol for it. The author contacted some prominent phoneticians. They all agreed that this **consonant sound** exists. But they were unable to describe and name it. So we leave it here and move on!

kaṇḍā → **kaṇ.ḍā** ("thorn")

ਕੰ.ਡਾ (ਣ is written as ੰ)

candan → **can.dan** ("sandal wood")

ਚੰ.ਦਨ (ਨ is written as ੰ)

kambaḷ → **kam.baḷ** ("blanket")

ਕੰ.ਬ਼ਲ (ਮ is written as ੰ)

The following two examples must be studies very carefully. They are important for understanding the Panjabi spelling in Gurmukhi.

lammā → **lam.mā** ("long, tall")

ਲੰ.ਮਾ (first ਮ is written as ੰ, second as full ਮ)

unnĩ → **un.nĩ** ("nineteen")

ਉਂ.ਨੀਂ (first ਨ is written as ਂ, second as full ਨ)

You always use **Bindi** with ੳ. The important thing to remember is that the first syllable ends and the second begins with the *same* **nasal consonant sound**. So the **consonant** is its own **homorganic consonant**. It sounds a bit absurd, like someone being his own brother! But this will become clear when we come to the **doubling** of the **consonants** below.

But a **syllable** may end with ਙ ਞ, ਨ ਨ or ਮ ਮ, and the following **syllable** may start with **non-homorganic consonant**. In such cases, *full* ਙ ਞ, ਨ ਨ and ਮ ਮ are used. They are *not* written as **Tippi** or **Bindi**. Examples are

raṇjīt → **raṇ.jīt** ("victor in battlefield")

ਰਣ.ਜੀਤ (ਣ is written as full, and not as ੰ because ਙ ਞ and ਜ ਜ are not **homorganic**)

sanmān → **san.mān** ("honour")

ਸਨ.ਮਾਨ (ਨ ਨ and ਮ ਮ are not **homorganic**)

sam.tol → **sam.tol** ("balanced")

ਸਮ.ਤੋਲ (ਮ ਮ and ਤ ਤ are not **homorganic**)

Rule 3. Look for "double consonants"

We will deal with this topic in more detail in the next chapter. A "double consonant" is the **non-nasal tense consonant sound** which is stretched in such a way that the **syllable boundary** lies inside it. The part *before* this boundary is represented by the symbol ੱ known as **Addhak**. Study the following pairs carefully

ga.dā	**gad.dā**	
ਗਦਾ	**ਗਦ.ਦਾ** →	**ਗੱਦਾ**
(“club, the weapon”)	(“cushion”)	
pa.tā	**pat.tā**	
ਪਤਾ	**ਪਤ.ਤਾ** →	**ਪੱਤਾ**
(“address”)	(“leaf”)	
ka.lā	**kal.lā**	
ਕਲਾ	**ਕੱ.ਲਾ** →	**ਕੱਲਾ**
(“art”)	(“alone”)	

Rule 4. Look for the sound which can become the second member of a Consonant Cluster.

(1) y ਯ, **r ਰ** and **v ਵ** can become a second member of **Consonant Cluster** (within a **syllable**) in Panjabi. As we have seen earlier (on page 40), **y ਯ** is a **non-syllabic** version of **i ਇ** and **v ਵ** is a **non-syllabic** version of **u ਉ**. They are *pronounced* as such. Some older Panjabi writers also spelt them as such. But most modern writers write them as **ਇ** and **ਉ** respectively. Examples are

Older spelling		Modern spelling
giān →	**gyān**	
	ਗਜਾਨ	**ਗਿਆਨ** (“knowledge”)

suād → svād

ਸ੍ਵਾਦ **ਸੁਆਦ** ("taste")

But **r ਰ** is still subscripted by most writers, as in

prem

ਪ੍ਰੇਮ (**ਰ** is written as subscript ◌੍)
("love")

pri.tam

ਪ੍ਰੀ.ਤਮ (**ਰ** is written as subscript ◌੍)

ਪ੍ਰੀਤਮ
("sweetheart", also a name)

It is important to remember that in Gurmukhi, the first member of the cluster without a **vowel sound** following it is written in its *full form*. It is the *second* member with the **vowel** sound following that is **subscripted.**

(2) Subscript h ਹ demands most care in pronunciation and spelling because

(i) It **clusters** only with a **liquid consonant**. See the picture on Page 44 showing what the Panjabi **liquid consonants** are. For the pronunciation of a **liquid coso**nant, the **voiced airstream** is *either* just *obstructed*, but not stopped in the mouth, or if it is stopped in the mouth, it goes on escaping through the nose. The **nasal consonants**

in the **Consonant Square** and the **frictionless continuants** come in this group. So, *theoretically*, The **h ਹ** sound can **cluster** (become a part of the cluster within a **syllable**) with *any* of the five **nasal consonants** and *any* of the five **frictionless continuants.** But, *practically*, it clusters only with **ṇ ਣ**, **n ਨ**, **m ਮ**, **r ਰ**, **l ਲ**, **v ਵ** and **ṛ ੜ**. In the speech of the people who use the **retroflex ḷ ਲ਼** in their speech, it can cluster with this **consonant** as well.

(ii) This **h ਹ** is *never* pronounced. It was the first casualty of the great change that started coming in Panjabi pronunciation about five hundred years ago. Some scholars believe that it was not pronounced in Panjabi when Gurbani was written down. We will discuss all this in the one of the following chapters. But it is very much there in Gurmukhi spelling. So we give some examples of the words in whose spelling it occurs as **subscript ੍**.

paṇhā → **pa.ṇhā** (“silt”)

ਪਣ੍ਹਾ

annhã̃ → **an.nhã̃** (“blind”)

ਅੰਨ੍ਹਾਂ (The first **n** is written as **Tippi**)

tʰammhĩ̃ → **tʰam.mhĩ̃** (“support”)

ਥੰਮ੍ਹੀਂ (The first **m** is written as **Tippi**)

varhā → **va.rhā** (“year”)

ਵਰ੍ਹਾ

sillhā → **sil.lhā** ("moist")

ਸਿੱਲ੍ਹਾ (See the use of the **Addhak** ੱ above)

ravhe → **ra.vhe** ("may stay")

ਰਵ੍ਹੇ

caṛhā.ī → **ca.ṛhā.ī** ("ascent")

ਚੜ੍ਹਾਈ (three syllables, cluster in the middle syllable)

caḷhā → **ca.ḷhā** ("small water tank")

ਚ.ਲ੍ਹਾ

Summing up

Here we simply repeat the words we used on page 19 to start an earlier Chapter.

> The Gurmukhi script used to represent the pronunciation of Panjabi words in a *fairly systematic* manner (but not "perfectly" – no known writing system does this) about 400-500 years ago. Since then, some very significant changes in the system of pronunciation of Panjabi words have been taking place. But the spelling system in Gurmukhi has not kept pace with these changes. However, a *systematic relation* still exists between the pronunciation of Panjabi words and their representation in the Gurmukhi script.

In this chapter we very briefly explored the “systematic relation” mentioned above.

In the next two chapters, we are going to discuss the “very significant changes in the system of pronunciation of Panjabi words.”

Everything that people have done billions of times with a given thing, everything that it could give people in their actions, has become the assimilated flesh and blood of the word – its sound, its ability to combine organically with other words of the given language. The social function of a word is thus objectified in its sound. And it is now the sound that determines its linguistic function of guiding relations between people and people's relations to the things.

— F.T. Mikhailov


?
Do you speak
pañ|jā|bī
ਪੰ|ਜਾ|ਬੀ
or
paña|jā|bī
ਪੰ|ਜਾ|ਬੀ
?

SYLLABLE AND STRESS IN PANJABI

The greatest intellectual sin in the study of the phonetics and phonology of a language is ***"hearing with the eyes".*** This happens when you hear a word and *immediately and unconsciously* "translate" the auditory impression into its *visual written form*, so that you *unconsciously* "hear" the written form. This habit prevails specifically among the Panjabi folk "linguists" dearly holding two myths about the Gurmukhi script: (1) this script was "invented" by Guru Angad Dev, the second Guru of the Sikhs faith and (2) in Gurmukhi you "write exactly as you speak and read out exactly as you write". Both these dangerous myths have prevented a genuine scientific study of Panjabi and Gurmukhi. Unless you start hearing the spoken language without bringing in the script and free yourself from these two myths, you cannot make any progress in understanding the rest of the book.

The research of G.B.Singh (1951) has shown that all the Gurmukhi letters and symbols had already been in existence for centuries before Guru Nanak Dev. All that Guru Nanak did was *assemble* a script suited to his need, i.e., writing his compositions in his Panjabi-based language, incorporating words from other languages as well and making it suitable for being set to music. Even this is a great linguistic achievement. As for the "write exactly as you speak..." myth, this may have been true *to some extent*, as the spelling rules given in the last chapter have shown, but as we have already pointed out, some "very significant changes in the system of pronunciation of Panjabi words" have taken place over the past

400-500 years, and the Gurmukhi writing system has not kept pace with them. But a *systematic* relation between Panjabi pronunciation and Gurmukhi script still exists. This poses an intellectual challenge for the learner as well as the teacher. This chapter and the next are going to explore and meet this challenge. We are going to reduce the use of the **Phonetic Transcript** (a sort of baby walker) from now onwards. The major changes in Panjabi pronunciation mentioned above can be understood under the following headings.

All the facts presented in this chapter and the next have been discovered and verified by some highly educated qualified linguists from time to time, starting more than a century ago. Their views are quoted at appropriate places. But do not accept these views simply on their authority. Like a really educated person, you can check verify them yourself.

Stress-timed rhythm

Banarsi Das Jain (1889-1954) was the first native Panjabi linguist who received a Ph.D. degree in linguistics from a foreign university (London). The title of his thesis was *Phonology of Panjabi as Spoken about Ludhiana*. It is notable that his mentor was Daniel Jones, the foremost phonetician of his generation in the world. So any wrong analysis and conclusion by Jain would have been detected by Jones. But in science, you examine and verify everything and do not simply rely upon anybody's authority. Jain wrote in his thesis that in Panjabi "stressed syllables tend to occur at approximately equal intervals and this may be effected by changing the order of words if permissible by grammar." Quite significantly, he used the words "tend to" and "approximately". Natural languages are governed by *tendencies*, and not by rules carved in stone. The stressed syllables *tend to* occur at *approximately* equal intervals, not by a stopwatch accuracy. English, German, Russian and some other European languages are **stress-timed**, in which **stressed syllables** *tend to*

occur at regular intervals and **unstressed syllables** are squeezed between them. If the order of words in less flexible, as in English, the unstressd syllables are more radically squeezed. But, fortunately, the grammatical order of words in Panjabi is not that rigid. Jain's observation was tested by the present author with the help of a computer. The results (but not the procedure itself) is given in Bhardwaj 2016 (Chapter 16).

The opposite tendency is that of a **syllable-timed** language, in which syllables *tend to* be given equal time. French, Spanish, Italian, Hindi and Sanskrit are such languages. All these languages mentioned above belong to the same Indo-European family. It is unknown why some languages are in one group or the other, and why some like Panjabi and Portuguese are changing sides. In Sanskrit, for example, syllables were *guru* (heavy) and *laghu* (light). We need not go into these details. Sanskrit, Hindi and Panjabi verse prosody was based on such considerations. Some old-fashioned Panjabi prosodists still insist on analysing Panjabi verse prosody in such terms. But we are not concerned with this subject here. Briefly, this involved **short** and **long vowels** and **open** and **closed syllables**. As we are going to see, these distinctions are being obliterated in modern day Eastern Panjabi speech. But **stress-timed rhythm** involves a great deal more than **stressed syllables** occurring at regular intervals.

We have already dealt with the **syllable** in a previous chapter. But we must deal with **stress** now to fully understand what Jain meant. It is this feature of Panjabi which gives it a unique phonetic character among the languages of the Indian sub-continent.

Syllable and Stress in Panjabi

A **stressed syllable** is uttered with stronger articulatory energy than an **unstressed syllable**. It often sounds more prominent and louder in the word. The Panjabi name

Sukh**jin**der ਸੁਖ**ਜਿੰ**ਦਰ, has three **syllables** – Sukh-**jin-**der ਸੁਖ-**ਜਿੰ-**ਦਰ, and the *middle* syllable **-jin-** -**ਜਿੰ-** is **stressed**. Any speaker of Panjabi can check this by speaking the word aloud. Only *one* **syllable** in a multi-syllable word is **stressed**. (A few exceptions to this *tendency* are discussed below).

Since this tendency is relatively new in Panjabi, the difference between a **stressed** and an **unstressed syllable** is not as great as in English (in which it has existed for a great deal longer period of time), but any good observers (unlike the traditional "I-don't-agree" die-hards) can feel it. In Panjabi, some other features are also associated with the new rhythm.

Though it is the **syllable** that is regarded as **stressed,** it is actually the **vowel** that constitutes the **syllable peak** that bears the **stress**. **Vowels** in **unstressed syllables** tend to bcome weak an **centrlised** (move tyowards the **vowels a ਅ**, **i ਇ** and **ੳ u**. Very often **a ਅ** disappears altogether, especially in an **unstressed syllable** *before* the **stressed** one. **Consonants** are also weakly articulated.

"Double Consonants" again

On page 50, we dealt with **double consonants**, written with an **Addhak ੱ.** We can regard a **double** (or **geminated**) **consonant** as a single **tense consonant** stretched in such a way that the **syllable boundary** comes in the middle of it. It is important to know that a **lax consonant** does not occur in such a position. The picture on page 61 shows the **lax** and **tense consonants** and **vowels** of Panjabi. Only the **tense** sounds (both **vowels** and **consonants** can be "doubled" in this way. Yes, Panjabi **tense vowels** *are* also **doubled**, strange tough it may sound, as we will see.

"Short" vs "Long" Vowels, or "Lax" vs "Tense" Vowels?

Look at the pictures of Panjabi **vowel sounds** in page 28. Traditionally, **a ਅ**, **i ਇ** and **ੳ u** were known **short vowels** and the remaining seven as **long vowels**.

LAX PANJABI SOUNDS

Vowels (Centralised)

a	i	u
ਅ	ਇ	ੁ

Consonants (Flap/Tap)

ṇ	ṛ	r	ḷ
ਣ	ੜ	ਰ	ਲ਼

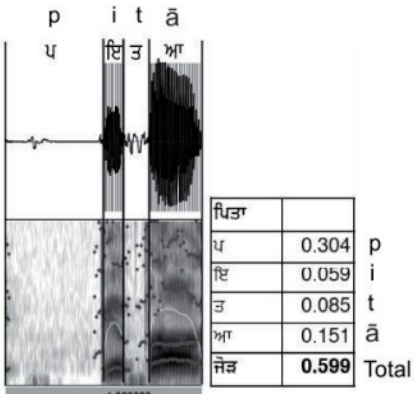
TENSE PANJABI SOUNDS

All the rest

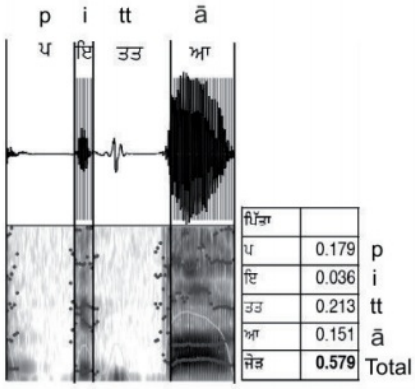
Superficially, they do appear so – as *quantitatively smaller* versions of **ā ਆ**, **ī ਈ** and **ū ੂ** respectively. The bar above these phonetic symbols indicates this. This convention was taken from the phonetic transcription developed for Sanskrit. We took the *familiar* phonetic transcription rather than develop a new one for this book. But we must not unquestioningly accept the tradition. Now we have the computer. So why not use it to examine the validity of the traditional distinction?

There is a computer software known as PRAAT developed by University of Amsterdam. It can be downloaded free from the Internet and used to analyse sounds. We chose the pair of traditionally **"short" vowel i ਇ** and the **"long" vowel ī ਈ** and used them in some words, each having two **syllables**. The words

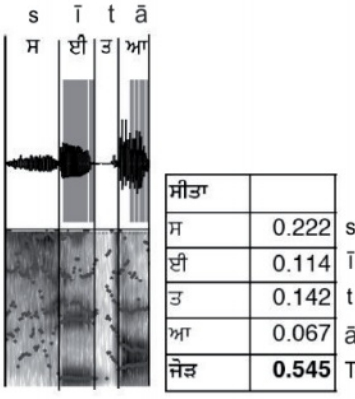
were recorded with a USB microphone on the hard disk of a computer and were then analysed with PRAAT, and the duration of each sound was measured. Marking the *exact* boundary between two sounds is difficult, but marking it *approximately* is fine for our purpose. PRAAT can show the duration up to one millionth of a second. But we measured it only up to one thousandth of a second. But it would be wrong



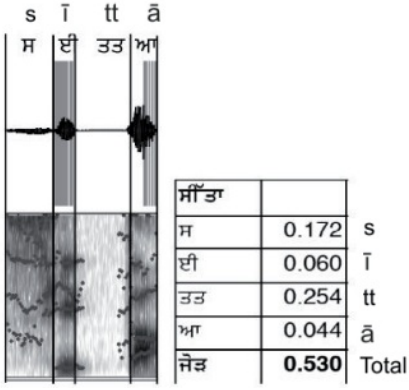
ਪਿਤਾ		
ਪ	0.304	p
ਇ	0.059	i
ਤ	0.085	t
ਆ	0.151	ā
ਜੋੜ	**0.599**	Total



ਪਿੱਤਾ		
ਪ	0.179	p
ਇ	0.036	i
ਤਤ	0.213	tt
ਆ	0.151	ā
ਜੋੜ	**0.579**	Total



ਸੀਤਾ		
ਸ	0.222	s
ਈ	0.114	ī
ਤ	0.142	t
ਆ	0.067	ā
ਜੋੜ	**0.545**	Total



ਸੀੱਤਾ		
ਸ	0.172	s
ਈ	0.060	ī
ਤਤ	0.254	tt
ਆ	0.044	ā
ਜੋੜ	**0.530**	Total

to read too much in these pictures of PRAAT analysis. The recordings were made in the author's study and are subject to various "performance factors". At the best, the conclusions derived from this computer analysis should be regarded as hypotheses to be tested by a more rigorous computer analysis. It is a sort of "rough sketch" of the area to guide the actual survey. However, a few interesting conclusions emerge:

(1) The length or duration of each spoken vowel and consonant sound depends on its place in the word. A "double" **consonant** is the one which is stretched in such a way that the **syllable boundary** lies inside it. Its length is not always exactly the "double" of the length of a "single" consonant. While speaking a word, it is possible to stop at the syllable boundary (unless it lies within a **stretched vowel sound**, for which see below).

(2) The four words in the pictures on the opposite page can be divided into syllables like this: **pi.tā ਪਿ.ਤਾ** ("father"), **pit.tā ਪਿਤ.ਤਾ** ("physique"), **sī.tā ਸੀ.ਤਾ**, (a woman's name), **sīt.tā ਸੀਤ.ਤਾ** ("sewed"). Quite interestingly the length of the "short" **Vowel i** in **pita ਪਿਤਾ** is *nearly* the same (0.059 seconds) as the length of the "long" **Vowel ī** in **sīttā ਸੀੱਤਾ** (0.060 seconds).

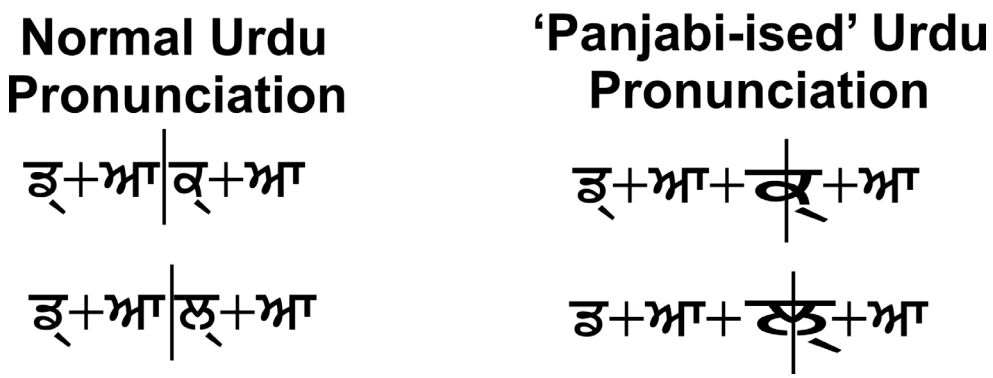
(3) The length of the "long" **ī** in **sītā ਸੀਤਾ** is *nearly* the double (0.114) of the length of the "long" **ī** in **sīttā ਸੀੱਤਾ** (0.060 seconds).

Since we are not interested in *exact* measurements here, we use the word "nearly" when the difference is about one hundredth or two hundredths of a second or less, which is an extremely small difference and can happen because of "performance factors" involved the recording the isolated words one by one. But our main argument is clear. The length or *quantity* of a **vowel** sound is unimportant in modern Panjabi. What is really important is its *quality*, i.e., its position in the **vowel space** *and* whether it is **tense** or **lax**. A **tense vowel** can be doubled (stretched in such a way that the **syllable boundary** lies *within* it. This cannot be felt by speaking the

word aloud, as in the case of a **consonant sound**, but instrumental evidence (given in a later section) clearly shows this.

Closed stressed syllables

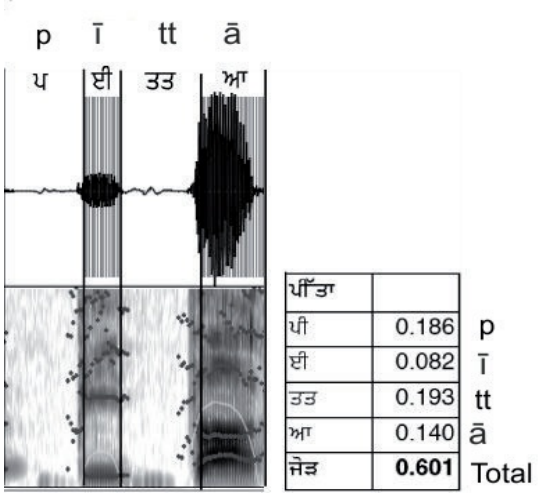
The old classic theory of there being "one breath pulse per syllable" has been challenged (Ladefoged 2001). The theory may not be universally true and applicable to *all* languages. But since languages may differ widely from one another, there is no justification in claiming that it may not apply to *some* other languages. Several Panjabi-speaking linguists *feel* that in their language there is not only one breath pulse (or **syllable pulse**) per syllable, but also a this pulse for **stressed syllable** is stronger than for an **unstressed syllable.** The human organs for sending up **syllables pulses** are the diaphragm and the intercostal muscles. Their activity ceases temporarily for a split second after sending a **syllable pulse** and then resumes for the following **syllable**. The speech organs in the mouth seem to help the process of generating the stream of the separate succeeding **syllables**. *If possible*, a strongly **stressed syllable** is *also* closed with a part of a **consonant sound** grabbed from the following **syllable**, and thus creating **consonant gemination** (or **doubling**) so that the **syllable boundary** lies inside this stretched (or **geminated**) **consonant sound**.



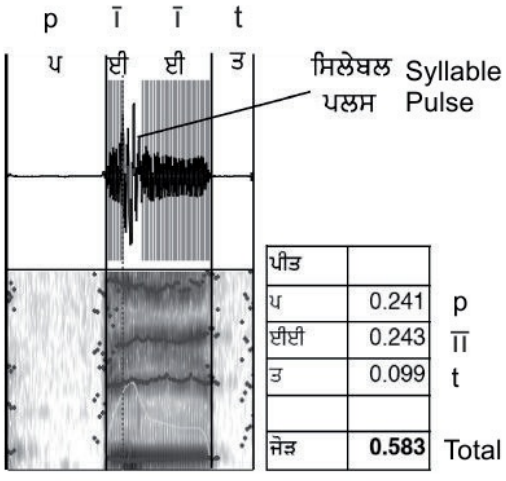
The classic example of this is how speakers of Panjabi pronounce the name of their language. Look at he picture on page 56. The name Panjabi has three syllables **pañ.jā.bī ਪੰ.ਜਾ.ਬੀ**, with stress on the middle **syllable -jā-**. But in the pronunciation of most speakers of Panjabi, the word is pronounced as **pañ.jab.bī ਪੰ.ਜੱ.ਬੀ** with **b geminated**. Now look at the picture on page 64. A well-known Pakistani ghazal singer sings a famous Urdu ghazal in which there is line **ḍākā to nahĩ ḍālā ਡਾਕਾ ਤੋ ਨਹੀਂ ਡਾਲਾ**. ("I did not commit a robbery"). But he pronounces some Urdu words the way he would in his mother tongue Panjabi. He pronounces **ḍākā ਡਾਕਾ** as **ḍāk.kā ਡੱਕਾ** (by geminating **k ਕ**) nd **ḍālā ਡਾਲਾ** as **ḍāllā ਡੱਲਾ** (by geminating **l ਲ**). The picture shows this graphically.

But the closing of a **stressed syllable** by **gemination** is simply a *strong tendency.* It does not always work in some cases such as

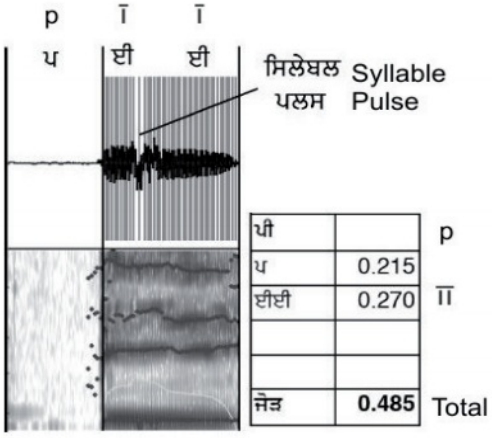
(1) The **lax consonants sounds** (**ṇ ਣ**, **r ਰ**, **ṛ ੜ**, **ḷ ਲ਼**) cannot be **geminated**. The following examples of are interesting.

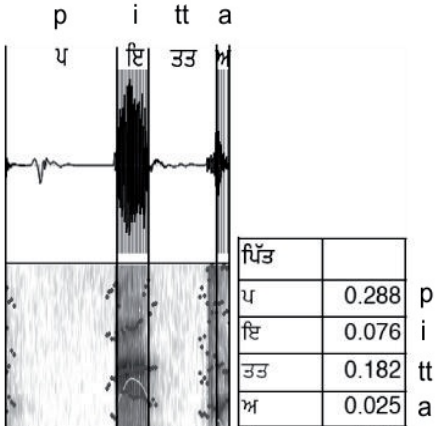


ਪਿੱਤਾ		
ਪੀ	0.186	p
ਈ	0.082	ī
ਤਤ	0.193	tt
ਆ	0.140	ā
ਜੋੜ	**0.601**	Total



ਪੀਤ		
ਪ	0.241	p
ਈਈ	0.243	ī ī
ਤ	0.099	t
ਜੋੜ	**0.583**	Total





Tense Consonant Geminated	Lax Consonant *Not* Geminated
nīllā ਨੀੱਲਾ (“blue”)	**pīḷā̄ ਪੀਲ਼ਾ** (“yellow”)
sākkā̄ ਸਾੱਕਾ (“tragedy”)	**sāṛā ਸਾੜਾ** (“jealousy”)
kānnā ਕਾੱਨਾ (“reed”)	**kāṇā ਕਾਣਾ** (“one-eyed”)

(2) Sometimes this type of **gemination** is avioded because it would result in another frequently used word.

gʰaṭṭā ਘੱਟਾ (“dust”)	**gʰaṭā ਘਟਾ** (“clouds”)
pattā ਪੱਤਾ (“leaf”)	**patā ਪਤਾ** (“address”)
dāttī ਦਾੱਤੀ (“sickle)	**dātī ਦਾਤੀ** (“charitable woman”)

This type of **gemination** in Panjabi is relatively new in **stressed syllables** with **tense vowels**. This is one of the features of the so-called "Panjabi accent" mentioned above in the case of the Pakistani ghazal singer.

Penultimate Syllable Stress

"Penultimate" means "second from the end" or the "last but one" **syllable**. There is a *strong tendency* in Panjabi to stress the **penultimate syllable** in a word (except in the case of monosyllabic **grammatical words** like **pronouns, postpositions, conjunctions** and **auxiliary verbs**, which are normally **unstressed**, anyway). So a word having a **stressed syllable** should have at least two **syllables**, so that the **penultimate syllable** is **stressed**. The interesting part of the story is that if this is not the case, a **syllable** is created at the end of the word. The pictures of the spoken versions of the some words given in this chapter are quite interesting.

Now let us consider these four cases one by one. Some readers addicted to traditional thinking may find these conclusions outrageous. (But even more outrageous things are going to follow).

pīttā ਪੀੱਤਾ ("drank") (Page 65)

All the sounds in the word are **tense**. To create the first **closed stressed syllable**, a part of the **tense consonant t ਤ** from the second **syllable** is grabbed, and the **syllable boundary** now lies inside this stretched or **doubled t ਤ**. The length or duration of this so-called "long" (actually **tense**) **ī ਈ** is 0.082 seconds.

pīīt ਪੀਤ ("yellow", in old Panjabi) (Page 65)

The only way to create a second **closed syllable** is to stretch or **double** the **tense Vowel ī ਈ** so that the **syllable bounday** lies *inside* this **vowel sound**. So this *is* done. This **ī ਈ** has now has a duration of 0.243 seconds, a lot more than double of

the **ī ਈ** in **pīttā ਪੀੱਤਾ**. The duration of each sound depends on the structure and duration of the whole word.

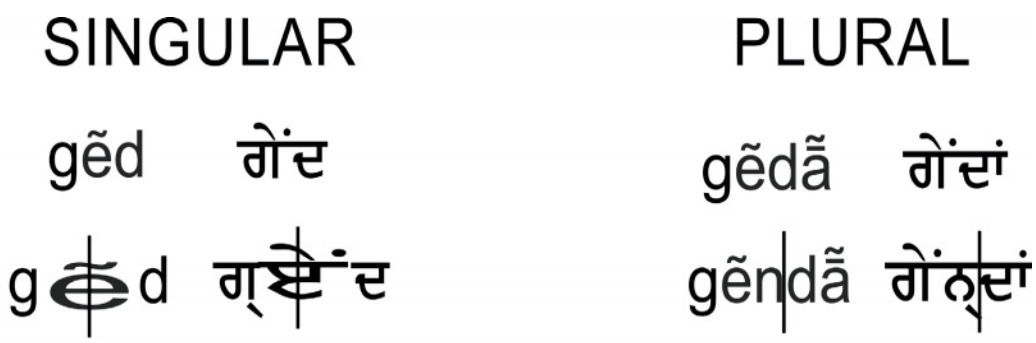
pīī ਪੀ (“drink”, the **imperative form**) (Page 66)

The second **syllable** in this case has to be an **open** one. The **tense vowel ī ਈ** is doubled and is 0.270 seconds long. In addition to this length, the computer analysis also gives an evidence of a fresh **syllable pulse** *inside* the **doubled tense vowel ī ਈ** in **pīīt ਪੀਤ** and **pīī ਪੀਤ**.

pitt ਪਿੱਤ (“prickly heat”) (Page 66)

This is the most inetersting case. The first **syllable** has the **lax vowel i ਇ** which cannot be **doubled** to create a second **syllable**. So the **tense consonant t ਤ** is **doubled**. But the second **syllable** must have a **vowel sound** to become its **syllable peak**. ***So a vowel sound of extremely short duration (0.025 seconds) is created for this purpose***. This **a ਅ vowel** has the length of just two hundred and fiftieth part of a second, but can be heard. In phonetics, this is known as **vocalic release**. Normally, a word in Modern Panjabi does not end in **lax vowel**, but this case is *exceptional.*

The process can become complicated. Consider the **singular** and the **plural** spoken forms of the word **gẽd ਗੇਂਦ** (“ball”). In the **singular** form, the **tense vowel ẽ** is **geminated** to give the word two **syllables**. The Plural form **gẽdã̄ ਗੇਂਦਾਂ** already has two **syllables**. But the first **stressed syllable** has to be made a **closed** one by **geminating d**. But since the **vowel ẽ** is **nasalised**, it **nasalises** the part of the **geminated d** that falls into the first **syllable.** So the first part of **d** becomes **n**, as shown in the following picture.



“Panjabi-isation” of Sanskrit/Hindi names

Speakers of Hindi and some other languages react sometimes with mild amusement and sometimes with great outrage to the “mispronunciation” and “corruption” of some Sanskrit/Hindi names by speakers of Panjabi. This “corruption” of the names is not deliberate. It happens because of the tendencies in Panjabi phonology. Before we study the phenomena, look at the Hindi and Panjabi versions of the names. Some examples of such names are

mahendra ਮਹੇਂਦ੍ਰ → mahindar ਮਹਿੰਦਰ

amrendra ਅਮਰੇਂਦ੍ਰ → amrindar ਅਮਰਿੰਦਰ

rāmendra ਰਾਮੇਂਦ੍ਰ → ramindar ਰਮਿੰਦਰ

indirā ਇੰਦਿਰਾ → indrā ਇੰਦ੍ਰਾ

The Sanskrit/Hindi word **mahendra ਮਹੇਂਦ੍ਰ** has three Syllables, none of which receives appreciably audible **stress**. The word ends in **a**. The **consonant n** is quite weakly articulated. But in Panjabi, the equivalent of the **penultimate syllable -hen-** (with **nasalised vowel** sound **ẽ** and quite weaky pronounced **n**) has to be

stressed. So Panjabi chooses the more convenient **vowel sound i** which is close to **e,** (See the picture of the **vowels** on page 28), and adds the **consonant n** to create a **closed stressed syllable.** The word-final **lax vowel** is not allowed in Modern Panjabi, unless it is *specially created* as in the case of **pitt** ਪਿੱਤ discussed above. So is **-dra** is changed to **-dar**. In the case of **ramindar** ਰਮਿੰਦਰ, the first **unstressed syllable rā-** is **weakened** to **ra-** we shall discuss below.

indirā ਇੰਦਿਰਾ → **indrā** ਇੰਦ੍ਰਾ

The first **closed syllable in-** is capable of being **stressed**. The second and the third **syllables** are combined into **-drā** **–ਦ੍ਰਾ** to make the **stressed syllable penultimate**. The result is the *really unintentionally* "corrupted" name **indrā** ਇੰਦ੍ਰਾ.

Weakening of Unstressed Syllables

The **unstressed syllables** (especially the ones *before* the **stressed syllable**) in the word *tend to* be articulated less strongly. **Vowels** in such syllables *tend to* become **lax** and **centralised**. (See the picture on page 30). Often they are reduced to **a**. If the **syllable** consists of a **vowel** only, this vowel *tends to disappear completely*.

Examples are

ārām ਆਰਾਮ → **arām** ਰਾਮ → **rām** ਰਾਮ
("rest")

ūjāgar ਉਜਾਗਰ → **ajāgar** ਅਜਾਗਰ → **jāgar** ਜਾਗਰ
("manifest")

akʰaṇḍ ਅਖੰਡ → **kʰaṇḍ** ਖੰਡ
("uninterrupted")

The last example is interesting. An uninterrupted reading of the Sikh holy scripture *Sri Guru Granth Sahib* for about 48 hours is known as **akʰaṇd pāṭh ਅਖੰਡ ਪਾਠ**. The word **akʰaṇd ਅਖੰਡ** when pronounced as **kʰaṇd ਖੰਡ** means the exact opposite ("interrupted"). Much to the anger, and even the fury, of Sikh scholars, common Panjabi people, and sometimes even Sikh priests, carry on the mispronunciation.

sapʰal ਸਫਲ → safal ਸ਼ਫ਼ਲ
("successful")

This is a pure Indian word, and is not borrowed from Persian or Arabic. Since the second **unstressed syllable** is weakly articulated, the strongly aspirated **pʰ** is pronounced like the weak **fricative f**. So many Panjabi writers accordingly spell it as **ਸ਼ਫ਼ਲ**, as if it were borrowed from Arabic or Persian.

Love affair between n ਨ and ṇ ਣ

The love affair between the **dental n ਨ** and the **retroflex ṇ ਣ** has been going on for a number of centuries since the days of Sanskrit. One replacing the other in a word is very common. This goes on in modern Panjabi as well.

Let us consider the derivation of a **gerund** (**verbal noun**) from a **verb stem**. The standard rule is to add the **suffix -ṇā –ਣਾ** to the **stem**. Examples are

haṭ ਹਟ → haṭṇā ਹਟਣਾ ("moving aside")

dekʰ ਦੇਖ → dekʰṇā ਦੇਖਣਾ ("seeing")

But if the **stem** ends in a **lax consonant ṇ ਣ** or **r ੜ** or **ṛ ਣ** or **l ਲ਼**, you add **-nā -ਨਾ**. The reason is quite simple. All these **lax consonants** are **flap** or **tap consonants**. **Flapping** or **tapping** the tongue twice quickly to add to add **-ṇā –ਣਾ** will be difficult. So you add **-nā -ਨਾ**. Examples are

buṇ ਬੁਣ → buṇnā ਬੁਣਨਾ (“weaving, knitting”)

pʰir ਫਿਰ → pʰirnā ਫਿਰਨਾ (“turning”)

muṛ ਮੁੜ → muṛnā ਮੁੜਨਾ (“turning back”)

car ਚਰ → carnā ਚਰਨਾ (“grazing”)

The **vowel sound** in the stem in all these example is **lax** as well. In the single **syllable**, though **stressed**, it cannot be **tense**.

But Panjabi, being what it is, will not allow things to remain that simple! What if the **stem** has a **tense vowel** and ends in **ṇ ਣ**? Then it must be possible to change this **lax ṇ ਣ** into the **tense n ਨ**, **geminate** it to turn the **syllable** into a **closed** one and then add the usual **-ṇā –ਣਾ** suffix? (Any *self-respecting* **sressed syllabl**e in Panjabi should be such!) Moreover, **ṇ ਣ** or **n ਨ** have been in love for many centuries). So we have

jāṇ ਜਾਣ → jānṇā ਜਾਨਣਾ (“knowing”)

(pronounced as) **[jān.nṇā] ਜਾੱਨਣਾ**

māṇ ਮਾਣ → mānṇā ਮਾਨਣਾ (“enjoying”)

(pronounced as) **[mān.nṇā] ਮਾੱਨਣਾ**

It is worth mentioning here that this extremely significant aspect of Panjabi pronunciation is *impossible* to discuss using the Shahmukhi script (used for wrtiting Panjabi in Pakistan) because Shahmukhi has no symbol for the extremely imporatnt Panjabi consonant **ṇ ਣ**.

“Prem Parkash” “ਪ੍ਰੇਮ ਪਰਕਾਸ਼”

This a quite a common North Indian name. The original Sanskrit/Hindi name **“Prem Prakash” “ਪ੍ਰੇਮ ਪ੍ਰਕਾਸ਼”** is pronounced as ***prem prakāsh***, with both the parts in the original Hindi/Sanskrit names starting with the **consonant cluster p+r ਪ੍+ਰ**. Nobody other than a careful and perceptive linguist is likely to notice an odd mismatch in the common Panjabi pronunciation of the two parts of the name. ***Prem*** **ਪ੍ਰੇਮ** starts with this **consonant cluster pr ਪ੍ਰ**. But in **ਪਰਕਾਸ਼**, the **vowel a** comes between **p** and **r**. Let us analyse in some detail how and why this happens.

prem ਪ੍ਰੇਮ (“love”)

The original **monosyllabic** word has a **tense vowel e ਏ**, which can be (and *is*) **geminated** to create a second syllable to “Panjabi-ise” its pronuncation. As we have seen above, Panjabi tends to **stress** the **penultimate syllable** in a word.

prakāsh ਪ੍ਰਕਾਸ਼ (“light”)

The original word has two **syllables**. The second **syllable** has a **tense vowel ā ਆ**, which can be (and *is*) **geminated** to create the final **syllable** of the word in Panjabi pronunciation. As always happens in Panjabi, the **unstresed syllable** (especillay the one *before* the **stressed** one) is weakened. Its **CCV** structure is simplified to the *more basic* one **CVC**. So **pra** becomes **par**.

Has Panjabi got *two* y ਯ consonants and *two* v ਵ consonants?

The question will sound most outrageous to the script chauvinists who believe that the Gurmukhi script represents to Panjabi sounds with perfect accuracy. Apart from the Panjabi **tones** (dealt with in the next chapter), what we are going to say now debunks this myth seriously.

As has already been discussed (on pages 50-51), the **high vowels** of Panjabi in the immediate neighbuorhood of **low vowels** tend to become **consonants** by ceasing to be **syllable peaks**. **i ਇ** becomes **y ਯ** and **u ਉ** becomes **v ਵ**, sometimes to **cluster** with the preceding **consonant** and sometimes as a standalone **consonant**. Excamples are

giān ਗਿਆਨ → gyān ਗ੍ਯਾਨ (“knowledge”)
(Pronounced with **geminated ā ਆ**).

tāiā ਤਾਇਆ → tāyā ਤਾਯਾ (“father’s older brother”)
(Already two **syllables**; so no need for any **gemination**)

suād ਸੁਆਦ → svād ਸ੍ਵਾਦ (“taste”)
(Pronounced with **geminated ā ਆ**).

Both **i ਇ** and **u ਉ** are **lax vowels**. So they become **lax consonants y ਯ** and **v ਵ** respectively. They cannot be **geminated**. But Panjabi has **tense high vowels ī ਈ** and **ū ਊ** as well. Do they become **tense y ਯ** and **v ਵ** respectively? The logic of Panjabi phonology demands that they *should* become **tense consonants** (capable of being **geminated**) in the right environment. The picture on the next page is worth examining carefully. It exemplifies what we have already said above. But, more importantly, it says what may surprise even some Panjabi linguists. Now let us consider two such words.

bʰāīā ਭਾਈਆ → bʰāy.yā ਭਾੱਯਾ
(“sister’s husband” or “old man”).

The **tense high vowel ī ਈ** laid between two instances of the **low vowel ā ਆ** becomes the **tense consonant y ਯ**, which is **geminated** accordingly in this position

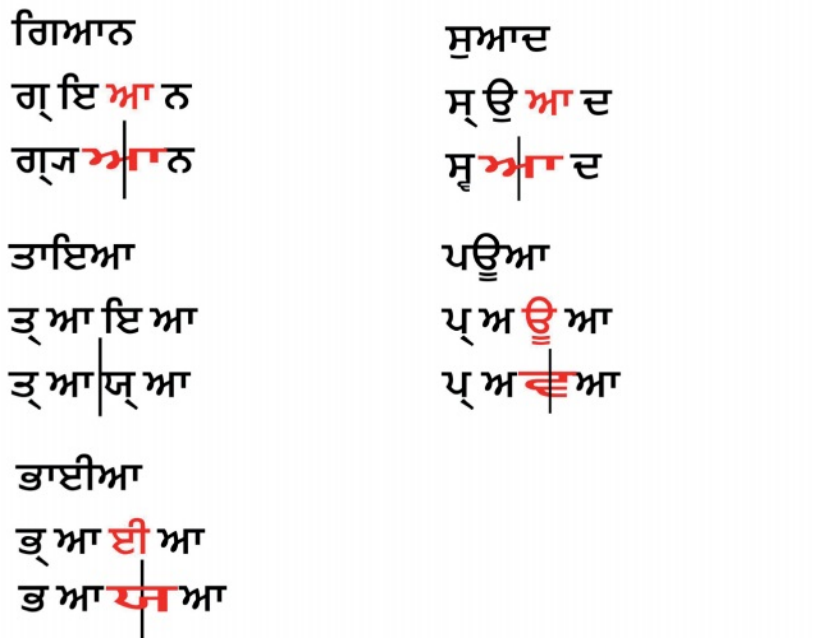
according to the Panjabi tendencies to create a **stressed closed syllable** (as shown in the picture). There is no way of marking it in phonetic transcription, and Gurmukhi has no letter for it.

paūā ਪਊਆ → pav.vā ਪੱਵਾ

("small bottle one quarter of the size of a normal bottle")

The **tense high vowel ū ਊ** laid between the **low vowels a ਅ** and **ā ਆ** becomes the **tense v ਵ**. In this position, it is geminated according to the Panjabi tendencies to create a **stressed closed syllable** (as shown in the picture). There is no way of marking it in phonetic transcription, and Gurmukhi has no letter for it.

Some strategies for achieving Penultimate Word Stress



Summing Up

A living natural language is a self-organising evolutionary system, whose various components and sub-components evolve at different rates and rather slowly over space and time. So such a language (as opposed to a language of logic and mathematics) is never a consistent self-contained system with invariable rules. *A natural living language is governed not by **rules** but by **tendencies***. The present chapter is an attempt to demonstrated this. The relations between "parts" and "wholes" in the systems and sub-systems of a languages are *dialectical* (each determining and influencing the other) not unilinear. While parts join to a form a whole and influence its nature, the precise nature of the form and function of each part is also in return determined by the whole. These are some important conclusions we draw about what is informally called the "Panjabi Accent".

(1) Tendency for a **stress-timed rhythm**;
(2) **Stressed syllables** are articulated with more articulatory force than the **unstressed** ones which tend to be weakened;
(3) Preference for **closed stressed syllables**;
(4) Preference for **stressing** the **penultimate syllable** in a word.

But we have not dealt with the most distinguished feature of the "Panjabi Accent" – **word tones**. This feature seems to be connected with (4) mentioned above, i.e., preference for stressing the **penultimate syllable** in a word. The subject is rather complicated and demands a full-length chapter. The next chapter is devoted to this most noticeable feature of the "Panjabi Accent".

Language allows us to reach out to people, to touch them with our innermost fears, hopes, disappointments, victories. To reach out to people we'll never meet. It's the greatest legacy you could ever leave your children or your loved ones: The history of how you felt."

— Simon Van Booy

PANJABI (GURMUKHI) “ALPHABET”

Vowel Bearers

ੳ	ਅ	ੲ

Older Fricatives

ਸ s	ਹ h

Consonant Square (Stops)

	Voiceless Unaspirate	Voiceless Aspirate	Voiced Unaspirate	Voiced Aspirate	Nasal
ਕ Group	ਕ k	ਖ k^h	ਗ g	ਘ g^h	ਙ ṅ
ਚ Group	ਚ c	ਛ c^h	ਜ j	ਝ j^h	ਞ ñ
ਟ Group	ਟ ṭ	ਠ $ṭ^h$	ਡ ḍ	ਢ $ḍ^h$	ਣ ṇ
ਤ Group	ਤ t	ਥ t^h	ਦ d	ਧ d^h	ਨ n
ਪ Group	ਪ p	ਫ p^h	ਬ b	ਭ b^h	ਮ m

Frictionless Continuants

ਯ	y	ਰ	r	ਲ	l	ਵ	v	ੜ	ṛ

New Fricatives

ਸ਼	ś	ਖ਼	x	ਗ਼	ɣ	ਜ਼	z	ਫ਼	f

More Recent Additions

ਕ਼	q	ਲ਼	ḷ

WORD TONES IN PANJABI

Panjabi is the only major language in the Indian sub-continent that has **word tones** or **pitch accents**. (Some languages of the Tibeto-Burman family spoken by *small isolated* communities in the Himalayan areas in India and Nepal are also said to have **word tones**). The tonal nature of Panjabi was first discovered by the Rev Grahame Bailey in 1912. Since then, a number of linguists, including Harjit Singh Gill, Shiv Joshi, Tej Bhatia, Boota Singh Brar and the author of this book, have examined the phenomenon. But most Panjabi scholars addicted to "hearing with the eyes" remain totally ignorant of this distinguishing feature of Panjabi.

Before we go ahead to discuss what a **word tone** is, consider the following words.

mã̄ ਮਾਂ *[mã̄]* ("mother")

mãh ਮਾਂਹ *[mã́]* ("black lentils")

If you stop "hearing with the eyes" (i.e., translating the *spoken* form of a word into its written form and then *hearing the word as spelt in Gurmukhi*), you will notice that there is no **h ਹ** *sound* in the spoken form of **mãh ਮਾਂਹ**. You need to lay aside the script chauvinism that in Panjabi "you write as you speak and speak aloud as you write." This may have been true some centuries ago, but this is no longer the case. Rather, the **nasalised vowel ã̄ ਆਂ** is pronounced with a *higher pitch*. We will write the pronunciation in *italic type* and within square brackets, as we have done above. As in earlier chapters, **ã̄** shows a **nasalised vowel ā** (with the addition of the additional symbol above it). Similarly, consider the following words.

d^{h}ī ਧੀ *[tì]* (“daughter”)

The pitch **falls** at the **vowel sound ī**

tīh ਤੀਹ *[tǐ]* (“thirty”)

The pitch **rises** at the **vowel sound ī**

We will use the symbol ´ to indicate a **high tone** and ` to indicate a **low tone**.

If you do not agree, listen to the children born and brought up in the UK and unable to pronounce these tones, and pronouncing both these words as **tī ਤੀ**; and also eating what they call **mā̃ dī dāl ਮਾਂ ਦੀ ਦਾਲ** (which actually means “cooked mother”) and respectfully addressing an elder brother or cousin as **pā jī ਪਾ ਜੀ** (which actually means “a mean and cunning fellow”).

Their parents and teachers (or at least the tiny minority among them who take this problem seriously) raise their hands in despair and express the problem *using the names of the relevant Gurmukhi letters* – “These children cannot pronounce the Panjabi sounds **g^{h}aggā**, **j^{h}ajjā**, **ḍ^{h}aḍḍā**, **d^{h}addā**, **b^{h}abbā** (**ਘੱਗਾ**, **ਝੱਜਾ**, **ਢੱਡਾ**, **ਧੱਦਾ**, **ਭੱਬਾ**).” Their unconscious and deeply ingrained habit of “hearing with the eyes” shows itself here. When they are told not to confuse *sounds* of the language the *letters* of the script, this advice most often simply bypasses their heads. Some of them even go on to say, “Why not? Doesn’t the Gurmukhi script accurately represent the Panjabi pronunciation?”

As any good doctor will tell you, the ailment must be properly diagnosed by a specialist in the field before any cure can be prescribed. So let us first try to understand the problem scientifically. The real problem is that of the **tones** in the language. The “consonant sounds” which the children are “unable to pronounce” *do not really exist* in the language. Their departure has given rise to **tones**, which the children are unable to detect and pronounce. But it is not very difficult to

learn how to hear and pronounce the Panjabi **tones**. Chinese, for example, must be at least seventy per cent *more* **tonal** than Panjabi. In Panjabi, only the **stressed** (or **accented**) **syllables** of about ten to fifteen per cent of the vocabulary are **tonal**. Panjabi has only *two* special tones – which we call the **high tone** and the **low tone**. But in Chinese, *every* **syllable** of *every* **word** has one of the four distinct tones. Still, some people learn to speak Chinese well. ***The question is how motivated and dedicated the learner is and how knowledgeable and skilled the teacher is. We need say nothing more in connection with Panjabi.***

Norwegian and Swedish, like Panjabi, have **tones** of a **pitch accent** variety in some words. Will it be easier to make the learners of these languages recognise and learn Panjabi tones? Nothing can be predicted right now. It will also depend partly on the knowledge and skill of the teacher as well. We leave the question to the future.

Before moving ahead to discuss the departure of some older **consonant sounds** and the arrival and of the analysis of the **tones** of Panjabi, it must be made clear that we are here dealing with the *Eastern* variety of Panjabi spoken in the Indian part of the Panjabi-speaking area and in the Lahore region of Pakistan and by the people who migrated from these areas. This analysis does not apply to the *Western* dialects of Panjabi spoken in Pakistan, which have retained the consonants lost in the Eastern dialects. The historical loss of these **consonants** in Eastern Panjabi is accompanied by the emergence of **tones**. The underlying cause or causes of these phenomena still remain unknown. Further research is needed to unravel them. So our emphasis here is on the *how* rather than the *why* aspects of the phenomenon.

Loss of the older “voiced aspirate” consonants

The **consonant sounds** shown in the **red** boxes in the picture on page 78 are traditionally known as **voiced aspirate consonants**. The production of these

consonants involves two processes – (1) **phonation** or what happens in the throat and (2) **articulation** or what happens in the mouth. As far as **phonation** is concerned, the vocal cords vibrate to make these sounds **voiced**. The combination of the outgoing relatively strong airstream and the voicing effect of the vibration of the vocal cords results in **breathy voice**. Such **consonant sound**s are found in Hindi-Urdu and some other North Indian languages and also in the Western dialects of Panjabi. Some linguists (Ladefoged 2001, for example) argue that these **consonant sounds** should be described as **breathy voiced**, and not as **voiced aspirate.** But, leaving aside this academic issue, the use of the term **voiced aspirate** makes a lot of sense for us, as well will see.

The **phonation** (combination of **voice** and **aspiration**) for all these five **consonants** is the same. But **articulation** (the place of stopping the outgoing airsteam) is different for each, as we have already seen. The original consonants have not lost their original **articulation**, They have just have become some other consonants *of their own group*, depending upon their place within the word. It is their **phonation** that has changed. They have completely lost the **aspiration** part of the **phonation**. In some positions, they have lost the **voice** as well and have become **voiceless unaspirate**. But in some other positions, they are still **voiced** but **unaspirate**. The second picture on page 84 gives the example of the older **voiced aspirate d^{h} ਧ**, which becomes **voiceless unaspirate t ਤ** in some positions and **voiced unaspirate d ਦ** in some other positions. Look at the table on page 78 and move *towards the left* from the **voiced aspirate** position of **d^{h} ਧ**, and locate **d ਦ** and **t ਤ**. Then do it for the other **voiced aspirate** consonants. You will find that **g^{h} ਘ** will become **g ਗ** or **k ਕ**, **j^{h} ਝ** will become **j ਜ** or **c ਚ**, **ḍ^{h} ਢ** will become **ḍ ਡ** or **ṭ ਟ**, and **b^{h} ਭ** will become **b ਬ** or **p ਪ**. We will give examples later.

But the plight of **h ਹ** in the **pink** box in the table on page 78 has been very different. **h ਹ** is a **voiced aspirate** consonant. But it is not a **stop** consonant.

It has **phonation** only, and has no **articulation** to retain as in the case of the **voiced aspirate stops** discussed above. (Nothing happens in the mouth for the production of **h ਹ**). So its **phonation** (the combination of **voice** and **aspiration**) has to be retained. It has one of the three options before it – (1) retain its original nature an resist the arrival of **tone** altogether, or (2) co-exist with the **tone**, or (3) depart the scene and leave the field to **tone**. We will see below that *all the three* things happen to **h ਹ** in different positions and in different geographical dialects of Eastern Panjabi.

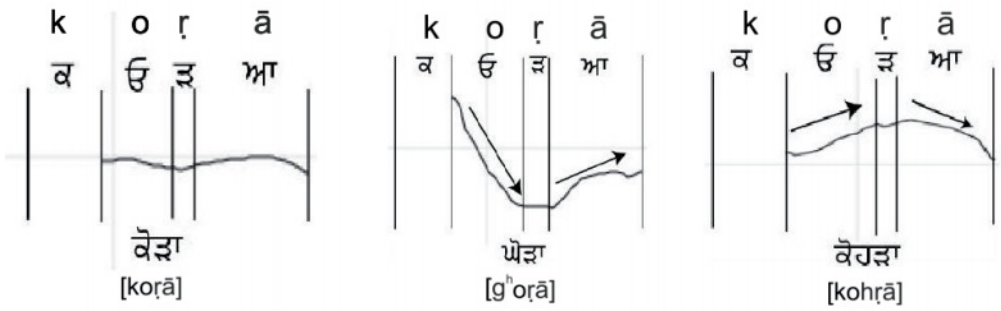
A computer analysis of the Panjabi tonal contours

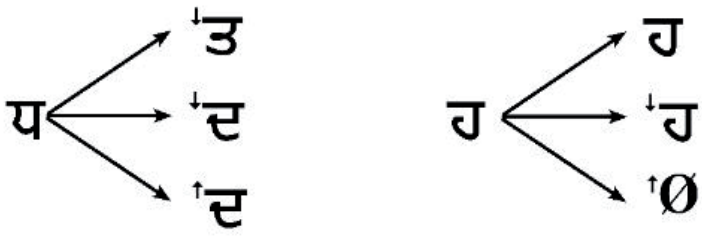
Look at the top picture on page 84. It shows the vowel and consonant sounds and pitch contours in the *spoken versions* of the Panjabi words **koṛā ਕੋੜਾ** (“whip”), **g^{h}oṛa ਘੋੜਾ** (“horse”) and **kohṛa ਕੋਹੜਾ** (“leper”). Some writers spell **kohṛa ਕੋਹੜਾ** as **koṛha ਕੋੜ੍ਹਾ**, but with either spelling, the pronunciation is the same, as we will see later.

A computer is a lifeless machine, which is not culturally prejudiced to “hear with the eyes”, as some human beings are. We are not going to give details of how to read the relevant computer graphics. Interested readers are referred to Ladefoged (2001) or some other book dealing with **acoustic phonetics**.

What the pictures on page 86 reveal

(1) Though spelt differently in *writing*, all the three words have the *same* **consonant** and **vowel sounds** in *pronunciation*. They sound different because of the **tones**. **koṛā ਕੋੜਾ** (“whip”) has no tone, **g^{h}oṛā ਘੋੜਾ** (“horse”) has **low tone**, and **kohṛā ਕੋਹੜਾ** (“leper”) has **high tone**.





The direction of the arrow before a letter shows the direction of the movement of the pitch in the stressed syllable

ਧਾਗਾ	ਸੁਧਾਰ	ਵਾਧੂ	ਸਾਧ
ਤ੍+↓ਆ ਗਾ	ਸੁ ਦ੍+↓ਆ ਰ	ਵ੍+↑ਆ ਦੂ	ਸ੍+↑ਆ ਦ
word-inital ਧ	word-medial ਧ	word-medial ਧ	word-final ਧ
before stressed vowel	***before*** stressed vowel	***after*** stressed vowel	***after*** stressed vowel

(2) The **low tone** in **gʰoṛā ਘੋੜਾ** involves the sudden fall of the pitch in the **stressed syllable** of the word. Then the pitch rises comparatively gradually on the following **unstressed syllable**. The **high tone** in **kohṛā ਕੋਹੜਾ** occurs on the first **stressed syllable**. The rise in the pitch is more gradual than the rather abrupt fall on the second **unstressed syllable**. There is no **tonal** pitch variation in **koṛā ਕੋੜਾ**. A little **pitch variation** is there because the **vowels** and the **consonants** have their own **pitch** as well. In each case, the **tonal contour** starts at the **stressed syllable** and ends at the following **unstressed** one. Moreover, not every word in Panjabi has a **tone**. It occurs in about ten to fifteen per cent of the Panjabi vocabulary. Some linguists use the term **accented syllable** for what we call a **stressed syllable**. They say Panjabi is a **pitch accent** language like Norwegian, Swedish and Serbo-Croat. In these languages, **stress** or **accent** *in some words* is marked by **pitch variation** as well, in addition to loudness and other acoustic features. They reserve the term **tone language** for a language like Chinese in which *every* syllable has one of the *four* distinct **tones**.

(3) *At least one* **syllable** is needed after the **pitch-accented syllab**le (**stressed syllable with pitch variation**) for the pitch to come to the normal level. So what was said about the **penultimate syllable stress** in the previous chapter applies here as well. Was the **penultimate syllable stress** already there in Panjabi before the arrival of the **tones**, and **tones** were accommodated within the structure? Or did the structure appear because of the **tones** and was extended to **non-tonal words** as well? This is a chicken-and-egg question.

What happened to the older *voiced aspirated* consonants?

As has been pointed out earlier, the older **voiced aspirated consonants gʰ ਘ, jʰ ਝ, ḍʰ ਢ, dʰ ਧ** and **bʰ ਭ** disappeared in the sense that they became some other sounds *within their group*. The meaning of the word was preserved with the appearance of **tones**. The second picture on page 84 shows that **dʰ ਧ** became **t ਤ** plus **low tone**, or **d ਦ** plus **low tone**, or **d ਦ** plus **high tone**, depending on its position in the word – whether it was originally *before* or *after* the **stressed** or **accented vowel.** The following examples make this clear.

(i) Voiced aspirate consonant *before* the accented (stressed) vowel and at the *beginning* of the word

The **voiced aspirated (+voiced, +aspirate)** consonant became **voiceless unaspirate** or **(-voiced, -aspirate). *Low tone* is given to the accented vowel.** There is some constriction in the throat and its effect can be heard in the **voice quality** (**constricted phonation**).

gʰāṇī ਘਾਣੀ → ***[kà̀ṇī]*** (“mud”)

jʰāṛū ਝਾੜੂ → ***[cà̀ṛū]*** (“broom”)

ḍʰol ਢੋਲ → ***[ṭòl]*** (“drum”)

dʰāgā ਧਾਗਾ → ***[tà̀gā]*** (“thread”)

bʰāī ਭਾਈ → ***[pà̀ī]*** (“brother”)

(ii) Voiced aspirate consonant *before* the accented vowel and *inside* the word. *Low tone* is given to the accented vowel.

The **voiced aspirated (+voiced, +aspirate)** consonant became **voiced unaspirate** or **(+voiced, -aspirate)**

saṅg^{h}ār ਸੰਘਾਰ → ***[saṅgà̀r]*** ("murder")

juj^{h}ār ਜੁਝਾਰ → ***[jujà̀r]*** ("brave fighter")

niḍ^{h}āḷ ਨਿਢਾਲ਼ → ***[niḍà̀ḷ]*** ("unconscious")

sud^{h}ār ਸੁਧਾਰ → ***[sudà̀r]*** ("reform")

sub^{h}āg ਸੁਭਾਗ → ***[subà̀g]*** ("good fortune")

(iii) Voiced aspirate consonant *after* the accented vowel and *inside* the word. *High tone* is given to the accented vowel.

The **voiced aspirated (+voiced, +aspirate)** consonant became **voiced unaspirate** or **(+voiced, -aspirate)**

kaṅg^{h}ā ਕੰਘਾ → ***[káṅgā]*** ("comb")

vañj^{h}ḷī ਵੰਝ਼ਲੀ → ***[váñjḷī]*** ("bamboo flute")

muḍḍ^{h}lā ਮੁੱਢਲਾ → ***[múḍḍla]*** ("initial")

add^{h}ak ਅੱਧਕ → ***[áddak]*** (the Gurmukhi symbol ੱ)

gabb^{h}ā ਗੱਭਾ → ***[gábbā]*** ("middle, centre")

(iv) Voiced aspirate consonant *after* the accented vowel and at the *end* the word. *High tone* is given to the accented vowel.

The **voiced aspirated (+voiced, +aspirate)** consonant became **voiced unaspirate** or **(+voiced, -aspirate).**

saṅg^{h} ਸੰਘ → ***[sáṅg]*** ("union", "throat")

saṅj^{h} ਸੰਝ → ***[sáñj]*** ("evening, sunset time")

suṇḍ^{h} ਸੁੰਢ → ***[súṇḍ]*** ("ginger powder")

kand^{h} ਕੰਧ → ***[kánd]*** ("wall")

k^{h}amb^{h} ਖੰਭ → ***[k^{h}ámb]*** ("feather")

What has been happening to h ਹ?

The intersting story of **h ਹ** and its connection with the Panjabi **tones** started about five hundred years ago, as we are going to see in Part 2 of this book. Since then, it has been bamboozling those Panjabi scholars who "hear with their eyes". It has disappeared from many positions, resulting in the arrival of tones which are not marked in modern Gurmukhi spelling. So modern writers have to *guess* the older spellings of the words (correctly most of the time, but very often arriving at two different and equally plausible ones).

As has been pointed out earlier, the **voiced aspirated stop consonants g^{h} ਘ, j^{h} ਝ, ḍ^{h} ਢ, d^{h} ਧ** have **phonation (+voice, +aspiration)** – what happens in the

throat. They also have **articulation**, stopping the outgoing airstream at different points in the mouth. But **h ਹ** has only the **phonation** (**+voice, +aspiration**). It was this **phonation** which became incompatible with the **stress system** which developed in the language, so that the **+aspiration** aspect completely disappeared in *all positions* and the **+voice** aspect in many positions. But **articulation** was preserved. In other words, each of these **consonants** became a different one *within its the group*. We have seen above how this happened.

But since **h ਹ** has only the **phonation** (**+voice, +aspiration**), it could do one of the three things shown in the second picture on page 84 – (1) stand firm and resist the arrival of the **tone,** or (2) co-exist with the **tone**, or (3) exit the scene gracefully and let the tone rule. This is shown by the zero symbol Ø in the picture. As far as co-existence is concerned, it can *co-exist* only with the **low tone**, and never with the **high tone**. The rules of being before or after the **stressed vowel** (discussed above) apply to **h ਹ** has as well. So we need not repeat them here.

(i) At the beginning of the word. h ਹ is *retained* in *most* Panjabi dialects. In some dialects, it *co-exists* with **low tone**, But in the speech of some persons, it disappears, leaving low tone only. The pronunciation of every word cannot be predicted, and it may differ even in the speech of a single person.

hāthī ਹਾਥੀ → ***[hāt^{h}ī]*** or ***[hà̀t^{h}ī]*** or ***[à̀t^{h}ī]*** (“elephant”)

hakīm ਹਕੀਮ → ***[hakīm]*** or ***[hakì̀m]*** or ***[kì̀m]*** (“physician”)

(ii) Within the word and before the stressed syllable. h ਹ is retained in *most* Panjabi dialects. In some dialects, it co-exists with **low tone**, But in the speech of

some persons, it disappears, The pronunciation of every word cannot be predicted, and it may differ in even the speech of a single person.

sahārā ਸਹਾਰਾ → ***[sahārā]*** or ***[sahà̀rā]*** (“shelter, help”)

kahāṇī ਕਹਾਣੀ → ***[kahāṇī]*** or ***[kahà̀ṇī]*** or ***[kà̀ṇī]*** (“story”)

bahār ਬਹਾਰ → ***[bahār]*** or ***[bahà̀r]*** (“spring season”)

nihang ਨਿਹੰਗ → ***[nihang]*** or ***[nihàng]*** or ***[niàng]*** or ***[nìng]*** (“member of a sect of Sikhism”)

itihās ਇਤਿਹਾਸ → ***[itihās]*** or ***[itihà̀s]*** or ***[atihà̀s]*** or ***[tihās]*** or ***[tià̀s]*** (See the processes of weakening the unsressed syllables discussed in the last chapter)

As we can see above, some speakers pronounce the word **ghāṇī ਘਾਣੀ** (“mud”) as ***[kà̀ṇī]***. In their speech, **ghāṇī ਘਾਣੀ** (“mud”) and **kahāṇī ਕਹਾਣੀ** (“story”) are **homophonous** (have the same pronunciation).

(iii) Within the word and after the stressed syllable. *Either* **h ਹ** is *retained* and the word has *no* **tone**. Or the word gets a **high tone** and **h ਹ** is lost. **h ਹ** cannot exist in a word with the **high tone**.

saʲhā ਸੈਹਾ → ***[saʲhā]*** (“rabbit”)

cūhā ਚੂਹਾ → ***[cūhā]*** or ***[cu̍ā]*** (“rat”)

kaṛāhī ਕੜਾਹੀ → ***[kaṛāhī]*** or ***[kaṛā̍ī]*** (“large frying pan”)

(iv) At the end of the word. h ਹ is lost and the word gets a **high tone**.

cāh ਚਾਹ → ***[cā́]*** (“tea”)

kʰūh ਖੂਹ → ***[kʰū́]*** (“well”)

mī̃h ਮੀਂਹ → ***[mī̃́]*** (“rain”)

The subscript h ਹ (written as ˳ “in the foot”) spelling

This truncated **ਹ** represents the **h ਹ sound** in a **consonant cluster** or a succession of two **consonants** *within* a **syllable**. It clusters only with a **liquid consonant**. (See page 44 for what the liquid consonants are and how it clusters with them. To repeat briefly, the **nasal stops** and the **frictionless continuants** are known as **liquid consonants**. But it clusters only with **ṇ ਣ**, **n ਨ**, **m ਮ**, **r ਰ**, **l ਲ**, **v ਵ**, **ṛ ੜ** and **ḷ ਲ਼**. Here we see how these words are pronounced with a **tone** in modern Panjabi. The **h ਹ sound** in this position the first casualty of the arrival of **tones** in Panjabi. It disappeared completely from Panjabi. The general rules for choice of **low tone** or the **high tone** discussed earlier apply to this **h ਹ** as well. However, the difference is that there is either the **low tone** or the **high tone** in *pronunciation*, this **h ਹ sound** is *never* pronounced.

paṇhā ਪਣ੍ਹਾ → *[páṇā]* (high tone)

annhã̄ ਅੰਨ੍ਹਾਂ → *[ánnhã̄]* (high tone)

tʰammhĩ̄ ਥੰਮ੍ਹੀਂ → *[tʰámmhĩ̄]* (high tone)

varhā ਵਰ੍ਹਾ → *[várā]* (high tone)

sillhā ਸਿੱਲ੍ਹਾ → *[síllā]* (high tone)

ravhe ਰਵ੍ਹੇ → *[ráve]* (high tone)

caṛhāī ਚੜ੍ਹਾਈ → *[caṛàī]* (low tone)

caḷhā ਚਲ਼੍ਹਾ → *[cáḷā]* (high tone)

Tones in causative verb forms

A **causative verb form** indicates an action being getting done by someone else, or "causing" some to do something. In most cases, this verb form is derived by adding **-ā** **-ਆ** or **-vā** **–ਵਾ** to the **verb stem**. This **-ā** **-ਆ** or **-vā** **–ਵਾ** is always s**tressed.** Examples are **suṇ** **ਸੁਣ** ("to hear") becoming **suṇā** **ਸੁਣਾ** ("to make someone hear") and **sunṿā** **ਸੁਣਵਾ** ("to make someone make someone else hear"). Another example is **cal** **ਚਲ** ("to move") becoming **caḷā** **ਚਲਾ** ("to make something move, to drive") and **caḷvā** **ਚਲਵਾ** ("to get something moved or driven by someone else"). A **causative verb form** in Panjabi can be without a **tone**. But if it has a **tone**, it must be the **low tone**, and never the **high tone**. The reason is that **voiced aspirate consonant** causing the rise of the tone always occurs *before* the last **stressed syllable**. The rules for the choice of the **tone** and change of the **consonant** have already been discussed. Let us have examples.

cal ਚਲ	**calā ਚਲਾ**	**calvā ਚਲਵਾ**
(“to move”)		
(no tone)	(no tone)	(no tone)
jʰaṛ ਝੜ	**jʰaṛā ਝੜਾ**	**jʰaṛvIvā ਝੜਵਾ**
(“to be shaken down”)	(“to dust”)	(“to get dusted”)
[càṛ]	*[caṛà]*	*[caṛvà]*
(low tone)	(low tone)	(low tone)
caṛh ਚੜ੍ਹ	**caṛhā ਚੜ੍ਹਾ**	**caṛhvā ਚੜ੍ਹਵਾ**
(“to go up”)	(“to raise”)	(“to get raised”)
[cáṛ]	*[caṛà]*	*[caṛvà]*
(high tone)	(low tone)	(low tone)

Try to apply the rules of tone generation and the change of the consonants given earlier on page 87. You will come to know that this is all rule-governed. If you are give a spoken instruction

[darīā̃ caṛvà dio]

you will not know whether you are being asked to get the carpets dusted or take upstairs. An instruction written in Gurmukhi

ਦਰੀਆਂ ਝੜਵਾ ਦਿਓ

or

ਦਰੀਆਂ ਚੜ੍ਹਵਾ ਦਿਓ

will remove the ambiguity. The two different sentences are **homophonous** – having the same spoken form (as in English *"The sun's rays meet"* and *"The sons raise meat"*). But there can be **homographic** forms as well (with the same spellings but different pronunciations). An example is *"row"* (line) and *"row"* (a fierce quarrel). An example from Panjabi is **ਵਰ੍ਹਾ** ("year") and **ਵਰ੍ਹਾ** ("to make the rain fall", as in **ਰੱਬਾ ਰੱਬਾ ਮੀਂਹ ਵਰ੍ਹਾ** "O God, O God, make the rain fall").

Two possible spelling with h ਹ

Some Panjabi words can be spelt in two different ways. Either way, the pronunciation is the same. In some cases, only one alternative is mostly used. But the other alternative is also used by a few other writers. The rules assign the *same pronunciation* to both. The important thing is that all these words have **h ਹ** *in their Gurmukhi spelling after* the **stressed vowel** and the **high tone** in pronunciation, The older **h ਹ** is now lost. But it has to be used in spelling, either in the full form or in the subscript form. Examples are

ਇਹਨਾਂ **ਇਨ੍ਹਾਂ** both pronunceable as ***[ínə̃]***
("these")

ਉਹਨਾਂ **ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ** both pronunceable as ***[únə̃]***
("those")

ਦਾਹੜੀ **ਦਾੜ੍ਹੀ** both pronunceable as ***[dáṛī]***
("beard")

ਪੀਹੜੀ **ਪੀੜ੍ਹੀ** both pronunceable as ***[píṛī]***
("generation", "wide low stool")

ਸਾਹਨ **ਸਾਨ੍ਹ** both pronunceable as ***[sáṅn]***
("bull")

ਕਾਹਨ **ਕਾਨ੍ਹ** both pronunceable as ***[káṅn]***
(a name)

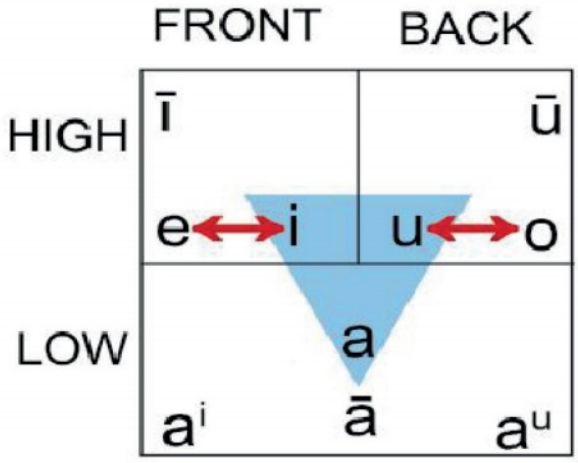
In some cases, the use of only one of the alternatives is established. But very often, the other alternative is also used by a few other writers. Of course, there are debates about the "correctness". But the important thing is that both the alternatives have the *same* pronunciation according to the rules

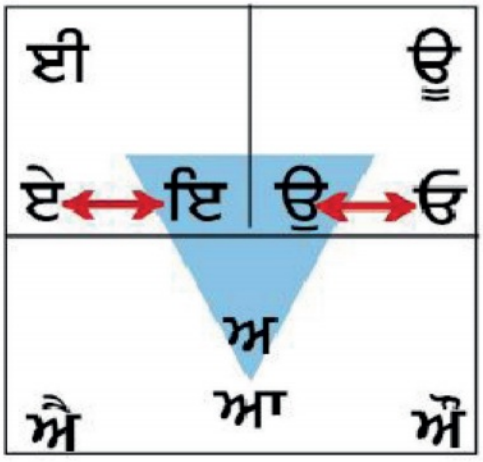
Mismatch between spelling and pronunciation

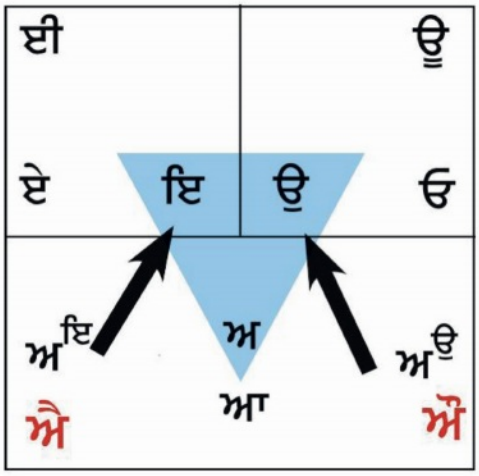
Right from the beginning of the book, we have been trying to expose the myths about the relation between pronunciation of many Panjabi words their representation in Gurmukhi spelling – the chief myth being that Panjabi is a "phonetic language" in which "you write as you speak and speak aloud as you write". Below, we present some sets of words which thoroughly expose this myth. The notable thing is that each of these words has **h ਹ** in its spelling, this **h ਹ** is not pronounced, the word has **high tone**, and the **vowel sound** which is *actually* pronounced is not shown in the Gurmukhi spelling. These examples can be referred to when the discrepancies between the present Panjabi pronunciation and their traditional spellings are dicussed and explained.

(1) -ih- –ਇਹ– in spelling and *[é] with high tone* in pronunciation

sihat ਸਿਹਤ *[sét]*
("health")


FRONT
BACK
HIGH
LOW
ī
ū
e
i
u
o
a
a^i
ā
a^u


ਈ
ਊ
ਏ
ਇ
ਉ
ਓ
ਅ
ਐ
ਆ
ਔ


ਈ
ਊ
ਏ
ਇ
ਉ
ਓ
ਅ^ਇ
ਅ
ਅ^ਉ
ਐ
ਆ
ਔ

mihar ਮਿਹਰ *[mér]*

(“mercy, kindness”)

mihnat ਮਿਹਨਤ *[ménat]*

(“hard work”)

kihṛā ਕਿਹੜਾ *[kéṛā]*

(“which?”)

ih ਇਹ *[é]*

(“this”)

(2) -hu- –ਹੁ– in spelling and *[a^{u}] with high tone* in pronunciation

suhaj ਸੁਹਜ *[sój]*

(“beauty, charm”)

uh ਉਹ *[ó]*

(“that”)

The red double-headed arrows ↔ in the first and the second pictures on page 96 show that the **tense vowel** nearest to the **lax vowel i ਇ** is **e ਏ**, and that the **tense vowel** nearest to the **lax vowel u ੁ** is **o ੋ**. (We will come across this in Part 2 of the book as well). With the disappearance of **h ਹ** and the emergence of the **high tone**, the first **tone-bearing stressed** (or **accented**) **open syllable** needs a **tense vowel** which should stand prominent and, if needed, be capable of being stretched or **geminated**. so the original **lax *[i]*** becomes the *nearest* **tense *[e]***, and the original lax ***[u]*** becomes the *nearest* tense ***[o]*** in the new phonetic avatar of the word.

Words in the next two sets pose a more complicated problem. In the case of some of these words, pronunciation does not follow from the spelling. Rather, it is the other way – ***spelling is created in the backward direction.*** So it is necessary to look at the history of the Panjabi **vowels a^{i}** and **a^{u}**. First of all, you need to study the third picture on page 96.

(3) -hi- –ਹਿ– in spelling and *[a^{i}] with high tone* in pronunciation

pahilā ਪਹਿਲਾ *[pá^{i}lā]*

(“first”)

pahir ਪਹਿਰ *[pá^{i}r]*

(“duration of three hours”)

kahir ਕਹਿਰ *[ká^{i}r]*

(“wrath, anger")

nahir ਨਹਿਰ *[ná^{i}r]*

(“canal”)

(4) -hu- –ਹੁ– in spelling and *[a^{u}] with high tone* in pronunciation

sahurā ਸਹੁਰਾ *[sá^{u}rā]*

(“father-in-law”)

mahurā ਮਹੁਰਾ *[má^{u}rā]*

(“poison”)

pahũc ਪਹੁੰਚ *[pá̃^{u}c]*

(“approach”)

gahu ਗਹੁ *[gáᵘ]*

(“attention”)

The reason for the discrepancies between spelling and pronuncition is *historical*. In Old Panjabi, the vowel sound written **ਐ** as in Gurmukhi was pronounced as **vowel glide** or **diphthong**, for which the tongue position glides quickly from the position of **a ਅ** to that of **i ਇ**. The starting **a ਅ** part is stronger than the **i ਇ** part. (See the third picture on page 96). So we transcribe it as **aⁱ**. The same thing happened with the back vowel **ਔ**. It was the **vowel glide** from **a** to **u**. So we transcribe it **aᵘ**. The second part is **superscripted** (or raised) to make it clear that **aⁱ** is a *single* **vowel sound**, and not a sequnce of two vowels **a** and **i**. Similarly, **aᵘ** is a single vowel sound, and not a sequence of **a** and **u**. In some areas of East Panjab, **ਐ** and **ਔ** are still pronounced in the **gliding** manner, and not as **pure non-gliding vowels**. With the demise of **h ਹ** from the second **syllable** and the arrival of the **high tone**, which was grabbed by the first **stressed syllable**, the widowed **i ਇ** or **u ਉ** of the second syllable married the vowel **a ਅ** of the first **syllable**, forming the vowel glide **aⁱ** or **aᵘ**, which is still pronounced as such in some Panjabi dialects and is written as **ਐ** or **ਔ**.

Must a tone-bearing word always have two syllables?

As we have pointed earlier, the **tonal rise** or **fall** of the pitch occurs on the **vowel** of the **stressed** or **accented syllable**. So there is a logical requirement for there being an **unstresed syllable** in a **tone-bearing word** on which the pitch can come to the followed by a normal level again. But in continuous speech, a **tonal syllable** can be followed by a **non-tonal syllable** of *another wor*d. In such a case, that **syllable** of the follwing word is used to bring the pitch to the normal level. So the **tone-bearing syllable** of a word need not have an **unstressed syllable** following it.

Look at the following picture. The word **dʰī ਧੀ** (daughter) in isolation is pronounced a ***[tì̀.i]*** with the **low tone** and two syllables. The **tense vowel i ਈ** is **stretched** or **geminated** to create a second **syllable** for the pitch to come to the normal level. But in the phrase **dʰī dā hissā ਧੀ ਦਾ ਹਿੱਸਾ** ("daughter's share"), there is toneless word **dā ਦਾ** after **dʰī ਧੀ**. This word is used to bring the pitch to the normal level. So in **dʰī ਧੀ**, no extra syllable is created. This is also the case with **cā́ ਚਾਹ** ("tea") pronounced a ***[cā́.a].*** No extra syllable is needed when the word occurs in **cāh dā kapp ਚਾਹ ਦਾ ਕੱਪ** ("cup of tea").

Summing up

This chapter and the previous one have picked up the subjects largely ignored by the Panjabi linguists. We have demonstrated that (1) among the languages spoken in the Indian sub-continent, Panjabi has a unique phonetic and phonological structure; (2) it is a myth that "Panjabi is phonetic language" and that "in the Gurmukhi script when used for writing Panjabi you "write exactly as you speak": and (3) in spite of the mismatch between the Panjabi speech at many places,

there are definite rules for the correspondence between the spoken and the written forms of Panjabi words.

The subject is very vast indeed and could not be dealt with in adequate depth and detail. Doing so would have taken us into the highly complicated abstruse technicalities of modern theoretical linguistics. But we hope to have made at least a good beginning.

A written word is the choicest of relics. It is something at once more intimate with us and more universal than any other work of art. It is the work of art nearest to life itself. It may be translated into every language, and not only be read but actually breathed from all human lips; ... not be represented on canvas or in marble only, but be carved out of the breath of life itself."

— Henry David Thoreau

GURMUKHI WRITING PRACTICE

In this age of computers, printers, emails and other means of communication, you will hardly ever need to write with a pen. But there is no harm in learning how to write Gurmukhi manually with a pen or marker. It may come in handly – for writing a *hukamnāmā* on a notice board in a gurdwara, to give just one example. You can choose your own style of writing, the only requirement being that the result should be legible and look attractive (a "must" requirement for *any* art). So if you want to learn how to write Gurmukhi manually, keep in mind the following tips:

(1) In Gurmukhi, there is only one set of letters, not separate sets of small and capital letters; all these letters are written *below the line*.

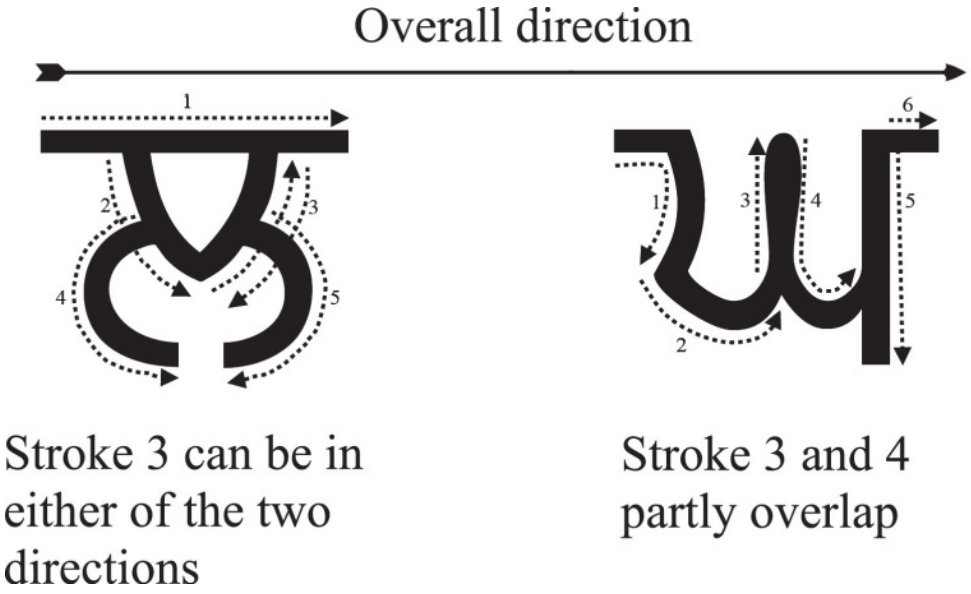
(2) Some letters look very similar to others (as you will see below). You should learn how to differentiate their shapes.

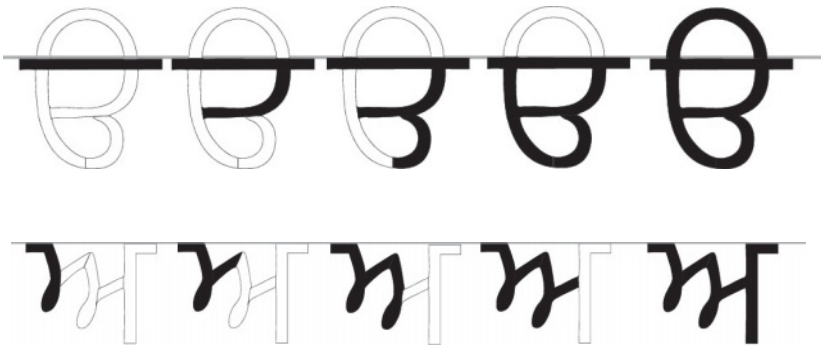
(3) Start learning with a broad felt tip pen or marker, and not with an ordinary pen or a ball point pen or a pencil;

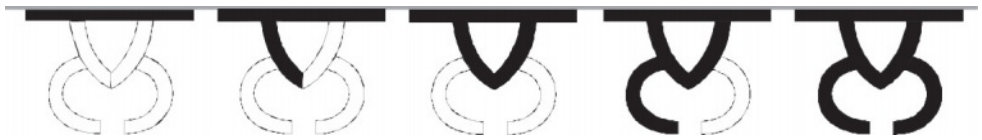
(4) Keep the shape of the *whole letter* in mind when you start writing it. Among the 35 Gurmukhi leters, 30 have a "roof" and 5 are "roofless". In the case of a letter with a "roof" start with the "roof". The letters in a word are joined, but do not be tempted to write the whole word first and then "roof" the letters separately. You *can* do this if you wish, but this is not the traditional standard practice. The first picture on page 104 shows the *suggested* directions of the pen strokes for a "roofed" and a "roofless" letter;

(5) For the *direction* of the strokes of the pen, do what is convenient without the need to *lift the pen too often*. Keep in mind the following picture of the pen strokes for a rather complicated "roofed" and a "roofless" Gurmukhi letter.

(6) The remaining pictures do not show the direction of the pen strokes. Keep the shape of *the whole letter* in mind, divide it into convenient parts and keep filling each part as if it were a hollow container.







It is hoped that this writing practice will enable you not only to write each letter of this beautiful script, but also to remember the shape of each letter and distinguish it from similar-looking letters. So start it if you have not done this yet.

You need to be very careful about **ਸ ਮ, ਹ ਰ, ਠ ਨ, ਵ ੜ, ੜ ੜ ਭ, ਖ ਥ ਪ ਧ, ਏ, ਟ**. You are not ever likely to use **ੜ** and **ਛ**. But they are used in Gurbani, and you should know what Panjabi consonant sounds they represent. So keep up the practice.

In Part 2, we are not going to use the phonetic transcription as extensively as in this part. It will be assumed that if you are interested in Gurbani, you will know Gurmukhi well. You will also see that certain spelling conventions make it *impossible* to write Gurbani properly in any script other than Gurmukhi (though attempts have been made to do this in other scripts).

SUMMING UP PART 1

In Part 1 of the book, we have argued that in order to teach Panjabi properly outside India in the coming decades, a new approach and methodology will be needed. There are a few reasons for this.

(1) The Panjabi-speaking people (especially the Sikhs among them) will have spread over a number of countries. They already have spread over 141 countries according to the estimates of the publishers of this book. Panjabi will not be their first language or home language. In order to be able to communicate with their relatives in other countries, they will need a link language, which cannot be English. Panjabi will serve this need better.

(2) They should have at least some members in the community to communicate with the centres of Sikhism in India and to be able understand and translate the speeches of the scholars visiting from India, and also to read and explain to others the books about Sikhism written in Panjabi.

(3) The Sikh holy scripture *Sri Guru Granth Sahib* is in the Gurmukhi script and its language will be intelligible (with the help of commentaries in Modern Panjabi if need be) for the next few generations.

(4) A number of myths about Panjabi and Gurmukhi are circulating among Panjabi scholars and teachers, such as “Panjabi is a phonetic languguage in which you write exactly as you speak”. These myths have been pointed out in the book. They must be discarded and the true nature of the language and the script should be understood by the future teachers and writers of the teaching/learning materials. Problems of the learners of Panjabi as a second language

must be adequately studied and addressed. Teaching Panjabi through the Roman script, as many short-sighted persons may advocate, will defeat the very purpose of learning Panjabi, for two reasons – (i) the Roman script does not have letters to represent all the Panjabi sounds, and (ii) The Sikh holy scripture *Sri Guru Granth Sahib* is in Gurmukhi and most commentaries on Gurbani and most books on Sikh religion and philospohy are in Panjabi in the Gurmukhi script. A ceremonial use of *Sri Guru Granth Sahib* in any script other than Gurmukhi will be regarded as a sacrilege by most Sikhs.

(5) Among the languages of the Indian sub-continent, Panjabi has a unique character. For the last five centuries, important changes have been taking place in the phonological system of the language. Panjabi has become a **tone language**. But the structure of the Gurmukhi writing system has not kept pace with these changes. So the relation between Panjabi pronunciation and its representation in Gurmukhi has become somewhat complicated, but not chaotic. A systematic relation still exists.

(6) This book explains this relation in detail.

(7) The new generation of Panjabi learners born and brought up in the countries with the education systems which encourage critical thinking and discourage following the authority blindly will be asking *legitimate* questions demanding *rational* answers.

(8) The battery of the mind of the teacher and the writer of teaching/learning materials should be adequately charged with the right knowledge to enlighten the learners' minds. The author of this book cannot predict the problems of the future learners and teachers of Panjabi and Gurmukhi. But he has tried to anticipate and deal with some possible ones.

(9) Part 2 of the book argues that the information about Panjabi and Gurmukhi given in Part 1 will help the reader understand the Gurmukhi spelling system used in *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*.

The job of the linguist, like that of the biologist or the botanist, is not to tell us how nature should behave, or what its creations should look like, but to describe those creations in all their messy glory and try to figure out what they can teach us about life, the world, and, especially in the case of linguistics, the workings of the human mind.

— Arika Okrent

Part 2

Gurbani Spellings in Gurmukhi

Sahib Singh (1892-1977)

Lives of great men all remind us
We can make our lives sublime;
And, departing, leave behind us
Footprints on the sands of time;

– H W Longfellow

A TRIBUTE TO SAHIB SINGH

Any linguists studying the language of Gurbani should gratefully remember Sahib Singh and the footprints he has left on the sands of time. His lasting greatness is more a ***greatness of effort*** **(ਜਤਨ ਦੀ ਮਹਾਨਤਾ)** than a ***greatness achievement*** **(ਜਿੱਤ ਦੀ ਮਹਾਨਤਾ)**. Standards for measuring the *greatness of achievement* have always been, and will always be, varying from time to time, from place to place and from person to person. But there is only one *invariable* standard for measuring the *greatness of effort* – a sincere and unwavering dedication to the chosen noble cause. And his life and work stand as a towering monument to this!

Every scholar's ideas and work are ultimately creatures of their biography and intellectual milieu, whose gravitational pull they have to struggle against, though they also rise above them to some extent to bring about a change in them. Sahib Singh is no exception. We have to know a few relevant facts about him. The following information and Sahib Singh's picture are taken from *SikhiWiki.org*. He was born in 1892 as Nathu Ram in a Hindu family in the village Phattevali in Sialkot district in Western Punjab (now in Pakistan). His father ran a small shop in the village which hardly gave him enough income to support his family which was heavily in debt. In his boyhood, he saw Sikh soldiers and this created in him a desire to "look like them". So he took *amrit* in 1906 and became Sahib Singh. He was a bright student right from his school days. But getting education was an uphill task for him. In his boyhood, he suffered from malaria, typhoid, small pox and the deadly Spanish Flu which killed millions of people in the world, including India. In extreme poverty, but with the help of some benevolent souls, he managed to get

the B.A. degree. He stopped learning Persian and moved towards Sanskrit, which became his favourite subject. He instinctively realised that he needed a knowledge of Sanskrit in order to understand Gurbani better. But poverty, responsibility to pay off the heavy debt his family was under and other family responsibilities wrecked all his hopes of getting the M.A. degree from Government College, Lahore. He worked as a school teacher, post office clerk and college lecturer in Panjabi, Divinity and Sanskrit. When he was working at Khalsa High School, Gujranwala, the school organised an Akhand Paath on Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur's martyrdom day in December 1920. Sahib Singh was one of the readers. He noticed the same word spelt in two or three different ways, and sometimes in the same line. This came to him like the apple that fell in front of Newton. Any other reader would have simply ignored this, but not Sahib Singh, whom Destiny had created to be the greatest Gurbani scholar of the twentieth century. He started thinking deeply about this. He immediately started planning his *Gurbāṇī Viākaraṇ*, which took him twelve years to complete in 1932. But he kept making use of his findings in writing the translations and commentaries on parts of Gurbani. All in all, he wrote about 50 books in his life. On 1 January 1957, he started writing his *magnum opus*, a Panjabi translation and commentary on *Sri Guru Granth Sahib* (*SGGS*) in ten volumes called *Srī Guru Granth Sāhib Darpaṇ*. He completed it in 1961. It is a sad reflection on the deplorable intellectual philistinism of the Panjabi Sikhs that the *Gurbāṇī Viākaraṇ* had to wait for seven years to be published, and no Sikh publisher would agree to publish *Srī Guru Granth Sāhib Darpaṇ*, which was ultimately published by Raj Publishers in Jalandhar, a Hindu publisher better known for publishing notes and guides for schools and colleges. His work finally got its recognition when the Punjab government conferred on him the honorary degree of D.Litt in 1971.

Right from his childhood till his death, Sahib Singh never enjoyed a very good health. But he lived for 85 years. During the last years of his life, he suffered from Parkinson's Disease. In the preface to *Srī Guru Granth Sāhib Darpaṇ*, he wrote, "My Lord Guru himself has arranged to keep alive this body rendered decrepit by illnesses."

Sahib Singh as a linguist – his strenghts and weaknesses

There have been translations of *SGGS* before and since Sahib Singh's work, some of which produced by learned professors and doctors of philosophy with impressive academic records. These are all based on their *personal faith and understanding*. New such translations continue appearing. But Sahib Singh's translation is the only one based on a sound analysis of Gurbani grammar. The readers interested in reading Gurbani for spiritual enlightenment only can read any of these translation. But for those who want to go into the depths, Sahib Singh is the only option. Luckily, his translation and commentary are now available free online, and anyone can download and read them.

(1) Sahib Singh's sharp observation spotted almost every word in Gurbani which needed analysing. His is the most comprehensive grammar of the language of Gurbani. He knew that the Gurbani language was a mixture of several languages and dialects. He took notice of this, and his analysis has great depth. In the days when there was no cumputerised text and no search faclities, just imagine how much concentarion his manual note-taking would have required. But he unintentionally *jumbled up* his analysis of these words. The user of his *Gurbāṇī Viākaraṇ* has to work hard to find out the requisite information. His student Harkirat Singh (who does not claim to have done anything new in his *Gurbāṇī dī Bhāshā te Viakaran*) has attempted to do this. But his book nowhere achieves the dept of the work of the matser. But this was not Harkirat Singh's aim, anyway.

(2) The modern science of linguistics was in its infancy when Sahib Singh started developing his grammar. So he could not make use of the latest findings in this field. Since he had no access to a foreign university (unlike his contemporaries Banarsi Das Jain and Siddheshwar Varma had), this was impossible for him. His attempt to view and analyse the Gurbani through the prism of Sanskrit sometimes went wrong. In 1961, Varma published a review of *Gurbāṇī Viākaraṇ*, which was reprinted in its later editions. He is all praise for the great innovations Sahib Singh brought about in the book, but is also mildly critical of Sahib Singh's fitting the case system of the language of Gurbani into that of Sanskrit. There have been changes in the grammatical structure of the languages following Sanskrit. Fitting a language into the grammatical categories of another is not good linguistics. Sahib Singh borrows the term **preposition** from English grammar and uses it for what is clearly a **postposition** in Panjabi, and not a **preposition**. Here are the examples. In the English expression *in the house*, the word *in* comes **before** the **noun** *house*. So it is called a **PREposition**. But the equivalent of the English **preposition** in the Panjabi **ਘਰ ਵਿਚ** comes **after** the noun. So it is called a **POSTposition**.

Since 1961, when Varma wrote his review, more linguists have come forth to assert that the individual character of each languge must be respected and it must not be fitted into the theoretical framework of another language (Bhardwaj 2016). Questions can be raised on whether Sahib Singh's use of the Sanskrit **tenses** and categories like **passive voice** are justified in a grammar of the language of Gurbani. Christopher Shackle in the textbook *An Introduction to the Sacred Language of the Sikhs* (1982) attempts an analysis of the Language of Gurbani by using the terminology of modern linguistics. But he gives the impression that this analysis applies to *all* Gurbani. This is definitely not the case.

(3) The *phonology* (sounds and their use) in the language of Gurbani is also quite different from that of Sanskrit in some important respects. The fact that Sanskrit has been written in Devanagari for centuries and Gurbani in Gurmukhi, the writing conventions of the two system also have their effect. But Sahib Singh misses the point here. He either provides a misleading **sandhi** analysis of the use of **subscript characters** in Gurbani or simply ignores the problem, as in the case of the use of two **vowel symbols** with one **consonant letter**. (See page 140).

Harkirat Singh, a trained modern linguist, tried to mend some of the shortcomings of Sahib Singh's work on Gurbani phonology and grammar. But he was quite old (78) when he started his work. It should be taken up again by some dedicated young Sikh scholar trained in modern linguistics who is able to devote more time in a spirit of full dedication. At 75 myself, I am able to deals only with *some* aspects of Gurbani *phonology.* My contention is that some "peculiarities" of Gurbani spelling system can be best undestood in the light of the phonology and spellimg system of Modern Panjabi presented in Part 1 of the book.

Every intellectual achievement or **ਜਿੱਤ ਦੀ ਮਹਾਨਤਾ** is ephemeral and subject to the ravages of time. What time cannot erase is the greatness and sincerity of effort or **ਜਤਨ ਦੀ ਮਹਾਨਤਾ** put into bringing it about, especially by a scholar of saintly character like Sahib Singh. He had unshakable faith only in his Guru, to whom he devoted his life. He regarded himself as accountable to his Guru only. He never indulged in any political maneuvering or self-publicity. His faith and self-respect never allowed him to approach any Raja or Maharaja of a princely state to beg for financial help. As the most dedicated and insightful Gurbani scholar of his century, he never ran after any worldly honours. When the honorary D.Litt was being conferred upon him, he was probably wondering what all the fuss was about!

*The analysis of some aspects of the the language and script of Gurbani attempted in this part of the book is done in a **secular** and **scientific** spirit. A secular and scientific analysis is **non-devotional** and **non-sectarian** but **not irreverent**. Languages like Vedic, Sanskrit, Hebrew, Greek, Pali, Prakrit, Persian and Arabic have been used in the religious scriptures of different religions, but there also are centuries-old traditions of scientific analyses of these languages. Ours is a similar attempt.*

NEED FOR A FRESH ANALYSIS OF GURBANI SPELLING

Knowledge must never become static or stagnant. Knowledge is not a thing or object but a *process* like a stream (called *pravāhnirantartā* in Sanskrit) . Its life requires continuous growth and evolution. Systems to be analysed (especially the human and socio-economic systems) go on evolving and new analytical logics and tools also keep appearing. If this process stops, knowledge starts deteriorating and decaying. As was pointed out in the chapter on Sahib Singh, he created a new field of knowledge – a scientific analysis of the grammar of the language of Gurbani. Critically examining a past scholar's work is the greatest tribute which can be paid to them. That a past scholar, working within the limitations of their time and place, struggled against their gravitational pull and endeavoured to overcome them is a great credit to their initiative and scholarship. Kahn Singh Nabha and Sahib Singh are the two great Gurbani scholars of the twentieth century. They started their work about a hundred years ago and their achievements are great indeed. But the science of linguistics has advanced a great deal from where it was when they started their work. We must move ahead by "standing on the shoulders of these giants", as Newton said about how he made use of the work of his predecessors in science.

In the chapter on Sahib Singh, we mentioned a review of his *Gurbāṇī Viākaraṇ* (**ਗੁਰਬਾਣੀ ਵਿਆਕਰਣ**) published in 1961 by his contemporary, the eminent Sanskrit scholar Siddheshwar Varma. It must be said that Varma's mild criticism of Sahib Singh's grammar itself is more than half a century old and is only partly justified. Sahib Singh's use of the *Sanskrit* **case system** and of the **notional category** *of time*

Arrangement of Letters in ਪਟੀ ਲਿਖੀ

ਸ	ਏ	ਓ	ਙ	
ਕ	ਖ	ਗ	ਘ	
ਚ	ਛ	ਜ	ਝ	ਞ
ਟ	ਠ	ਡ	ਢ	ਣ
ਤ	ਥ	ਦ	ਧ	ਨ
ਯ	ਰ	ਲ	ਵ	ਲ਼
ਹ	ਅ			

Subscript Characters

ਖ ਟ ਤ ਨ ੍ ਵ

Other Symbols

ਂ ਁ ਃ

as the **grammatical category** *of* **tense** is questionable now (Bhardwaj 2016), but such theoretical distinctions were not made when Sahib Singh was working on the grammar of the language of *SGGS*. Any linguists worth their salt know this these days. But taking Sahib Singh's Herculean work on Gurbani grammar further in the light of the latest developments in the science of linguistics will require years of hard labour by a devout Sikh scholar trained as a linguist in an eminent university and also having an in-depth knowledge of Sanskrit and the languages used in Gurbani. Such a dedicated and inspired scholar may appear in the future.

But our aim is far more modest. We start with the use of the writing system now known as Gurmukhi in *Sri Guru Granth Sahib* (*SGGS*). Some writing conventions used in *SGGS* but discontinued in modern Panjabi are the focus of our attention.

No serious scholar believes that the writing system known as Gurmukhi was "invented" by Guru Angad Dev, the second Guru of the Sikh faith. It either existed before Guru Nanak Dev, or he *refined it or assembled* it by taking letters and symbols from the writing systems of the Brahmi family used in and around the Panjabi-speaking areas, such as Sharda, Takari, Landa, Siddh Matrika and Bhatt Acchari. As an astute linguist, he knew fully well that the Perso-Arabic script, however good for writing Arabic and Persian, could not be used properly for writing his poetic compositions meant to be sung. He mentions the thirty-five letters of this script in a composition known called **ਪਟੀ ਲਿਖੀ** in *SGGS* (pages 432-434). In this composition in **ਰਾਗ ਆਸਾ**, the name of a *letter* is first mentioned and then a word starting with the *sound* represented by the letter is used to start the actual first line of that particular verse. Following points are notable in **ਪਟੀ ਲਿਖੀ**:

(1) His *arrangement of the letters* is slightly (but not very) different from the modern arrangement shown in the pictures give in Part 1 of the book. (See page 124). The reason seems to be his creative freedom as a poet to give a certain sequence to his ideas.

(2) The names of the letters in this composition end in -**ਐ**, e.g., **ਸਸੈ, ਕਕੈ, ਪਪੈ** etc. But the actual names ended in -**ਆ**, as is the case now. All names (except one) are grammatically **masculine singular**. In Gurbani grammar, when a **masculine singular** noun ending -**ਆ** is used in the **instrumental case form**, this -**ਆ** changes to **ਐ**, so that **ਸਸੈ** means "with **ਸਸਾ**".

(3) The names of the letters are not written with the **ਅੱਧਕ** symbol ੱ, as in the *modern* spelling of their names (such as **ਸੱਸਾ, ਕੱਕਾ, ਪੱਪਾ** etc.). The "doubling" of consonants, necessitating the use of ੱ was not a prominent feature of Panjabi pronunciation in Guru Nanak Dev's times. ੱ is not used anywhere in Gurbani. This does not mean that this *tendency* was not there. But it was not very prominent. The use of ੱ in Panjabi writing started in the eighteenth century.

(4) In the name of each **consonant letter**, its sound is **reduplicated**, but the names of the **vowel bearer letters** **ਓ**, **ਅ** and **ਏ** have **ੜ** in them (**ਊੜਾ**, **ਆਇੜਾ** and **ਈਵੜੀ**).

(5) In modern Panjabi, the sounds represented by **ਛ**, **ਢ**, **ਣ** and **ੜ** cannot occur at the beginning of a word. But in Guru Nanak Dev's times, the Panjabi word for "knowledge" was pronounced either as **ਗਿਆਨ** or as **ਛਿਆਨ**. Both the spellings occur in *SGGS*. He uses **ਛਿਆਨ** in **ਪਟੀ ਲਿਖੀ**. But he uses **ਨਦਰਿ** after **ਢ**, **ਰਢਤੁ** after **ਣ**, and **ਰਾੜਿ** after **ੜ**. Even in his times, no Panjabi words started with **ਢ**, **ਣ** and **ੜ**.

(6) The name of a **vowel bearer** letter, starts with *the most commonly used* **tense vowel** represented by the letter – **ਊੜਾ, ਆਇੜਾ** and **ਈਵੜੀ**, though each **vowel bearer** letters is used to represent other vowel sounds as well.

(7) The name **ਆਇੜਾ** used by Guru Nanak Dev is quite interesting. Now it is pronounced as **ਐੜਾ**. This shows that the **pure vowel ਐ** of modern Panjabi was pronounced as the **gliding vowel ਆਇ** (**ਆ**ਿ**ਇ**) by Guru Nanak Dev. Later on it became **ਅ**ਿ**ਇ**, a pronunciation still used in some Panjabi-speaking areas. But most speakers of Panjabi now pronounce it as a **pure vowel ਐ**. (We have already discussed this in Part 1, pages 97-100).

(8) Guru Nanak Dev was a fluent speaker of Persian and Arabic as well. He communicated with the native speakers of these languages. So we can safely assume that he correctly pronounced the special sounds of these languages not found in Panjabi (including the four different Arabic sounds pronounced as **[z]** in Persian and Urdu. See Bhardwaj 2016). But in his writings, he used only the traditional letters of his native writing system. He did not try to add to his script any letters for the foreign sounds and for the two **[sh]** sounds of Sanskrit not used by the common people. Letters for these sounds were added to the Gurmukhi "alphabet" towards the close of the nineteenth century and came into general use about thirty years later (and are still used wrongly and inconsistently by the writers who do not know Urdu).

(9) All the nine symbols for the **vowel sounds** added to the **vowel bearer letters**, as well as **Tippi** nad **Bindi** are used in *SGGS*. But some other symbols and **subscript characters** (truncated characters put beneath the full chracters) are also used. They were mentioned in Part 1 also. But we will deal with them in this chapter too.

It was claimed in Part 1, that the analysis of modern Panjabi phonology presented there earlier can help us understand some of the conventions used in Gurbani spelling system discontinued in modern Panjabi writing. In our tribute to Sahib Singh, it was pointed out that he was not an expert phonologist. In his *Gurbāṇī Viākaraṇ* as well

Gurbani Similar-looking Words A

ਮਤਿ ਵਿਚਿ ਰਤਨ ਜਵਾਹਰ ਮਾਣਿਕ (2)

ਭਰੀਐ **ਮਤਿ** ਪਾਪਾ ਕੈ ਸੰਗਿ (4)

ਮਤੁ ਦੇਖਿ ਭੂਲਾ ਵੀਸਰੈ ਤੇਰਾ ਚਿਤਿ ਨ ਆਵੈ ਨਾਉ (14)

ਸਚਾ ਸਾਹਿਬੁ ਏਕੁ ਹੈ **ਮਤੁ** ਮਨ ਭਰਮਿ ਭੁਲਾਹਿ (428)

Gurbani Similar-looking Words B

ਕਰ ਕਰਿ ਟਹਲ ਰਸਨਾ ਗੁਣ ਗਾਵਉ (189)

ਸਿਵ ਸਿਵ ਕਰਤ ਸਗਲ **ਕਰ** ਜੋਰਹਿ (207)

ਜਉ ਸਾਧੂ **ਕਰੁ** ਮਸਤਕਿ ਧਰਿਓ (214)

ਦੇਵਲ ਦੇਵਤਿਆ **ਕਰੁ** ਲਾਗਾ (1191)

as in his translation and commentary on *SGGS,* he ignores the phonological aspects of Gurbani spellings and presents a **sandhi** analysis of the use of the subscript **characters,** which is now old-fashioned and misleading. Here we attempt to make sense of some of the spelling conventions used in *SGGS*, discontinued in modern Gurmukhi writing

ਸ਼ਬਦਾਂਤਕ ਲਗਾਂ ਮਾਤ੍ਰਾਵਾਂ Words ending in ਇ and ਉ

Any reader of Gurbani will notice that many words end in lax vowels **ਇ** and **ਉ**. This does not happen in modern Panjabi writing (except in some **unstressed monosyllabic conjunctions** and **adverbial particles** like **ਕਿ** and **ਜੁ**).

Examples of some such words are give in the pictures on the facing page. The numbers given in the brackets show the page numbers in *SGGS.*

ਮਤਿ (2, 4) means "intellect" or "thinking".

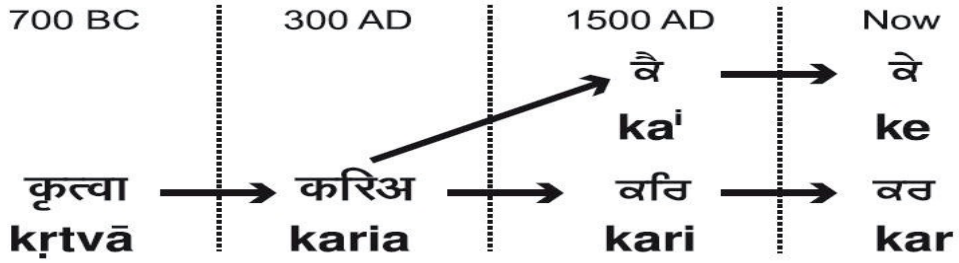
ਮਤੁ (14, 428) indicates prohibition – "do not"

ਕਰੁ (214) means "hand" (singular number)

ਕਰੁ (1191) means "tax" (singular number)

ਕਰ (189, 207) means "hands" (plural number). The grammatical rule of turning a noun from **singular number** to **plural number** turns **ਉ** into the **invisible ਅ**.

ਕਰਿ (189) means "having done" (one action before another). This verb form is known as **conjunctive participle**. (Bhardwaj 2016). It is a distinguishing feature of modern North Indian languages. On page 10 of *SGGS*, Guru Nanak Dev writes **ਜਿਨਿ ਦਿਨੁ ਕਰਿ ਕੈ ਕੀਤੀ ਰਾਤਿ (**"He Who, having created the day, created the



ਗਗਨ ਮੈ **ਥਾਲੁ** ਰਵਿ **ਚੰਦੁ ਦੀਪਕ** ਬਨੇ ਤਾਰਿਕਾ **ਮੰਡਲ** ਜਨਕ ਮੋਤੀ

ਪੰਨਾ 663

Gurbani Similar-looking words C

ਮਨ ਤਨ ਨਾਮਿ ਰਤੇ **ਇਕ** ਰੰਗਿ (278)

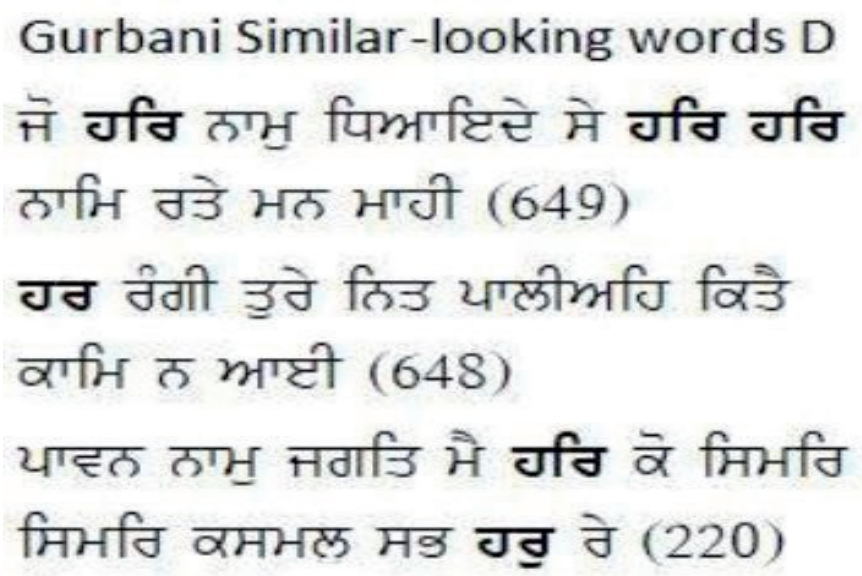
ਨਾਨਾ ਭੇਖ ਕਰਹਿ **ਇਕ** ਰੰਗ (284)

ਗੁਰ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ ਨਾਨਕ **ਇਕੁ** ਜਾਤਾ (289)

ਆਵਨ ਜਾਨੁ **ਇਕੁ** ਖੇਲੁ ਬਨਾਇਆ (294)

ਇਕਿ ਦਾਤੇ **ਇਕਿ** ਭੇਖਾਰੀ (11)

ਇਕਿ ਆਵਹਿ **ਇਕਿ** ਜਾਹਿ (16)



night"). or "He Who created the day and then created the night"). His own use of the **conjunctive participle verb** form is illustrated in **ਕਰਿ ਕਰਿ ਕਰਣਾ ਲਿਖਿ ਲੈ ਜਾਹੁ** (Page 4) ("You will carry (the effects of) your repeated actions after writing them (on your soul)." A detailed account of how this verb form historically developed in Panjabi over centuries and functions now in Modern Panjabi is given in Bhardwaj 2016 (chapters 10-13). The first picture on page 130 shows its development from Sanskrit onwards. Both the members of the **conjunct verb ਕਰਿ ਕੈ** (Modern Panjabi **ਕਰ ਕੇ**) come from the same Sanskrit form. Any serious scholar interested in the grammar of Gurbani and Modern Panjabi is advised to go through Bhardwaj 2016.

We have seen that the final **ੳ** changes to **invisible ਅ** when the noun assumes a **plural form**. But this also happens when it assumes an **oblique form**. This grammatical concept needs to be explained. Let us consider **ਮੁੰਡਾ ਗਿਆ** and **ਮੁੰਡੇ ਨੇ ਕਿਤਾਬ ਪੜ੍ਹੀ**. In the second sentence, there is a **postposition ਨੇ** following **ਮੁੰਡਾ**. This **postposition** marks **ਮੁੰਡਾ** as the **subject** of the sentence. Because of the presence

of this **postposition**, **ਮੁੰਡਾ** becomes **ਮੁੰਡੇ**, but is still a **singular noun**. This form **ਮੁੰਡੇ** is known as the **oblique form**, while **ਮੁੰਡਾ** is contrastively known as the **direct form**. In the line quoted from the **ਆਰਤੀ** (page 663 in *SGGS*) given in the picture on page 130, the word the word **ਗਗਨ** ("sky") is in the oblique form because of the **postposition ਮੈ** (**postposition** meaning "like", in "The sky is like a ceremonial platter"). But **ਥਾਲੁ** ("platter") and **ਚੰਦੁ** ("moon") are in the **direct form**. **ਦੀਪਕ** is in the **plural form** ("lamps") because the sun and the moon are the two lamps. **ਮੰਡਲ (**"constellations of the stars") is also in the plural form. So they do not have **ੳ** at the end. Also consider **ਨਾਮ ਸੰਗਿ ਜਿਸ ਕਾ ਮਨੁ ਮਾਨਿਆ** (Page 281) "One whose mind is attached to the Naam (of the Lord)." The word **ਨਾਮ** ("Name") is followed by the **postposition ਸੰਗਿ** ("to" or "with"). So its **oblique form** does not end in **ੳ**. But this is not the case with **ਮਨੁ**, used in the **direct form** ending in **ੳ**.

The rule is presented in a very *simplified* form here. What is emphasised is that fact that a grammatical analysis of the language of Gurbani should be based on the latest findings of the science of linguistics, and not simply on the categories borrowed simple-mindedly from the grammars of other languages.

ਇਕ **(278,284)** means "the number 1". "The mind and the body are imbued with one hue – (of the Lord.)" "He assumes many forms but is still one."

ਇਕੁ **(289,294)** means "One God". "By Guru's grace, O Nanak, the One is known.". "The One has created the drama of coming and going."

ਇਕਿ **(11,16)** means "of one group" (**collective noun**). "Some are givers; some are beggars." "Some are coming; some are going."

ਹਰਿ **(649,220)** means "God". "Those who meditates on the Lord's name are imbued with the name Hari Hari of the Lord." "The Lord's name is pure and

sublime; remembering His name in meditation will make you free from all the sinful deeds."

ਹਰ (648) means "every, each". "He may breed horses of every colour; but they will not be of any use."

Why did word-final ਇ and ਉ disappear after Gurbani Panjabi?

Changes, both externally induced and internally motivated, are the defining features of a living language. Most often, the complexity of a language does not allow an analyst to clearly isolate the factor or the factors responsible for a change. But the presence of ***unstressed and monosyllabic grammatical words*** still spelt as like **ਕਿ** and **ਜੁ** in Gurmukhi points towards the cause. We have already discussed the phenomenon earlier in Part 1. Briefly, the factor responsible for this is the development of **strong word stress**. In two- and multi-syllabic words, there is **strong stress** on one **syllable**, and **vowels** in the other **syllables** become **weakened** and **centralised** and sometimes disappear completely. Sometimes word-final like **ਇ** and **ਉ** in Gurbani change to **ਅ** (which has no *visible* symbol) for grammatical reasons as we have seen above. But very often, in the **unstressed second syllable**, the **lax** final **ਇ** and **ਉ** were further weakened and centralised to the position of **ਅ**. Words spelt as **ਕਰੁ** ("tax" or "do") and **ਕਰਿ** ("having done") used in Gurbani are spelt and pronounced as **ਕਰ** in Modern Panjabi. Word-final **ਇ** and **ਉ** are rarely pronounced by Sikh priests in verses like

ਕਹੁ ਨਾਨਕ ਹਰਿ ਭਜੁ ਮਨਾ ਜਿਹ ਬਿਧਿ ਜਲ ਕਉ ਮੀਨੁ
(page 1426)

In fact, some Sikh "scholars" encourage Sikhs in the name of teaching them the "correct" Gurbani pronunciation not to pronounce them at all, arguing that these **ਲਗਾਂ ਮਾਤ੍ਰਾਵਾਂ** are there "to show correct grammar only". It is for Sikhs themselves

੍ਹ ੍ਟ ੍ਤ ੍ਨ ੍ਯ ੍ਵ

੍ਰ ੑ ਃ

Gurbani Spelling A

ਪਸੂਮਿ (1139) ਸ੍ਰਿਸ੍ਟਿ (586) ਸ੍ਨੇਹੰ (1354)
ਪ੍ਰਸੁਕ (1353) ਕ੍ਰਿਸ੍ਨ (1082) ਕ੍ਰਿਸਨ (98)
ਆਸ੍ਰਮ (804) ਸ੍ਵਾਦ (1331) ਸੰਪੂਰਣਃ (1361)

Gurbani Spelling B

ਕਵਨੁ ਜੋਗੁ ਕਉਨੁ ਗ੍ਯ੍ਯਾਨੁ ਧ੍ਯ੍ਯਾਨੁ ਕਵਨ ਬਿਧਿ ਉਸ੍ਤਤਿ ਕਰੀਐ (1386)
ਕਹੁ ਨਾਨਕ ਨਿਸਚੌ ਧ੍ਯ੍ਯਾਵੈ (1353)
ਇਹੁ ਸੁਖੁ ਨਾਨਕ ਅਨਦਿਨੁ ਚੀਨ੍ਹਾ (386)
ਭ੍ਰਮ ਕੇ ਪਰਦੇ ਸਤਿਗੁਰ ਖੋਲ੍ਹੇ (385)
ਸਾਸਤ੍ਰ ਬੇਦ ਪੁਰਾਣ ਪੜ੍ਹੰਤਾ (1242)
ਪੰਡਿਤ ਪਾਧੇ ਜੋਇਸੀ ਨਿਤ ਪੜ੍ਹਹਿ ਪੁਰਾਣਾ (419)

to decide how to pronounce such words. But it can be proved that these **ਲਗਾਂ ਮਾਤ੍ਰਾਵਾਂ** were *certainly* pronounced by the Gurus and they are there not simply "to show correct grammar only." The "grammar" would have been perfectly clear if Guru Tegh Bahadur (in this particular example and elsewhere) and the other Gurus had not used them. They are not used in Modern Panjabi and these "scholars" probably find it difficult to pronounce the **short/lax vowels ਇ** and **ੁ** at the end of a word. But our ancestors did this for thousands of years since the time of Sanskrit. (See the first picture on page 130). And the Gurus did the same. But unable to do this, and not willing to learn how to pronounce them, these "scholars" pronounce them like their nearest **long/tense vowels ਈ** / **ਏ** and **ੋ** and respectively, which is bad and they wish to avoid this. But omitting them altogether, which they recommend, is even worse. It is like cutting off a patient's head to cure his headache! It needs only a little careful practice to learn how to pronounce these **ਲਗਾਂ ਮਾਤ੍ਰਾਵਾਂ** correctly as in the Modern Panjabi words **ਕਿ** and **ਜੁ**. There are some other Sikh scholars who insist on pronouncing them as spelt. They regard any arbitrary decisions about the Gurbani pronunciation as sinful. We do not wish to take sides here. It is *not* our business to be *prescriptive* (to tell people how they *should* pronounce the Gurbani words today). Our business is *descriptive* (to *describe* what our research shows was the original pronunciation).

Subscript letters and other special symbols used in Gurbani

Some Gurmukhi letters are also used in their **subscript** (**truncated** "in the foot" forms). Only three of these letters are still used in this form in modern Gurmukhi writing. But their use is controversial among the writers and is going out of fashion. Also, some other special symbols used in Gurbani are no longer used in modern Gurmukhi writing. They are shown in the first pictures on page 134.

(1) Subscript ਰ (◌੍ਰ) and ਯ (◌੍ਯ) ਵ (◌੍ਵ)

We discussed in Part 1 (pages 50-53) that two or more consonant sound in immediate neighbourhood and *within* a syllable are known as a **consonant cluster**. We also discussed that the high vowels **i ਇ** and **u ਉ**, when immediately followed by a **low vowel** cannot become **syllable peaks** and thus become consonants **y ਯ** and **v ਵ** respectively. These vowels turned consonants are written as ◌੍ਯ and ◌੍ਵ respectively. The subscript symbol ◌੍ਯ is called **yaksh mātrā (ਯਕਸ਼ ਮਾਤ੍ਰਾ).** The words ਗ੍ਯਾਨੁ and ਧ੍ਯਾਨੁ (*SGGS* page 1386) in the third picture on page 134 are pronounced as **gyānu** and **d^{h}yānu** respectively. The **y** sound represented by ◌੍ਯ has developed from the **lax (short)** vowel **i ਇ**. It is a **non-syllabic** or **consonant** version of **i**. The **v** sound in the word ਸ੍ਵਾਦ (page 1331) the non-syllabic version of the **lax (short)** vowel **u ਉ**. The subscript **r ਰ** in some words is analysed in the following paragraphs. ◌੍ਯ is called **ਯਕਸ਼ ਮਾਤ੍ਰਾ** because it is used in the word **ਜਖ੍ਯ** (pages 276, 500) for the demigod **ਯਕਸ਼** in some Hindu religious books.

Devanagari	Sahaskriti	Panjabi (Gurmukhi)
pus.tak	pus.tak	pus.tak
पुस्तक	ਪੁਸ੍ਤਕ	ਪੁਸਤਕ
स is truncated	(1353)	(59, 470, 1043, 1127)

ਕ੍ਰਿਸਨ (98) has two syllables **kri.san ਕ੍ਰਿ.ਸਨ.** In the first syllable, there is a **consonnat cluster kr**. The second member **r ਰ** assumes the **subscripted** form ◌੍ਰ. But what about **ਕ੍ਰਿਸ੍ਨ**? Surely, Guru Arjan Dev, who spelt the name in two different ways, was not ignorant of the spelling rules in Gurmukhi.

ਧ੍ਯਾਵੈ (1353). Gurbani is meant to be sung in different *ragas* of the North Indian classical music. Even the compositions like **ਜਪੁ**, for which no particular *raga* is prescribed, are meant to be sung. Guru Arjan Dev was not only a great *linguist* (as we will discuss below), he was also a great *musicologist*. *Ragas* are prescribed for most composition. But this is not enough. As any singer and composer can tell you, a **musical composition** (known as a **ਬੰਦਿਸ਼** *bandish*) has to be made, which includes a *tāla* **ਤਾਲ** (a rhythmic cycle) and *laya* **ਲੈਯ** (tempo). In singing, some words have to be *prolonged* (in *bol ālāp*) and some are *shortened* or spoken quickly (in *bol tān*). By spelling the word **ਧ੍ਯਾਵੈ** like this, Guru Arjan Dev seems to be saying that this particular word can be pronounced either with *three* **syllables** as **d^hi.ā.va^i ਧਿ.ਆ.ਵੈ** or with two syllables as **d^hyā.va^i ਧ੍ਯਾ.ਵੈ**. He must have had a particular musical compostion in mind, which has unfortunately, not reached us.

(2) Subscript ਚ (੍ਚ), ਟ (੍ਟ), ਤ (੍ਤ) ਨ (੍ਨ) in Gurbani writing

We have already mentioned the subject in Part 1 (page 38) how Gurmukhi and Devanagari represent consonant clusters in different ways. We used a picture there which is given on the opposite page again.

The picture shows that in *SGGS* Guru Nanak Dev spelt the word **ਪੁਸਤਕ** like this four times but as **ਪੁਸ੍ਤਕ** once. The page numbers are given in the picture. We have also said earlier that Guru Arjan Dev spelt the word **ਕ੍ਰਿਸਨ** in two different ways, once like this, and once as **ਕ੍ਰਿਸ੍ਨ**. Guru Nank Dev and Guru Arjan Dev were great scholars of other languages as well. All the words with these subscript characters are Sanskrit words in the *saloks* in Sahaskriti (a hybrid language of Sanskrit and Apabraṁsha).

One such word **ਦਸ੍ਤਗੀਰੀ** is taken from Persian. Guru Nanak Dev and Guru Arjan Dev fully understood the writing conventions of the Devanagari script used since 10th century for writing Sanskrit and they tried to follow in Gurmukhi the

conventions of the original writing systems. We have seen that in order to represent a **consonant cluster** in Gurmukhi, the first letter is given in its full form and the second letter is **truncated** and also often **subscripted**. An example is

pre.mī

ਪ੍ਰੇ.ਮੀ

where we have a full ਪ followed by ਰ a subscripted as ੍ . A **consonant sound** at the end of a syllable is written as **full** as ਸ in

pus.tak

ਪੁਸ.ਤਕ

But the Devanagari conventions used for writing Sansksrit, Hindi and some other languages are different. *Most commonly* (but not always) a consonant sound not followed by a vowel sound anywhere inside the word is truncated. The syllable boundary does not matter. So the word **pustak** is written with a truncated letter for the sound **t**, as shown in the picture on page 136. This can be written only as **ਪੁਸ੍ਤਕ**, which Guru Nanak Dev did on page 1353 of *SGGS*. All other examples of the use of **Subscript ਚ (੍ਚ), ਟ (੍ਟ), ਤ (੍ਤ) ਨ (੍ਨ)** given the picture be explained in this way – Guru Nanak Dev and Guru Arjan Dev were trying to represent the Devanagari convention in Gurmukhi. But let us consider two more examples.

sriṣṭi

ਸ੍ਰਿਸ੍ਟਿ (Sahaskriti spelling)

sris.ṭi

ਸ੍ਰਿਸ.ਟਿ (Would be Gurmukhi spelling)

pascmi

ਪਸ੍ਚਮਿ (Sahaskriti spelling)

pas.cmi

ਪਸ.ਚਮਿ (Would be Gurmukhi spelling)

(3) The ਉਦਾਤ ਮਾਤ੍ਰਾ (ੑ)

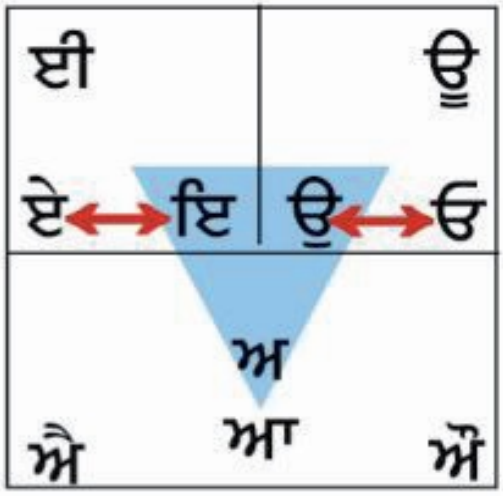
What initially puzzles linguists studying the writing system of Gurbani is **almost** the complete absence of the **subscript** ੁ symbol and the use of the **udāt mātrā** ੑ where ੁ should be expected. If Guru Arjan Dev could use some other Gurmukhi letters in the truncated form, why did he not use **ਹ** in this way? Examples given in the third picture on page 134 are **ਚੀਨ੍ਹਾ**, **ਪੜ੍ਹੰਤਾ** and **ਖੋਲ੍ਹੇ**. A modern writer using Gurmukhi would spell them as **ਚੀਨ੍ਹਾ**, **ਪੜ੍ਹੰਤਾ** and **ਖੋਲ੍ਹੇ** respectively with the subscript ੁ instead of ੑ. ੁ is actually used in some words at a few places in *SGGS*. An example is **ਪੜ੍ਹਹਿ** on page 419. This minor anomaly needs investigation. One plausible explanation is that some later writer making a copy of *SGGS* made a mistake *unconsciously* and that this mistake remained undetected by the members of the committee who finalised the *SGGS* text. Such human errors *can* happen. But this is simply a conjecture until the matter is investigated and sorted out.

The word **ਉਦਾਤ** means "high", "exalted", "raised", "sublime" etc. Some linguists (Harkirat Singh 2011, page 103, for example) believe that this symbol indicates **tonal** pronunciation. In most cases it indicates the **high tone** discussed in Part 1. According to the rules of Panjabi pronunciaton, **ਚੀਨ੍ਹਾ (ਚੀਨ੍ਹਾ)** and **ਖੋਲ੍ਹੇ (ਖੋਲ੍ਹੇ)** should be pronounced with a **high tone** as ***[cĺ́nā]*** and ***[khóle]*** respectively. But **ਪੜ੍ਹੰਤਾ (ਪੜ੍ਹੰਤਾ)** should have a *low tone* when pronounced as ***[paṛ̀ntā]***. If this hypothesis is true, tone had already appeared in Panjabi when Gurbani was written down. Guru Arjan Dev also used the other subscript characters mentioned above. As a Sanskrit scholar, he was certainly aware of **consonant clusters** of the **liquids consonant sounds** with **ਹ**. (We have already pointed this out in Part 1, pages 92-97) that the **h ਹ** sound in these clusters has completely disappeared in Modern Panjabi and one of the two **tones** has appeared, depending on the position of the lost **h ਹ**. This sound still survives in some other positions, but not in the old clusters of **liquid consonant+h**. It is no coincident that in Gurbani, the **ਉਦਾਤ ਮਾਤ੍ਰਾ**

ਗੋਵਿੰਦ (266)	ਗੁਵਿੰਦ (1173)
ਗੋਵਿੰਦੁ (442)	ਗੁੋਵਿੰਦੁ (442)
ਗੋਪਾਲ (15,81)	ਗੁਪਾਲ (200, 252)

ਗੁਰ **ਗੋਵਿੰਦੁ ਗੁੋਵਿੰਦੁ** ਗੁਰੂ ਹੈ ਨਾਨਕ ਭੇਦੁ ਨ ਭਾਈ
(ਪੰਨਾ 442)

ਸਾਜਨ ਮੀਤ ਸਖਾ ਹਰਿ ਮੇਰੈ ਗੁਨ **ਗੁੋਪਾਲ** ਹਰਿ ਰਾਇਆ
(ਪੰਨਾ 1223)



(ੱ) occurs only under the letters for the **liquid consonants** which must have earlier followed by **h ਹ**. Later writers seem to have reverted to the spelling representing the older spelling and pronunciation.

As in every scientific investigatrion, we start with this simple *hypothesis* to be confirmed or discarded by futher investigation.

In Part 1 (pages 58 onwards) we also hypothesised that the development of stressed-timed rhythm in Panjabi led to (1) heavier stress on some **syllables** (the **stressed** ones); (2) **doubling** of **tense consonants** and **vowels**; (3) use of **addhak** (ੱ) to represent the **doubling** of **consonants**; (4) weakening of **unstressed syllables**, especially the **weakening** and **centring** of their vowels, some of them moving towards the position of **a ਅ** and some disappearing completely; (5) change in the feature **voiced aspirate** of **g^h ਘ**, **j^h ਝ**, **$ḍ^h$ ਢ**, **d^h ਧ** and **b^h ਭ**; the loss of their **aspiration** in all positions and of **voice** in **word-initial** position; (6) the complicated consequences for **h ਹ** in different positions. What happened to **h ਹ** in some positions is apparent in Gurbani as well. But no **addhak** (ੱ) is used here. The presence of the **ਉਦਾਤ ਮਾੜ੍ਹਾ (ੱ)** and the absence of **addhak** (ੱ) indicate that the change which affected the language *slowly* over the following centuries had already started. But it was not fully apparent to necessitate the use of the **addhak** (ੱ). There *seems to be* no way of knowing at present whether the pronunciation of **g^h ਘ**, **j^h ਝ**, **$ḍ^h$ ਢ**, **d^h ਧ** and **b^h ਭ** was also affected when *SGGS* was written.

The name **ਹਲੰਤ ਮਾੜ੍ਹਾ** is also given to this symbol because it looks like the **halant symbol** used in Devanagari to mark a **consonant sound** not followed by a **vowel sound**. We did the same in Part 1 but clearly indicated that the use of this symbol is different in Gurbani.

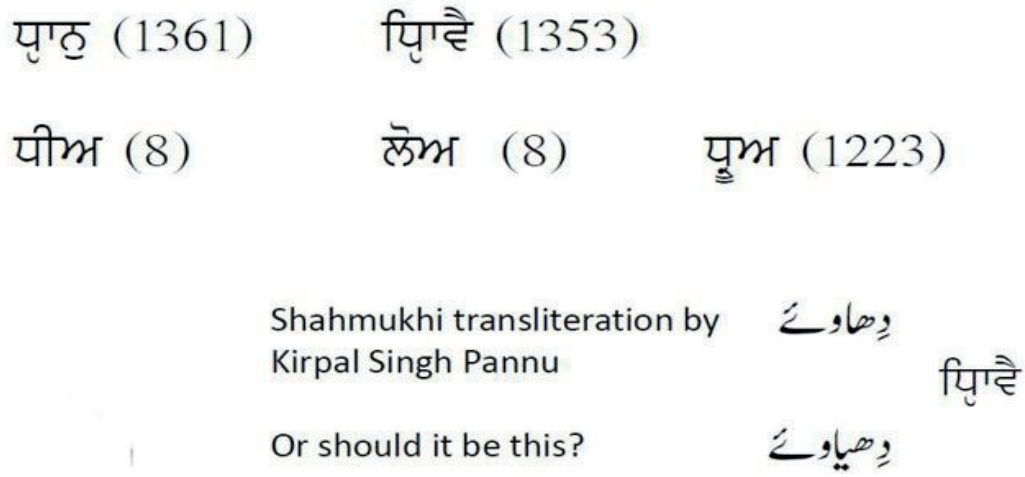
(4) Two vowel symbols with one consonant letter

In our chapter about Sahib Singh, we mentined a largely positive 1961 review of his **ਗੁਰਬਾਣੀ ਵਿਆਕਰਣ** by the great Sanskrit scholar Siddheshwar Varma.

Sahib Singh's own knowledge of Sanskrit was also fine. So both Sahib Singh and Varma were familiar with the Sanskrit verse metres, based on **light (ਲਘੂ)** and **heavy (ਗੁਰੂ) syllables**. Without getting into the details, we can say that this classification was based on the vowel sounds classified into **short (ਹ੍ਰਸਵ)** and long **(ਦੀਰਘ)** ones and also whether the syllable was open or closed. Some Panjabi "scholars" still insist on classifying the Panjabi metres in this way. They are successful *to some extent*, but not completely, because the changes in natural rhythm of Panjabi on which the metres are based are coming slowly like all lingusitic changes. It takes great intellectual courage to challenge the stranglehold of a tradition. The "scholars" not willing to use their brains and blindly following the tradition always come up aggressively with the arguments based on the logical fallacy known as "appeal to authority" – "Pandit A said this, Dr B said this, Professor C said this... Were they fools? Do you know more than they?" The tradition of free thinking and intellectual innovation prevailed in India until the coming of the Muslim Rule and later the Britsh Rule, which tried their best to kill it off. But this spirit refuses to die: Guru Nanak Dev and his mission are clear examples.

Varma praises Sahib Singh for posing "a challenge to the stupidity about metre". Sahib Singh did not analyse the metres in which the Gurbani compositins were written. The review was published during Sahib Singh's lifetime. So Sahib Singh surely read it agreed with it, because he reprinted it in the later editions of **ਗੁਰਬਾਣੀ ਵਿਆਕਰਣ**. All *SGGS* is written in poetic metres, which mostly follow the established verse metrical rules. But (and this is a significant "but"), these poetic compositions are meant to be sung in the traditional *ragas* of Indian classical music. Even the compositions to which no *raga* has been explicitly assigned are sung. Guru Nanak Dev and the later Gurus did not start the tradition of writing religious compositions to be sung in *ragas*. Saint Jayadeva (also known as Bhagat Jai Dev) wrote his

magnum opus Gīta Govinda in classical *ragas* about 300 years before Guru Nanak. ***When a poetic composition is meant to be sung, the requirements of music take precedence over the requirements of poetic metre and sometimes even the rules of spelling.*** Simply mentioning the name of the *raga* is not enough as we have said above in discussing the spelling of the word **ਧਿਆਵੈ**. The first picture on page 142 shows some words not only spelt in two different ways (even in the same line), but also "violating" the rules of Gurmukhi spelling. The first "challenge to the stupidity about metre" was posed by Guru Arjan Dev, who was an excellent musicologist and music composer. He was fully aware of the fact that the sound of **lax vowel ੁ** could not be prolonged. An effort to prolong it would result in the **tense vowel ੋ**. Conversely, the **vowel sound ੋ** uttered quickly would sound like **ੁ**. This prolonging and quickly uttering of the sounds is extremely common in singing, depending upon the *tāla* (rhythm) *laya* (tempo). Look at other pictures on page 140. **ੁ** and **ੋ** are very close to each other. So pronouncing one of them as the other in singing should be very common. It appears that the Gurbani compositions were sung in Guru Arjan Dev's time in certain *bandishes* set in ceratin *tālas* (rhythmic cycles) and *laya* (tempo), which have not come down to us. This seems to be the only explanation about the different spellings of some words. The Panjabi vowel sounds are no longer classifiable as **short** and **long**, but as **lax** and **tense.** We have argued about this in great length in Part 1. By spelling the word **ਗੋਵਿੰਦੁ** in this way, Guru Arjan Dev is giving the singer a freedom to pronounce it (*in this particular instance, but not elsewhere*) either as **ਗੋਵਿੰਦ** or as **ਗੁਵਿੰਦ**, depending upon the *tāla* (rhythm) *laya* (tempo) chosen by the singer. Any other explanation based on a badly understood and half-baked theory of verse metre can be challenged. As for Sahib Singh, he says about the use of the spelling **ਗੁਪਾਲ** on page 1223, "The real word is **ਗੋਪਾਲ**. Here it is to be read as **ਗੁਪਾਲ**." But he cannot be blamed for saying this honestly. An in-depth study of Panjabi phonetics and phonology took place later. But at most places, either **ੁ (◌ ੁ)** or **ੋ (◌ ੋ)** is used, as is clear from the first



picture on page 142. Both ੁ (◌ੁ) and ੂ (◌ੂ) are added to a single consonant letter only at a few places. There must have been a rerason for this.

(5) The ਵਿਸਰਗ symbol (ः)

This symbol used in the wods like **ਸੰਪੂਰਣਃ** represented a **light voiceless h** sound used in Sanskrit to mark some case endings. We need not do into the details.

Law of the Conservation of Ignorance

We have heard about the universal Law of the Conservation of *Energy*. But the Law of the Conservation of *Ignorance* is more universal among Indian intellectuals, the products of the Indian system of education that encourages rote learning and slavishly following established lines of thinking and discourages challenging old antediluvian views. Most modern Sikh scholars still stick to verse metres to explain Gurbani spellings *in totally illogical and inconsistent ways*, invoking concepts like **light** and **heavy** syllables (**ਲਘੁ ਮਾੜ੍ਹਾ** and **ਗੁਰੁ ਮਾੜ੍ਹਾ**).

The only conclusion we come to is that Guru Nanak Dev and Guru Arjan Dev were better linguists that these modern Sikh scholars.

It goes to the credit of Sahib Singh to have started a new way of studying Gurbnai scientifically by studying its *grammar*. He faced the limitations imposed upon him by the state of the development of the science of lingustic in his days. But his ***greatness of effort*** **(ਜਤਨ ਦੀ ਮਹਾਨਤਾ)** rather than ***greatness achievement*** **(ਜਿੱਤ ਦੀ ਮਹਾਨਤਾ)** will go on inspiring future linguists studying the language of Gurbani scientifically. Of course, human errors will continue being made by each scholar and corrected by some later scholars, ...and so on.

Is the Perso-Arabic script suitable for writing Gurbani

Guru Nanak Dev knew Persian and Arabic well and also the Perso-Arabic script used for writing these languages. He knew that the Arabic script was an excellent script *for writing Arabic*, whose phonological structure it represents perfectly. But the phonological features of the language in which he was writing his compositions *meant to be sung* was unsuitable for him. So he needed a different type if Indian script based on the Brahmi family, which historically developed in the area in which his language also developed. We have looked at some features of the language of Gurbani. No *unbiased* person who undestands the structure of the Perso-Arabic or the Urdu script (called Sahamukhi when usewd for writing Panjabi in Pakistan) and also the features of the language of Gurbani will try to defend the use of the Arabic script for correctly representing this language *for a scientific analysis.* Now let us consider the words given in the picture on page 144. We have already dealt with words like **ਧ੍ਯਾਨੁ** and **ਧ੍ਰਿਵੈ**. Words **ਧੀਅ**, **ਲੋਅ** and **ਧ੍ਰੂ** given in the picture have **ਅ** at the end, indicating the **prolongation** of the *last* **tense vowels (ਈ**, **ਓ** and **ਊ** respectively**)** *in singing*. Some modern Panjabi writers also use this device in their ordinary writings. No traditional verse metre requires this. Recently, Kirpal Singh Pannu published the transliteration of the complete text of *SGGS* in the Urdu (or Shahmukhi) script. An effort to make the text of *SGGS* available to those

who cannot read Gurmukhi is commendable indeed. But any serious linguist is bound to ask how *accurate* the Sahamukhi rendering is. The above picture gives his Shahmukhi transliteration of the word ਧਿਆਵੈ. But this transliteration fails to capture the fact that the Gurmukhi spelling of this word conveys the idea that the word can be pronounced *in two different ways.*

Summing up

It is known that the use of the Perso-Arabic script for writing Panjabi was started by the Muslim writer Sheikh Farid two centuries before Guru Nanak Dev. But Nanak, an astute linguist, found this script inadequate for his purpose. There is no historical evidence (yet) to help us decide whether he assembled the script now known as Gurmukhi, or he chose an existing one and refined it for his purpose. (A *Janamsākhī* says that he learn it from the Brahmin priest in his village). Either way, by using it to write his compositions, he gave an extremely valuable native script to Panjabi. He and Guru Arjan Dev effectively demonstrated that the salient phonetic and phonological features of their language could be represented *only* in Gurmukhi. Thanks to their pioneering efforts, Panjabi language and Gurmukhi script now look like having been "made for each other". The Pakistani writers of Panjabi use the Perso-Arabic (Sahamukhi) script for writing Panjabi. Many writers of Panjabi in undivided India did the same. Shahmukhi seems fine for writing Panjabi literature and for day-to-day use. ***But no serious linguist studying Panjabi linguistics can ignore Gurmukhi.***

An attempt has been made in this book to demonstrate this.

EPILOGUE

The publishers and I (the author) planned this book as our humble offering to Sri Guru Nanak Dev Ji. Our aim is to provide the future teachers of his language and script at an international level a *scientific* knowledge of some aspects of Panjabi and Gurmukhi to enable them to teach them to the young men and women born, brought up and educated in the societies where free and unimpeded growth of their personalities and intellectual capabilities is encouraged.

We assume that (1) Panjabi through Gurmukhi will be taught and learnt in the countries where the Panjabi-speaking people, especially Sikhs, have settled and (2) the dedicated teachers engaged in teaching this language and script will be able to understand the technicalities of the linguistic analysis presented here. Any properly educated person, especially a language teacher, willing to make a sincere effort can understand them. A linguistic analysis *is* technical, and it will be unprofessional to pretend otherwise. Even if these assumptions of ours are unrealistic dreams (and there will be many who will love to make this hasty and *ultra-cynical* judgement!), this effort is worth making.

In every civilised society, past and present, sciences like grammar, rhetoric, literary studies, philosophy, logic and mathematics have been, and are, cultivated *for their own sake* (i.e., without any tangible "practical" use in mind). This was done in ancient Greece, Rome, the Arab society in during its golden period, and in Ancient India until the invasions by Central Asian Turkish-speaking Muslims inspired by a fervent desire not only to loot India's riches but also to destroy its "infidel" and "un-Islamic"culture by burning the Hindu and Buddhist universities and libraries. Kandola (2016) documents the great achievements of Indian logicians before the Muslim rule unmatched anywhere until now.

But it has been a fate of great civilised societies in the past to fall victims to the barbarians greedy for the material riches of these societies and guided by a sheer blood-thirsty mentality or religious fanaticism. In such contests, the barbarian hordes, like the Central Asian Turks, specialists in the use of "fire and sword", invading India, are invariably victorious. In 1200 AD, during the Muslim Rule in Delhi, the University of Nalanda with a treasure of thousands of "un-Islamic" books was burnt and destroyed by Bakhtyar Khilji (one of the fanatical generals of the Delhi Sultanate). 58 years later, Hulagu Khan (Genghiz Khan's grandson) did exactly the same to the centre of Islamic learning in Baghdad. Some Buddhist and Hindu scholars (but I am not among them) believe that Hulagu did what the Muslims really deserved because of their acts of barbarism in destroying the "un-Islamic" cultures of learning in the countries they occupied. The British rulers of India, who put an end to the Muslim rule, practised a *more sophisticated, non-violent but more lethal form of barbarism*. They did their best to destroy India's native educational system and replace it by a system aimed at creating clerks with a slavish mentality and without any intellectual creativity. This system continues more or less intact in independent India. Rote learning and blindly following the established ideas is encouraged and originality and creativity are penalised. Foeticide of creativity in schools, college and universities is extremely common. Of course, some creative intellectuals do appear, not *because of* the system but *in spite of* it. The new "vote bank" political culture, giving "reservation" to certain communities for admission to institutions of higher learning, free education and scholarships and job appointments frustrates the really deserving people, who rush to the advanced countries in the West, where their talents are recognised and rewarded. Because of the political corruption prevailing in the institutions of higher learning in India, college and university departments and faculties are full of influential people who reached there because of "political connections", not because of their learning and talent. It should come as no surprise that many of them are not doing their teaching and "research" work responsibly.

While teaching English in a college in the Punjab, I got deeply interested in linguistics. Seeing no opportunity to study this subject in India, I came to the University of Manchester in 1978. As an M.A. student there, I concentrated on my mother tongue Panjabi. But my teachers spotted a "creative linguist" in me capable of making a contribution to the *science of general linguistics*. The University awarded me a scholarship to pursue my research. I am extremely grateful to my teachers – (the late) Professor W. Haas and (the late) Professor N.E. Collinge, who strongly recommended that I be awarded a research scholarship. God bless their souls! The results of my research appear in my books mentioned in my Preface and the References section on page 155 and in my journal papers and articles written in Panjabi. My research work on Panjabi is mentioned and frequently quoted as a contribuition to the *science of linguistics*. Though this books deals with Panjabi and Gurmukhi, I knowingly wrote it in English, to let *general linguists* in the world know about some aspects of the phonology of not only Modern Panjabi but also of the language and script used in Gurbani. The speakers of Panjabi who are capable of understanding my ideas can understand them in English. So there is no need to present them in Panjabi as well.

What *was* and *was not* included in this book

This book dealt only with the **phonology** (sounds and their distributions) of Modern Panjabi and Gurbani. I was unable to include **morphology** and **synatx** (construction of words and sentences) for two reason: (1) my book *Panjabi: A Comprehensive Grammar* deals with the morphology and syntax of Modern Panjabi in great detail. But a more detailed analysis of the phonology of Modern Panjabi was needed for this book, though some repetition from my earlier writings has been included at some places; (2) Sahib Singh has already presented a detailed analysis of the **morphology** and **syntax** of the language of Gurbani in his **ਗੁਰਬਾਣੀ ਵਿਆਕਰਣ** and his translation of *SGGS*. But, as I have already pointed out, his phonological analysis is faulty and

evasive at many places. His analysis of the syntax of the language of *SGGS* was done before the new developments in the science of linguistics, and there is a great scope for improvements in it. But this will require many years of serious research and analysis and a separate detailed book.

For example, consider

(1) **ਨਾਨਕੁ ਸਾਇਰੁ ਏਵ ਕਹਤੁ ਹੈ ਸਚੇ ਪਰਵਰਦਗਾਰਾ** (Page 660)
("Nanak, the poet, says this, O True Lord Sustainer")

(2) **ਕਰੇ ਕਰਾਏ ਸਭ ਕਿਛੁ ਜਾਣੈ ਨਾਨਕ ਸਾਇਰ ਇਵ ਕਹਿਆ** (Page 434)
("He acts, He causes to act, He knows everything; Nanak, the poet has said so.")

The following discussion is inevitably quite technical. You can either learn these technicalities from my book (Bhardwaj 2016) if you feel interested, or simply believe the analysis to be correct. In (1), the verb **ਕਹਤੁ** is in the **subjunctive verb** form (wrongly resgarded as the **"present tense"** form). **ਨਾਨਕੁ ਸਾਇਰੁ**, being the **subject** of the verb in this form, has the **ੁ** ending. In Modern Panjabi, one will say **ਨਾਨਕ ਸ਼ਾਇਰ ਇਹ ਕਹਿੰਦਾ ਹੈ**. But in (2), the verb is in the **perfect participle** form (wrongly regarded as the **"past tense"** form). The **subject** of the **perfect participle** verb form Sanskrit onwards until Modern Panjabi is either in the **instrumental case** form or is in the **oblique form** followed by the **postposition ਨੇ**. (This **ਨੇ** comes from the Sanskrit **instrumental case ending** *-ena*). A form which is not oblique is contrastively known as a **direct form**. In modern Panjabi, one will say **ਨਾਨਕ ਸ਼ਾਇਰ ਨੇ ਇਹ ਕਿਹਾ**. In the Western dialects of Panjabi (including Guru Nanak's mother tongue), the **postposition ਨੇ** is omitted *but the **subject noun** stays in he **oblique case** form*, indicating that the postposition **ਨੇ** was there in the past. So one will say **ਨਾਨਕ ਸ਼ਾਇਰ ਇਹ ਕਿਹਾ**. So in (2), the **subject ਨਾਨਕ ਸਾਇਰ** is in the **oblique cas**e form even without **ਨੇ**,

(as in a *Janamsakhi* sentence **ਮਰਦਾਨੇ ਰਬਾਬੁ ਵਜਾਇਆ, ਬਾਬੇ ਸਬਦੁ ਗਾਇਆ**). All this is discussed in detail in Bhardwaj 2016. Such constructions have been there in North Indian languages for thousands of years. Ram Singh (1930) described such constructions in Modern Panjabi as "passive in form but active in meaning". Now they are known as **ergative constructions**. The difference between the use of **ਹਉ** and **ਮੈ** (both translatable as "I") also involves **ergativity**. **ਮੈ** became **ਮੈਂ** later. A linguistic history spawning many centuries may be hidden behind these two words **ਹਉ** and **ਮੈ**, which is worth exploring. Since 1970, **ergativity** has been extensively studied in dozens of languages in the world. As we saw earlier (page 131-132), a noun in the **oblique case** form does not have **ੳ** at the end in *SGGS*. This type of syntactic analysis developed after Sahib Singh. So he could not make use of it. He wrongly regards **ਨਾਨਕ ਸਾਇਰ** in the **direct form** in (2) as being the addressee and thus in the **vocative** form in his commentary on *SGGS*. Even the most dedicated scholars are human after all. They all make mistakes unwittingly. These examples are included to give an idea that there is a great scope for a fresh **syntactic** analysis of the language of *SGGS* by a scholar trained in modern linguistic theory.

Guru Nanak Dev calls himself a **ਸਾਇਰ** ("poet"). He took the word *shāyar* from Persian. Needless to say, as a scholar of Persian, he pronounced the word correctly as the speakres of Persian did. But he did not find it necessary to add to his script a special letter for the Persian sound ***[sh]*** as was done at the close of the nineteenth century, when five letters "with dots underneath" (**ਸ਼**, **ਖ਼**, **ਗ਼**, **ਜ਼**, **ਫ਼**) were added to the Gurmukhi script, as shown in the tables in Part 1. It is not my business to say how the foreign words used in Gurbani without the letters "with dots underneath" *should* be pronounced today. Let the Sikhs decide this.

This study is *scientific – seeking knowledge for its own sake*. This is the mark of every society that is intellectually alive. Only an intellectually dead and decaying society indulges in barbarism suppressing scientific investigation.

Even if (contrary to my hope) no teacher of Panjabi and Gurmukhi uses it in the future, the book should be able to stand by itself, to inspire future *dedicated* scholars of Panjabi and Gurbani to carry on the work further. The greatest intellectual sin for a scientist is to claim that he or she has found a finite formula as a final solution to a problem. Keeping engaged in incessant **ਜਤਨ** (effort) to broaden the horizons of knowledge is the crowning **ਜਿੱਤ** (achievement) for a scientific investigator!

> *Only a fool looks for truth in a finite formulation; only a knave would want to acquire it without toil and heartache, Final truth is tentamount to stagnant knowledge; there is no substitute for self-correcting, progressive, ever-searching understanding. Dismiss your search for truth in a finite formulation and embrace the greatest human virtue, called Unending Search for Truth.*
>
> - LeShan and Margenau (1982:70)

REFERENCES

Bailey, T.G (1914). *A Panjabi Phonetic Reader*. London, Trübner.

Bhardwaj, M.R (1995, 2012). *Colloquial Panjabi.* London and New York: Routledge.

Bhardwaj, M.R (2014). *Colloquial Panjabi 2.* London and New York: Routledge.

Bhardwaj, M.R (2016). *Panjabi: A Comprehensive Grammar*. London and New York: Routledge.

Bhatia, T.J (1993). *Punjabi; A Cognitive-descriptive Grammar*. London and New York: Routledge.

Brar, B.S (2008) ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਵਿਆਕਰਨ: ਸਿਧਾਂਤ ਅਤੇ ਵਿਹਾਰ. Ludhiana: Chetna Prakashan.

Gill, H.S (1973). *Linguistic Atlas of the Punjab*. Patiala: Punjabi University.

Jain, B.D (1926*).* Phonology of Panjabi as Spoken about Ludhiana. Ph.D. Thesis, University of London.

Joshi, S.S (1978). The Phonology of the Verbal Phrase in Panjabi. Ph.D thesis, University of London.

Kandola, B.S (2016). ਭਾਰਤ ਦੀ ਦਾਰਸ਼ਨਿਕ ਪਰੰਪਰਾ ਵਿਚ ਵਿਗਿਆਨਕ ਤਰਕ: ਇਕ ਸਰਵੇਖਣ ਅਤੇ ਅਧਿਐਨ. Panjabi Vikas Manch UK.

Ladefoged, Peter (2001). *A Course in Phonetics*. New York: Harcourt College Publishers.

LeShan, L & H. Margenau (1982). *Einstein's Space and Van Gogh's Sky: Physical Reality and Beyond.* Brighton: Harvester.

Nabha, Kahn Singh (1998 one volume reprint). ਗੁਰੁਸ਼ਬਦ ਰਤਨਾਕਰ ਮਹਾਨ ਕੋਸ਼. Delhi: National Book Shop.

Shackle, Christopher (1982). A*n Introduction to the Sacred Language of the Sikhs.* London: School of Oriental and African Studies.

Singh, Bhai Randhir (1954). ਗੁਰਬਾਣੀ ਲਗਾਂ ਮਾਤ੍ਰਾਂ ਦੀ ਵਿਲੱਖਣਤਾ. Ludhiana: Bhai Randhir Singh Publishing House.

Singh, G.B. (1950). ਗੁਰਮੁਖੀ ਲਿਪੀ ਦਾ ਜਨਮ ਤੇ ਵਿਕਾਸ. Chandigarh: Panjab University Publication Bureau.

Singh, Harkirat (2011). ਗੁਰਬਾਣੀ ਦੀ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਤੇ ਵਿਆਕਰਨ. Patiala: Punjabi University.

Singh, Ram (1930). ਵੱਡਾ ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਵਿਆਕਰਣ. Amritsar: Partap Singh & Sundar Singh.

Singh, Sahib (1965). ਸ੍ਰੀ ਗੁਰੂ ਗਰੰਥ ਦਰਪਣ. Jalandhar: Raj Publishers. A PDF version is avilable for download from ***www.gurbanifiles.org***

Singh, Sahib (1995). ਗੁਰਬਾਣੀ ਵਿਆਕਰਣ (11th edition). Amritsar: Singh Brothers. (First edition 1939).

SOME PRE-PUBLICATION PREVIEWS

1 Gift for Transnational Panjabi Educationalists

Dr Mangat Rai Bhardwaj is a long standing friend and colleague since the 1980s. I learnt about his passion and professionalism in linguistics when he was working on BBC's *Hindi Urdu Bol Chaal* programme with Gordon Wells. This programme was being supported by a team from the Department of Language Development and Cultural Studies which I was fortunate to have formed and led at Handsworh College (now City & South College Birmingham). This stimulated our occasional conversation on developing a similar *Panjabi Bol Chaal* programme. Our educational journeys and literary interests were different but we have continued to discuss the theme of teaching and learning Panjabi language and Gurmukhi script abroad, especially in terms of the needs of the coming generations of Panjabis in general and Sikhs in particular. The younger Sikhs for whom Panjabi is not their everyday or common language, would have to consider learning Panjabi as their link language – if they are to communicate with one another across the world, and to gain authentic knowledge of Sikh literature, traditions and become familiar with major centres of Sikhism in India.

We have shared our views in public on the teaching and learning of Panjabi language and Gurmukhi script, including at events as for example the 2017 Panjabi language development conference held in Leicester. Obviously "Panjabis are a global transnational community transcending national boundaries, so is Panjabi language in Gurmukhi script. The status of Panjabi language varies significantly from it being one of the official languages of India, to an informal community language on the margins in diaspora… but our language has reached across the world with individuals, families, communities whether social/religious/cultural/trade/political…but it is struggling to enter mainstream

curriculum provision and gain a deserving status…However, efforts and campaigns of numerous individuals and groups including teachers, writers, academics and community activists some progress has been made in formalising the presence of Panjabi language in Gurmukhi script…Panjabis now live, learn and work in around 50 countries...the challenge of sustaining Panjabi language in Gurmukhi script is severe…almost all UK Panjabis by 2050 will be born/ brought up outside the Punjab/India. They will have little familiarity with Panjabi language in Gurmukhi script… the issue is what can be done to keep the language and script alive (Sangha, SS. The Tribune – Chandigarh, February 16, 2017)?

In this context, the work of linguists like Dr Bhardwaj is a valuable addition to the resource enabling teachers, preachers, readers of Guru Granth Sahib and general learners to enhance their competencies. He emphasises that Panjabi is a dynamic and adaptable language. To be able to read, write, speak, listen and understand Gurbani and other Sikh literature, it is essential to have working knowledge of Panjabi language and Gurmukhi script including the area of phonology (meaning sounds and styles) which is the core focus of this book. Dr Bhardwaj has already published his work covering related areas such as the construction of words and sentences. This book complements his previous work and adds to the resource so vital for enabling a systemic approach in teaching and learning – so critical for developing future teachers and learners. The newly developing schools and centres of higher education abroad should proactively build resources and reference books like this one, to support their students, teaching and research Staff.

Dr. Sujinder Singh Sangha OBE FRSA

Former Principal & CEO, Stockton Riverside College UK
Twitter: @SanghaDr

** Author's Note: Dr S.S. Sangha is an educationist, social activist, and author of several books and articles on Guru Nanak and Sikhism, Sikh and Panjabi Studies in Higher Education, and Panjabi Diaspora.*

2 An amazing book on the phonology of Modern Panjabi and *Gurbani*

I had the privilege to read the manuscript of *Panjabi Language and Script for the Coming Generations on the International Stage* by Dr Mangat Rai Bhardwaj, a seasoned linguist and an experienced teacher of Panjabi as a second language. It is an amazing book on the phonology of modern Panjabi and *Gurbani*. It deals with certain unique features of Panjabi language and Gurmukhi script. He strongly suggests that Panjabi is best learnt through Gurmukhi and Roman script is inadequate for its teaching and learning. Interestingly, the author contends that commonly accepted views that Panjabi is a phonetic language in which you write as you speak; and Gurmukhi being invented and developed by Guru Nanak and Guru Angad are erroneous beliefs. It is an essential reading and a text book for those interested in *Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji*. To benefit from the book you require concerted effort, motivation and inspiration.

Dr Ramindar Singh MBE DL

Email: ramindar.singh@ntlworld.com

** Author's Note: Dr Ramindar Singh is an economist, educationist, social theorist and activist with deep interest in Sikh diaspora, and author of several books and articles.*

3 Anatomy and Physiology of Panjabi Sound System and Script for the Future Generations.

The question facing Panjabi diaspora is one of extreme urgency and it pertains to how best to teach the language in the context of living in a non-Panjabi environment. This book takes a scientific approach and starts by looking at the basics and then building on it. It is rather like training a doctor who has to start by learning anatomy and physiology of the human body; we call it basic sciences. I am no linguist but can see how Dr Bhardwaj has dissected the linguistic basis of Panjabi which is crucial to gain a better understanding of how to teach it to future generations. It also looks at the change in our vocal structures when phonating Panjabi words. This to my mind is fundamental to successful teaching of Panjabi to children living in the West.

Although essentially written for teachers and students it is nevertheless of supreme interest to anybody who is connected to Panjabi. During my reading of it I have learnt an enormous amount but feel as if there is still so much more that I have missed.

I welcome this book as essential reading to understand our language and recommend that all should acquaint themselves with it.

Dr Mohinder Singh Gill MBChb. BPharm (Hons)
Email: drmohindergill@hotmail.co.uk

** Author's Note: Dr Mohinder Singh Gill is a successful doctor practising in the UK, where he arrived at the age of 13, and received his high school education and medical education. He is an eminent mainstream Panjabi poet and has published about half a dozen collections of his poems. His Panjabi poetry is distinguished by its cosmopolitan outlook, purity of diction and spontaneous rhythmicality.*

ਮੈਂ ਰਿਣੀ ਹਾਂ I am indebted

ਇਹ ਕਿਤਾਬ ਛਪਣ ਲਈ ਤਿਆਰ ਸੀ ਜਦ ਮੈਨੂੰ ਸਰਦਾਰ ਗੁਰਬਖ਼ਸ਼ ਸਿੰਘ ਸ਼ੇਰਗਿੱਲ ਜੀ ਦੇ ਦੇਹਾਂਤ ਦਾ ਦੁਖਦ ਸਮਾਚਾਰ ਮਿਲਿਆ। ਮੈਨੂੰ ਆਖ਼ਰੀ ਸਾਹਾਂ ਤਕ ਯਾਦ ਰਹੇਗਾ ਕਿ ਸਿੱਖ ਨੈਸ਼ਨਲ ਕਾਲਿਜ ਬੰਗਾ ਵਿਚ ਉਹਨਾਂ ਨੇ ਕਿਵੇਂ ਮੈਨੂੰ ਸਹਾਰਾ ਦੇ ਕੇ ਮੇਰੇ ਜੀਵਨ ਨੂੰ ਸੰਵਾਰਨ ਵਿਚ ਮੇਰੀ ਮਦਦ ਕੀਤੀ। ਪਰਮ ਪਿਤਾ ਪਰਮੇਸ਼ਵਰ ਉਹਨਾਂ ਦੀ ਆਤਮਾ ਨੂੰ ਸ਼ਾਂਤੀ ਬਖ਼ਸ਼ੇ!

This book was ready for publication when I heard the sad news of the demise of Sardar Gurbax Singh Shergill. I will remember till my last breath how in Sikh National College Banga he helped me shape my life and made me fit for my career. May the Almighty Father bless his soul!

This book is aimed primarily at the future teachers and learners of Panjabi at an international level. As the Panjabi-speaking people, especially Sikhs, are spreading all over the world, Panjabi is likely to become their *link language* for communication among themselves and with the centres of Sikhism in India for the next few generations. It is argued throughout the book that the Gurmukhi script is the best one for the teaching and learning of this language. A detailed phonological analysis of Modern Panjabi, including its *tone system*, and *rhythm* is presented and its systematic relation with Gurmukhi is demonstrated.

Then the insights gained from the phonological analysis of Modern Panjabi are applied to the Gurmukhi spelling system used in *Sri Guru Granth Sahib* and some of the conventions of the Gurbani spelling system discontinued in Modern Panjabi writing in Gurmukhi are analysed. It is demonstrated that a proper understanding of the phonological system of Modern Panjabi and how it is presented in Gurmukhi can help us understand the spelling system of Gurbani.

The in-depth analysis of the phonological system of Modern Panjabi will also be of interest to the scholars interested in Gurbani and Panjabi linguistics (including computational phonetic analysis of Panjabi prosodic features).