Exploring Gender-Specific Plural Markers in the Pashto Language

Saqlain Hassan
Assistant Professor, Department of English Linguistics and Literature, Riphah International University, Malakand Campus.
Email: saqlain.hassan@riphah.edu.pk ORCID: https://orcid.org/0000-0001-8861-6800

Zeeshan Ullah Swati***
BS (Hons) Scholar, Department of English Linguistics and Literature, Riphah International University, Malakand Campus. Corresponding Author Email: 58675@students.riphah.edu.pk

Muhammad Asim
BS (Hons) Scholar, Department of English Linguistics and Literature, Riphah International University, Malakand Campus.
Email: 58875@students.riphah.edu.pk

Ikram Ullah
BS (Hons) Scholar, Department of English Linguistics and Literature, Riphah International University, Malakand Campus.
Email: 58637@students.riphah.edu.pk

Saqib Ahmad
BS(Hons) Scholar, Department of English Linguistics and Literature, Riphah International University, Malakand Campus. Email: 58881@students.riphah.edu.pk

Abstract
This study aims to identify the masculine and feminine plural markers in Pashto. Pashto, an Indo-Iranian language spoken mainly in Afghanistan and Pakistan, has a rich and complex noun inflection system in which plural formation depends upon grammatical gender, phonological structure, and noun endings. For this purpose, the researchers (native speakers of Pashto) collected 120 Pashto nouns and analyzed them morphologically, separating root forms from bound morphemes. After a thorough analysis, the findings reveal eight major plural markers, categorised into four masculine markers (ونه *Una*, ان *Aan*, گـان *Gaan*, یان *Yaan*) and four feminine markers (ي *Ye*, یاني *Yaani*, گانيGaani, ی *Yai*), along with several exceptional cases and invariant forms. The findings of this study not only benefit linguists and learners of the Pashto language but also computational linguists who wish to develop software for linguistic analysis. It also contributes to the descriptive grammar of the Pashto language by systematically identifying and classifying Gender-specific plural markers and nouns.
Keywords: Pashto Language, Plural Markers, Masculine Plural Markers, Feminine Plural Markers, Gender-Specific Markers.

Introduction
Etymologically, morphology is a Greek-originated term used primarily by the German writer and philosopher Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1840) in the early 19th century. The term was used in biology, where "morph" refers to the structure or form of organisms. At the same time, in geology, it relates to the

study of land formations, their evolution, and configuration. Similarly, in Linguistics, morphology refers to the formation and structure of words (Clerk, 2017). Morphology is a field in linguistics that focuses on the structure of words, how they are formed, and their relationship to other words in the same language (Jones, 2003). ***It analyses the structure of words and their parts, such as stems, root words, prefixes, and suffixes. Morphology also examines parts of speech, intonation, and stress, as well as how context can change a word's pronunciation and meaning.*** Similarly, morphology refers to the study of how words are structured internally and the principles that guide word formation within a language (Celik, 2007; Yule, 2010). Additionally, morphology is the branch of linguistics that studies how words are made, what parts they are made of, and how unfamiliar words can be formed from them (Dominguez, 1991).

Morphemes

Languages around the world share the same morphological systems, in which a root word is usually attached to affixes to create different meanings. For example, in English, words like *play, player, played, and playing all share the base word play, plus suffixes* like *-s, -er, -ed*, and *-ing*. These smaller parts are called morphemes. They are the tiniest pieces of a word that still have meaning or a grammatical role (Lieber, 2009, p. 32). Morphemes are the building blocks of words. For example, *sheep* and *dog* are single morphemes. When we put them together, they make an unfamiliar word: *sheepdog*. (Schmid, 2015). There are two types of morphemes.

Free Morphemes

Free morphemes are morphemes that, without their relation to other morphemes, can be directly used in speech (Chaer, 2008). Meanwhile, Yule (2010) stated that free morphemes are morphemes that can stand by themselves as a single word. According to Bishop (2009), free morphemes are those that can stand alone as words. Free morphemes are further divided into two types: lexical morphemes and functional morphemes.

Lexical Free Morphemes. These are content words; they carry the main meaning in a sentence. Examples: *cat*, *run*, *blue*, *house*, and *table*.

Functional (Grammatical) Free Morphemes. These are structured words; they help connect or clarify the meaning of lexical words. Examples: *and*, *the*, *in*, *but, he*, and *they*.

Bound Morphemes

Bound morphemes are also called affixes, which can be classified into prefixes, infixes, and suffixes. English has only two kinds of bound morphemes: prefixes and suffixes. There are no infixes in English. A prefix is placed at the beginning of a word to modify or change its meaning, such as *re, un*, and *dis.* A suffix is an affix attached after a root (or stem or base), like *-ly, -er, -or -ist, -s, -ing*, and *-ed*. For example: *kind-ly, wait-er, book-s, walk-ed* (Katamba, 1994, p. 44). Furthermore, bound morphemes are divided into two types.

Inflectional Morphemes. It examines how words change form to express different grammatical meanings in a sentence, such as whether something is singular or plural or whether it happened in the past or present tense (Crystal, 1997). Inflectional morphemes do not create new meanings. These morphemes

never change the syntactic category of the words or morphemes to which they are attached (Bauer, 1988).

Derivational Morphemes. It is the study of how innovative words are made by adding prefixes or suffixes to existing words. According to Jackson (1985), derivational morphology involves creating new words by adding prefixes or suffixes to base words. For example, adding *-ance* to *accept* gives *acceptance*. Derivational morphology looks at how new vocabulary is formed by combining word parts. Derivational morpheme is a bound morpheme that changes the part of speech. The bound morpheme – *ness* is called a derivational morpheme. A derivational morpheme is the morpheme that produces a new lexeme from a base, while an inflectional morpheme does not create new meaning. These morphemes never change the syntactic category of the words to which they are attached (Bauer, 1988, p. 12).

The researchers in the current study aim to analyze and understand the rules and patterns that govern plural formation in Pashto. Pashto, an Indo-Iranian language spoken primarily in Afghanistan and Pakistan, has a rich and complex morphological system, particularly in its treatment of noun inflection (Hallberg, 1992; Hassan et al., 2025; Hassan, 2025). This study focuses on the strategies used to mark plurality in Pashto, including both regular and irregular forms. Pluralisation commonly occurs through the addition of suffixes such as *una, gaan, aan, yaan, yaani, gaani, ye, yai*, and variations based on gender, phonological structure, and noun endings. Masculine and feminine nouns often follow distinct pluralization patterns, and in some cases, irregular forms are used. This research aims to provide a detailed understanding of gender in Pashto morphology and contribute valuable insights to the field of linguistics.

Problem Statement
Pashto is both linguistically rich and structurally complex, yet it is underrepresented in linguistic research and academic publications. Even though millions speak it in regions like Pakistan and Afghanistan, Pashto has very few documented resources, especially in grammar, morphology, and syntax. This lack of comprehensive research has led linguists and researchers to ignore the language. While plural formation is a fundamental component of linguistic structure, one of the most overlooked aspects of Pashto grammar is gender-specific pluralization. Very little research has examined how pluralization functions in Pashto, especially in relation to gender. This gap creates a need for focused research to investigate whether pluralization in Pashto functions as a gender-specific phenomenon and how it contributes to the overall grammar of the Pashto language.

Significance of the Study
This study is important because it reveals, for the first time, that pluralization in Pashto is gender specific. By identifying and analyzing Gender-specific pluralization patterns, the research contributes original knowledge to the field of linguistics and addresses a critical gap in Pashto grammatical studies. The study's findings challenge prevailing assumptions about Pashto morphology and offer a new perspective on how gender operates within its plural system. Besides, this research is crucial because studies on Pashto grammar are rare, and a detailed analysis of its morphological structures is even rarer. By documenting and explaining gender-specific pluralization, the study provides a valuable

resource for linguists, language teachers, and other learners. It also enhances our knowledge for future comparative and descriptive studies, helping preserve Pashto's linguistic knowledge, increasing its accessibility and academic importance, and encouraging a view of Pashto as a language warranting further research.

Research Questions
1. What are the primary morphological rules used for forming Gender-specific plurals in the Pashto language?
2. How do gendered nouns in the Pashto language influence the selection of plural markers?

Research Objectives
1. To identify and describe the primary morphological rules used for forming Gender-specific plurals in the Pashto language.
2. To find out the influence of gendered nouns in the Pashto language on the selection of plural markers.

Research Methodology
Research Design
The research adopts a qualitative approach to examine the specific rules governing the masculine and feminine plural suffixes when added to nouns to distinguish between masculine and feminine nouns. The research focuses on the description, interpretation, and analysis of linguistic patterns in the Gender-specific pluralization of Pashto.

Data Collection
The data collection procedure involves researchers making observations. The researchers collected data through the observation of 75 participants from different spheres of society. To better understand and validate the collected data, the researchers sought guidance from experts at the Department of Pashto and Oriental Languages at the University of Malakand. After a thorough examination and rigorous selection, the researchers finally agreed to analyze 120 nouns.

Demography of the Participants
The number of overall participants was 75. The researcher first obtained written consent as part of the research ethics. The researcher enlisted the help of two female volunteers to observe the conversations of the female participants (due to a lack of access to housewives or females living in rural areas, the researchers selected only female students of Riphah International University, as access to them was convenient). Later, participants were allowed to speak on different issues without any interruption. The researchers served as silent observers. Their task was to identify words that were plural and used in the context of male or female discussions. The figure below shows the demographics of the participants:

Table 1:   *Demography of the Participants*

SN	Category	Statistics
1	Gender (Male/Female)	55/20
2	Age Range	>18 and <50
3	Education	Nil to Graduates

4	Mother Tongue	Pashto

Data Analysis

The researchers split the collected words into root and bound morphemes. All the bound morphemes were first identified as gendered masculine and feminine plural markers, with experts' guidance. Later, the researchers separated feminine and masculine plural markers in their respective tables, each with its own description and governing rules.

Results and Discussion

This section of the paper contains a detailed analysis of the selected data. The researchers in the section of the paper have analyzed and categorised the masculine and feminine Plural markers in the selected words, which provides valuable insight into these markers.

Masculine Plural Markers

1) *(Una)* ونه

Table 1:   *"Una" Masculine Plural Marker in the Pashto language*

Phonetic Transcription	Pashto and English Singular	Plural Phonetic Transcription	Pashto and English plurals	Root words
/trə/	تره uncle	/ʈrʊ.ɴɑ/	ترونه uncles	Tra
/ɴɪˑkɑ/	نیکه grandfather	/ɴːkʊˑɴə/	نیکونه grandfathers	Nika
/kɒr/	کور home	/kʊːrɔɴɑ/	کورونه homes	Kor
/wær/	ور door	/wærɔɴə/	ورونه doors	War
/meˑkh/	میخ nail	/mɪːkhɔɴə/	میخونه nails	Mekh
/ərmɑː ɴ/	ارمان wish	/ərmɑːɴʊɴə/	ارمانونه wishes	Arman
/lɑː s/	لاس hand	/lɑːsʊɴə/	لاسونه hands	Las
/θɑː r/	تار wire	/θərʊ.ɴə/	تارونه wires	Tar
/gelɑː s/	ګیلاس glass	/gela:sʊɴə/	ګیلاسونه glasses	Gilas
/mækh/	مخ face	/mækhɔɴə/	مخونه faces	Makh
/de.wɑːl/	دیوال wall	/dewa:lʊɴə/	دیوالونه walls	Dewal
/t ʃaiˑnɑk/	چینک teapot	/tʃaɪɴɑkʊɴə/	چینکونه teapots	Chenak
/kʌt/	کټ cot	/kʌtʊɴə/	کټونه cots	Kat
/sɜː (r)/	سر	/sɜːrʊ.ɴə/	سرونه	Sar

| /zɻə/ | زړه
heart | /zɪʊnə/ | زړونه
hearts | Zra |

Description of (Una) ونه

Una is a masculine plural marker that converts singular masculine nouns to their plural forms. By adding this marker to the original singular form, the word is transformed to indicate that it refers to multiple entities. This function extends not only to common nouns but also to proper nouns, allowing a broader application of the pluralization process. In addition to common and proper nouns, this plural marker can be used with both concrete and abstract nouns, effectively turning singular masculine nouns into plural masculine nouns across various contexts. This versatility makes *una* a crucial element of the language's grammatical structure, enhancing communication by clarifying the number of subjects being discussed.

e.g., By adding ونه(*Una*) with کور(kor) "home", it becomes کورونه(korona) "homes".

2) (Aan) ان

Table 2: *Aan Masculine Plural Marker in the Pashto language*

Phonetic Transcription	Pashto and English Singular	Plural Phonetic Transcription	Pashto and English plurals	Root words
/hə.lʌk/	هلک boy	/həlɑkɑn/	هلکان boys	Halak
/plɑːr/	پلار father	/plɑːrəɴ/	پلاران fathers	Plar
/maːr/	مار snake	/maːrəɴ/	ماران snakes	Mar
/gedə.ɻ/	ګیدړ jackal	/gedəɻaːɴ/	ګیدړان jackals	Gidar
/bʊ.t/	بوټ shoe	/bʊtaːɴ/	بوټان shoes	Boot
/əmlʌkh/	املخgrasshopper	/əmlʌkhaːɴ/	املخان grasshoppers	Amlakh
/ŋgər/	اینګر blacksmith	/ŋgəræɴ/	اینګران blacksmiths	Ingar
/khəmaː r/	خامار python	/khə.məraːn/	خاماران Pythons	Khamar
/lʌɻəm/	لرم scorpion	/lʌɻəmənaːɴ/	لرمانان Scorpions	Laram
/mætʃ/	مچ fly	/mætʃɒn/	مچان flies	Much
/ʃɑltaˈlu/	شلتالو Peach	/ʃɑltaːˈlɑn]/	peaches شلتالان	Shaltalu

Phonetic Transcription	Pashto and English Singular	Plural Phonetic Transcription	Pashto and English plurals	Root words
/ʊkh/	اوښ camel	/ʊkhɑN/	اوښان camels	Okh
/ka:rghə/	کارغه crow	/ka:rgha: N/	کارغان Crows	Kargha
/ʃrmækh/	شرمخ wolf	/ʃrməkha:N/	شرمخان wolves	Sharmakh
/d ʒɔwN/	ځوان young man	/dʒɔwa:NɑN/	ځوانان Young men	Zwan

Description of *(Aan)* ان

Aan functions as a masculine plural marker, effectively converting singular masculine nouns into their plural forms by appending it to the original singular noun. This grammatical tool plays a crucial role in a language's structure, allowing speakers to switch easily between the singular and plural forms, thereby enhancing clarity and understanding in conversations. In addition to its primary function with singular masculine nouns, the plural marker *aan* is also applicable to a variety of other noun types. It works seamlessly with common and proper nouns, as well as both abstract and concrete nouns. This versatility makes *aan* a valuable aspect of noun formation, as it helps to maintain consistency and coherence within the language.

e.g., By adding ان(*Aan*) with هلک(halak) "boy", it becomes هلکان(halakan) "boys".

3) *(Gaan)* ګان
Table 3:   ***Gaan Masculine Plural Marker in the Pashto language***

Phonetic Transcription	Pashto and English Singular	Plural Phonetic Transcription	Pashto and English plurals	Root words
/pɪˈʃʊ:/	پیشو Cat	/pɪ.ʃu.ga:n/	پیشوګان cats	Pesho
əLɔ:	الو potato	/əlɒga:n/	الوګان potatoes	Alo
/bɪ.zʊ:/	بیزو monkey	/bi.zu.ga:n/	بیزوګان monkeys	Bizo
/bətʃə/	باچا king	/bətʃəga:n/	باچاګان kings	Bacha
/dʒɒlə/	جولا spider	/dʒɔ:ləga:n/	جولاګان spiders	Jola
/bu.də/	بوډا old man	/Bu.dəga:n/	بوډ اګان old men	Boda
/ma: ma:/	ماما uncle	/ma:ma:ga:n/	ماماګان uncles	Mama
/pɹæŋ/	پرانګ	/pɹæŋa:n/	پرنګان	Praang

DIALOGUE SOCIAL SCIENCE REVIEW

Phonetic Transcription	Pashto and English Singular	Plural Phonetic Transcription	Pashto and English plurals	Root words
	leopard		leopards	
/bɑndə/	بنده believer	/bandɪ.gaːn/	بندیگان believers	Bandha
/melɔː/	مېلو bear	/melɔː gaːn/	مېلوگان bears	Melo
/pəθŋ/	پتنگ moth	/pəθŋaːn/	پتنگان moths	Pathang
/deŋ/	ډینگ crane (bird)	/deŋaːn/	ډینگان Cranes	Ding
/t ʃəɻə/	چاړه dumb	/tʃəɻəgaːn/	چاړاگان Dumbs	Chara
/lʌ.tɔː/	لاټو top (toy)	/lʌ.tɔːgaːn/	لاټوگان tops (toys)	Latu
/sʊ.rŋ/	سورنگ tunnel, Mine	/sʊ.rŋaːn/	سورانگان Tunnels, Mines	Surang

Description of (Gaan) گان

Gaan is a masculine plural marker that converts singular masculine nouns into their plural forms by adding it to the singular. This marker is versatile and can be applied to various types of nouns, including common and proper nouns, as well as both concrete and abstract categories. By using *gaan,* speakers can effectively transform nouns while preserving the original meaning and context of the words. This feature is an essential element of the grammar of languages that incorporate such markers, facilitating clearer communication and expression in both spoken and written forms.

e.g., By adding گان(*gaan*) with پیشو(pesho) "cat", it becomes پیشوگان(peshogaan) "Cats" پیشوگان =گان +پیشو

4) (Yaan) یان

Table 4: Yaan Masculine Plural Marker in the Pashto language

Phonetic Transcription	Pashto and English Singular	Plural Phonetic Transcription	Pashto and English plurals	Root words
/gwaˈiː /	غواي ox	/gwaɪˈɑːn/	غوایان oxen	Gwayi
/mʌlə/	ملا mullah	/mʌlɑːjən /	ملیان mullahs	Mula
/kəˈkɑː ri/	ښکاري hunter	/kəˈkɑːrɪən/	ښکاریان hunters	Khkari
/bæŋɡi/.	بانکي	/bæŋˈjaːn/	بانگیان	Bangi

	roaster		roasters	
/lʊˈwəʊ.nəɪ/	لیونے mad (person)	/ləʊəˈnɑːjən/	لیونیان mad (people)	Lewanay
/məˈdɑːri/	مداری conjurer	/məˈdɑːrɪən/	مداریان Conjurers	Madari
/gəʊˈwændi/	گاونډی neighbor	/gɔːˈwʌn.dɪ.ən/	گاوندیان neighbors	Gawandi
/qəˈsɑːbi/	قصابی butcher	/qəˈsæb.jən/	قصابیان butchers	Qasabi
/mɪs.ri/	مسری mason	/mɪsˈrɪjɑːn/	مسریان Masons	Misri
/tʃɑːsi/	چرسی weeder.	/tʃɑːsɪjɑːn/	چرسیان w.eeders	Charsi
/pə.reɪ/	پیر ے ghost	/pəˈraɪən/	پیریان Ghosts	Peray
/tjuːti/	طوطی parrot	/tʌθjən/	طوطیان Parrots	Tuthi
/hɑːdʒi/	حاجی pilgrim (one who has performed the Hajj)	/həˈdʒiːən/	حاجیان Hajj pilgrims	Haji
/zælmi/	زلمے Young man, youngster	/zælˈmɪən/	زلمیان Youths, Young Men	Zalmi
/tɔˈreɪ/	تورے black person	/tɔːrɪən/	توریان Black people	Toray

Description of (*Yaan*) یان

Yaan is a type of masculine plural marker that converts singular masculine nouns into their plural forms. This linguistic feature plays a significant role in the structure of the language, allowing for clear differentiation between singular and plural references. In addition to its primary function, *Yaan* can also be added to a variety of nouns. It is not restricted to just common nouns; it can be used with proper nouns as well. This versatility extends to both concrete and abstract nouns, making *Yaan* a valuable tool for expressing plurality across diverse linguistic categories.

DIALOGUE SOCIAL SCIENCE REVIEW

e.g., by adding يان(*yaan*) with غواي(gwayi) "ox", it becomes غويان(gwayaan) "oxen".

Feminine Plural Markers

1) (i/Ye) ي

Table 5: Ye/i Feminine Plural Marker in the Pashto language

Phonetic Transcription	Pashto and English Singular	Plural Phonetic Transcription	Pashto and English plurals	Root words
/stɑː ɡə/	سترګه eye	/stɑːgi/	سترګي Eyes	Starga
/wræz/	ورځ day	/wræˈzi/	ورځي Days	Wraz
/brɑː ˈkɑː /	برخه share	/brəˈki/	برخي shares	Brakha
/khæ.zə/	ښځه woman	/khæˈzi/	ښځي women	Khaza
/zɑː .kə/	زرکه partridge	/zɑːk.ji/	زرکي (Partridges)	Zarka
/lʌmˈbɑː rə/	لومبره fox	/lʌmˈbɑː.ri/	لومبري Foxes	Lumbara
/tʃɪnˈdæxə/	چيندخه frog	/tʃɪnˈdɑːkhi/	چيندخي frogs	Chindakha
/wɒnə/	ونه tree	/wəˈni/	وني Trees	Wana
/kɑː kˈhɑː /	کرښه line	/kɑːkˈhi/	کرښي Lines	Karkha
/tʃɑː ɡə/	چرګه hen	/tʃɑːdʒi/	چرګي Hens	Charga
/bʊˈsɑː rə/	بوساړه rick	/bʊˈsɑːriː/	بوساري Ricks	Bosara
/mæɡə/	مږه mouse	/məˈgiː/	مږي Mice	Maga
/spəˈɡɑː /	سپيره louse	/spægi/	سپيري Lice	Spaga
/zæˈkɑː /	ځخه pimple	/zæˈki/	ځخي Pimples	Zakha
/læktə/	لخته stick	/læktˈi/	لختي Sticks	Lakhta

Description of *(i/Ye)* ي

The marker *Ye* serves as a feminine plural marker, effectively transforming singular feminine nouns into their plural forms. This linguistic tool is versatile and can be applied not only to feminine nouns but also to common and proper nouns, as well as abstract and concrete nouns. By using *Ye,* speakers can ensure clarity and accuracy when expressing plurality in feminine contexts. This enhances communication and helps maintain grammatical consistency across noun types.

e.g., by adding ي (i/Ye) with سترگه (starga) "eye", it becomes سترگي (stargi) "eyes"

Special Case

Some masculine words may also end with this plural marker, showcasing a unique aspect of grammatical structure. For example, the word for "man" is سرے(saray), and its plural form, "men," is سړي(sari). Similarly, the word for "lion" is زمرے(zmaray), while the plural "lions" is زمري(zmarri). Additionally, this pattern extends to terms such as "grandson," which is نوسے(nwasay) in the singular and نوسي(nwasi) in the plural. The word for "dog" is سپے(spay), and its plural form is سپي(spi). These examples highlight how the plural forms of specific masculine nouns in this language share the same endings.

2) (Yaani) ياني

Table 6:   *Yaani Feminine Plural Marker in the Pashto Language*

Phonetic Transcription	Pashto and English Singular	Plural Phonetic Transcription	Pashto and English Plural	Root words
/kɔːr/	خور sister	/kɔːˈrjɑːni/	خورياني Sisters	Khor
/lɔːr /	لور daughter	/lɔːrɪˈɑːni/	لورياني Daughters	Lor
/trɔːr/	ترور aunt	/trɔːˈrɪɑːni/	تروریاني Aunties	Tror
/mɔːr/	مور mother	/mɔːrˈjɑːni/	مورياني Mothers	Mor
/dəˈwaɪ/	دوائي medicine	/dəˈweɪ.jə.ni/	دواياني Medicines	Dawai
/tʃɪˈtaɪ/	چټابي mates	/tʃɪˈtaɪəni/	چټاباني Mates	Chitai
/tʃuːti/	چټی holiday	/tʃʌtɑːjɑːni/	چهټياني Holidays	Chuti
/tʊˈlaɪ/	تولابي bedding	/tʊˈlaɪəni/	تولاياني beddings	<u>Tulai</u>
/ttʃɜːˈbɑːti/	چورباتی torch	/tʃʌbətjɑːni/	چورباتیاني Torches	Churbati
/ɪndrə/	اندرور sister-in-law	/ɪn.drəʊ.riːɑːːni/	ایندروریاني Sisters-in-law	Indror

/jɔːr/	یور brother's wife	/jɔːˈjɑːni/	یوریانی Brothers' wives	Yor
/ɪŋgʊə/	اینگور daughter-in-law	/ɪŋˈgʊərɪəni/	انگوریانی Daughters-in-law	Ingor
/keɪntʃi/	قینچی scissor	/keɪntʃjəni/	قینچیانی Scissors	Qainchi
/kʌn.dʒi/	کنجي key	/kʌnˈdʒiːəni/	کنجیانی keys	Kunji
/gɛnθraɪ/	گینتري hoe	/gɛnθriːɑːni/	گینتریانی hoes	Genthri

Description of (*Yaani*) یانی

The term *yaani* serves as a feminine plural marker, effectively transforming singular nouns into their plural forms by appending it to the original noun. This grammatical tool is versatile; it applies not only to singular common nouns but also to proper nouns, whether concrete or abstract. By using *yaani,* speakers can easily indicate plurality, enhancing clarity. This functionality is essential to the language, providing depth and versatility in conveying meaning while ensuring that both common and proper nouns are appropriately pluralised.

e.g., By adding یانی(yaani) with خور(khor) "sister", it becomes خوریانی(khoryaani) "Sisters".

Special Case

Word mor مور(mother) may have two plural Forms:

مور (mor) "mother" = موریانی (moryani) "mothers", and مور (mor) "mother", میاندی (miandi) "mothers".

In the second example, we can see that مور (mor) "mother" may also take another plural marker, یاندی (Yaandi).

3) ی *(Yai)*
Table 7: ***Yay- Feminine Plural Marker in the Pashto language***

Singular Phonetic Transcription	Pashto and English Singular	Plural Phonetic Transcription	Pashto and English plurals	Root words
/əˈgaɪ/	هگی egg	/əˈgaɪ/	هگی Eggs	Agayi
/dʒəˈnaɪ/	جینی girl	/dʒəˈnækiːaɪ/	جینکی Girls	Jenai
/mɑːˈgeɪ/	مرغی bird	/mɑːˈgaɪ/	مرغی Birds	Margai
/ləˈkaɪ/	لکی tail	/ləˈkaɪ/	لکی Tails	Lakai
/zæŋˈkaɪ/	زنکی caraway	/zæŋˈkaɪ/	زنکی Caraways	Zankai

/ʃæmʃətaɪ/	شمشتی tortoise, Turtle	/ʃæmʃətaɪ/	شمشتی Tortoises, Turtles	Shams htai
/lɒlə.kaɪ/	لولکی butterfly	/lɒlə.kaɪ/	لولکی Butterflies	Lolakai
/tʃæm.tʃəˈkaɪ/	چمچکی lizard	/tʃæm.tʃəˈkaɪ/	چمچکی Lizards	Chamc hakai
/tʃəʊlaɪ/	چولی skirt	/tʃəʊlaɪ/	چولی Skirts	Cholai
/dəʊˈlaɪ/	دولی palanquin	/dəʊˈlaɪ/	دولی Palanquins	Dolai
/səˈplaɪ/	سپلی slipper shoe	/səˈplaɪ/	سپلی Slipper shoes	Saplai
/ælʊˌtʃaɪ/	الوچی plum	/ælʊˌtʃaɪ/	الوچی Plums	Alocha i
/ʃpəˈleɪ/	شپیلی flute (Musical instrument)	/ʃpəˈleɪ/	شپیلی Flutes (Musical instrument)	Shpelai
/kɑː kəʊˈraɪ/	کرکوری Dove	/kɑːkəʊˈraɪ/	کرکوری Doves	Karkor ai
/əʊˈsaɪ/	اوسی Deer	/əʊˈsaɪ/	اوسی Deer	Osai

Description of *(Yai)* ی

Yai is a type of feminine plural marker that can convert singular feminine nouns into their plural forms. It applies to a variety of nouns, including common and proper nouns, as well as abstract and concrete nouns. This flexibility allows singular feminine terms to be transformed into plural forms seamlessly in Pashto. In some cases, singular and plural feminine nouns may share the same original form without any apparent change. These instances can be identified as singular or plural based on the sentence's context, particularly by the presence of the words (is ده) and (are دي). For example, in the sentence "This is a beautiful butterfly," which translates to ''دا خائسته لولکی ده'' and ''دا خائستہ لولکی دی'' (These are beautiful butterflies.), the marker clarifies the intended meaning based on the surrounding words.

Special Case 1

During the analysis, the researchers discovered an interesting linguistic pattern among words ending in the suffix "ی." Typically, these words maintain the same form whether they are used in a singular or plural context. However, there is an exception to this rule: the noun جینی(Jenai) translates to "girl." While it ends with the suffix "ی," its plural form is distinctly different; it becomes جینکی (jenakai), meaning "girls." This highlights a unique aspect of language: despite similar endings, some nouns can vary in their plural forms, adding a layer of complexity to how we understand and use these terms.

Special Case 2

The researchers noted that words that end with the plural marker "ی" retain the same form whether used in the singular or the plural. However, here is a word that, although it ends with the plural marker "ی" when used as a singular, in the

plural it does not remain the same; it ends with another plural marker: "كاني."

Singular Form
بودى (bodai) "old woman."

Plural Form
بوډيګاني (bodaygani) "old women."
Other examples are:
Grandma = ابى (abai), Grandmas = ابيګاني (abhaigani)
Skirt=چولى (cholai), Skirts =چوليګاني (cholaigani)
Bread =ﺩﻭﺩﻯ (dodai), Breads=ﺩﻭﺩيګاني (dodaigani)]

4) (Gaani) ګاني
Table 8:   *Gaani- Feminine Plural Marker in the Pashto language*

Singular Phonetic Transcription	Pashto and English Singular	Plural Phonetic Transcription	Pashto and English plurals	Root words
/nɪə/	نيا Grandmother	/nɪəˈɡɑːni/	نياګاني grandmothers	Nia
/mæmi/	مامي Aunt	/mæmɪˈɡɑːni/	ماميګاني aunts	Mami
/ həˈwɑ/	هوا Wind	/həwəˈɡɑːni/	هواګاني winds	Hawa
/ɡwɑː /	غوا cow	/ɡwɑːɡɑːni/	غواګاني cows	Gwa
/ʃædəʊ/	شادو monkey	/ʃædəʊɡɑːni/	شادوګاني monkeys	Shadoo
/kəˈrəʊ/	بنارو Meena (bird)	/kəˈrəʊɡɑːni/	بناروګانى Meenas (birds)	Kharo
/bʌˈdaɪ/	بوډى old woman	/bʌˈdaɪɡɑːni/	بوډيګاني Old women	Bodaii
/bɑː ˈlɑː /	بلا witch	/bəˈlɑːɡɑːni/	بلاګاني witches	Balaa
/tuː lɪə/	تولیه Towel	/tʊlɪjəˈɡɑːni/	توليګاني towels	Tuliya
/ʃəˈrɑː wə/	شوروا Broth	/ʃɔːrəˈwɑːɡɑːni/	شورواګاني broths	Shorawa
/ranɟa/	رڼا light	/ranɟaˈɡɑːni/	رڼاګاني lights	Ranra
/hɑl.wə/	حلوه Halva	/hæl.wəˈɡɑː.ni/	حلواګاني halva	Halwa
/kʊə.mə/	خورما date	/kʊəˈmɑːɡəni/	خورماګانى dates	Khurma
/weɪ.nə/	وينا speech/statement	/wəɪnəˈɡɑːni/	ويناګان Speeches/statements	Waina
/lɒb.jə/	لوبيا	/ləʊbɪəˈɡɑːni/	لوبياګانى	Lobya

Bean	beans

Description of *(Ganni)* گاني

Gaani is a feminine plural marker that plays a crucial role in forming plural forms of feminine singular nouns. This linguistic feature is not limited to just singular nouns; it also applies to common and proper nouns, as well as both abstract and concrete nouns. The use of *gaani* enriches the language by providing a systematic way to express plurality among feminine nouns. By facilitating this transformation, *Gaani* enhances clarity and precision in communication. Its versatility across different types of nouns demonstrates the language's complexity and depth, allowing speakers to convey nuanced meanings while adhering to grammatical conventions. Overall, *gaani* is an essential component of the language's morphological structure, enabling effective expression and comprehension.

e.g., by adding گاني (gaani) with the word نيا(nia) "grandmother", it becomes نياگانی (niagaani) "grandmothers."

Conclusion

This was a qualitative study designed to investigate the rules of Gender-specific pluralisation in Pashto. Data were collected through the observation of 75 native Pashto speakers in the Malakand division and were validated by an expert. The researchers, using morphological distinctions, separated the root words from their plural markers (suffixes), and concluded that when plural markers like ونه (*Una*), ان(*Aan*), گان (*Gaan*), and يان(*Yaan*) appear at the end of a plural noun or are added to a singular noun, the result is a masculine plural noun. The researchers also noted that when the plural markers ي(*I/Ye*), ياني (*Yaani*), گاني (*Gaani*), and ی (*Yai*) appear at the end of a plural noun or are added to a singular noun, the result is a feminine plural noun. This research has contributed significantly to understanding the distinction between masculine and feminine plural markers in Pashto. This study may guide computational linguists in developing software to analyse Pashto text and morphological distinctions, thereby helping them identify masculine and feminine plural markers.

References

Al-Hawtali, A. M., Zaib, K., & Al-Hossini, A. S. (2025). Voices in exile: Postcolonial identity and Muslim immigrant experience in Abdulrazak Gurnah's Admiring Silence. *Academy of Education and Social Sciences Review*, *5*(4), 579-588.

Bauer, L. (1988). *English word formation*. Cambridge University Press.

Celık, M. (2007). *Linguistics for students of English* (Book 1). EDM.

Chaer, A. (2008). *Indonesian morphology: A process approach*. Rineka Cipta.

Clark, E. V. (2017). Morphology in language acquisition. In *The handbook of morphology* (pp. 374–389). Wiley-Blackwell.

Domínguez, J. A. (1991). The role of morphology in the process of language acquisition and learning. *Revista Alicantina de Estudios Ingleses, 4*, 37–47.

Goethe, J. W. von. (1840). *Goethe's theory of colours*. John Murray.

Hallberg, G. D. (1992). *Sociolinguistic survey of northern Pakistan volume 4: Pashto, Waneci, Ormuri*—National Institute of Pakistan Studies, Quaid-i-

Azam University; Summer Institute of Linguistics.

Hassan, S. (2025). Introducing Linguamorphosis: A new concept for real-time language contact and development in the 21st century. *International Premier Journal of Languages & Literature, 3*(3), 842–849. https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.17861595

Hassan, S., Yousaf, M., Ahmad, F. H., Khan, A., & Ali, S. (2025). Morphological Linguamorphosis: The impact of language contact on English loanwords in Pashto. *Journal of Social Signs Review, 3*(11), 113–121. https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.17699605

Jones, D. (2003). *English Pronouncing Dictionary*. Cambridge University Press.

Katamba, F. (1994). *Morphology: Modern linguistics*. Macmillan Press.

Lieber, R. (2009). *Introducing morphology*. Cambridge University Press.

Schmid, H.-J. (2015). Morphology. In N. Braber, L. Cummings, & L. Morrish (Eds.), *Exploring language and linguistics* (pp. 77–110). Cambridge University Press.

WAHAB, U., FAZAL, R., ROHAIL, K., & HILAL, A. (2025). Redefining identity: A critical analysis of transgender representation in Khuda Mera Bhi Hai. *JOURNAL FOR SOCIAL SCIENCE ARCHIVES Учредители: Ali Institute of Research & Skills Development, 3*(1), 833-844.

Yule, G. (2010). *The study of language* (4th ed.). Cambridge University Press.

Zaib, K., & Al-Hawtali, A. M. (2025). The literary cartography of East Africa in Abdulrazak Gurnah's Paradise: A study through critical cartography and postcolonial spatial theory. *Dialogue Social Science Review (DSSR), 3*(11), 1-16.

Zaib, K., Ahmed, S., & Al Murshidi, G. (2025). Exposed Online, Endangered Offline: The Intersection of Social Media Presence and Gendered Violence in Pakistan. *Liberal Journal of Language & Literature Review, 3*(3), 1243-1265.

Shen, Z., Zhao, M., & Zaib, K. (2024). Cultural aesthetics in language use: Examining expressive elements in novel, short story, and movie communication. *Cultura: International Journal of Philosophy of Culture and Axiology, 21*(5), 1-21.