



Exploring Gender-Specific Plural Markers in the Pashto Language

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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 (*Una*ونه, *Aan*ان, *Gaan*گان, *Yaan*يان) and four feminine markers (*Ye*ي, *Yaani*ياني, *Gaani*گاني, *Yai*ي), 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	/tɾʊ.nə/	ترونه uncles	Tra
/nɾ'ka/	نيکه grandfather	/n:kʊ'nə/	نيکونه grandfathers	Nika
/kɔr/	کور home	/kʊ:rənə/	کورونه homes	Kor
/wær/	ور door	/wærənə/	ورونه doors	War
/me'kh/	ميخ nail	/mɪ:khənə/	ميخونه nails	Mekh
/ərma:n/	ارمان wish	/ərma:nənə/	ارمانونه wishes	Arman
/la:s/	لاس hand	/la:sənə/	لاسونه hands	Las
/θa:r/	تار wire	/θəɾʊ.nə/	تارونه wires	Tar
/gela:s/	گيلاس glass	/gela:sənə/	گيلاسونه glasses	Gilas
/mækh/	مخ face	/mækhənə/	مخونه faces	Makh
/de.wa:l/	ديوال wall	/dewa:lənə/	ديوالونه walls	Dewal
/tʃai'nak/	چينک teapot	/tʃaɪnəkənə/	چينکونه teapots	Chena k
/kət/	کت cot	/kətənə/	کتونه cots	Kat
/sɜ:(r)/	سر	/sɜ:rʊ.nə/	سرونه	Sar



/z.ɬə/	زره heart	/zɬʊNə/	زرونه hearts	Zra
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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	and Plural Transcription	Phonetic Transcription	Pashto and English plurals	Root words
/hə.lək/	هلک boy	/hələkən/	هلکان	boys	Halak
/plɑ:r/	پلار father	/plɑ:rən/	پلاران	fathers	Plar
/ma:r/	مار snake	/ma:rən/	ماران	snakes	Mar
/gedə.ɬ/	گيدر jackal	/gedəɬɑ:n/	گيدران	jackals	Gidar
/bu.t/	بوت shoe	/bʊtɑ:n/	بوتان	shoes	Boot
/əmləkʰ/	املخ grasshopper	/əmləkʰɑ:n/	املخان grasshoppers		Amlakh
/ɲgər/	اينگر blacksmith	/ɲgərən/	اينگران blacksmiths		Ingar
/khəma:r/	خامار python	/khə.məra:n/	خاماران Pythons		Khamar
/lɬ.ɬəm/	لرم scorpion	/lɬ.ɬəmənɑ:n/	لرمانان Scorpions		Laram
/mætʃ/	مچ fly	/mætʃən/	مچان flies		Much
/ʃaltɑ'lu/	شلتالو Peach	/ʃaltɑ:'lan/	شلتالان peaches		Shaltalu
/ʊkh/	اوبن Okh	/ʊkʰɑn/	اوبنان		Okh



	camel		camels	
/ka:rghə/	کارغه crow	/ka:rgha:n/	کارغان Crows	Kargha
/ʃrmækʰ/	شرمخ wolf	/ʃrmækʰa:n/	شرمخان wolves	Sharma kh
/dʒɔwn/	خوان young man	/dʒɔwa:nən/	خوانان 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 هلك (halak) “boy”, it becomes هلكان (halakan) “boys”.

3) (Gaan) گان

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
/pɪʃu:/	پیشو Cat	/pɪ.fu.ga:n/	پیشوگان cats	Pesho
əLɔ:	الو potato	/əlɔga:n/	الوگان potatoes	Alo
/bi.zu:/	بیزو monkey	/bi.zu.ga:n/	بیزوگان monkeys	Bizo
/bətʃə/	باچا king	/bətʃəga:n/	باچاگان kings	Bacha
/dʒɔlə/	جولا spider	/dʒɔ:ləga:n/	جولاگان spiders	Jola
/bu.də/	بودا old man	/Bu.dəga:n/	بوداگان old men	Boda
/ma:ma:/	ماما uncle	/ma:ma:ga:n/	ماماگان uncles	Mama
/pɪæŋ/	پرانگ leopard	/pɪæŋa:n/	پرانگان leopards	Praang



/bandə/	بنده believer	/bandi.ga:n/	بنديگان believers	Bandha
/melɔ:/	مېلو bear	/melɔ: ga:n/	مېلوگان bears	Melo
/pəθŋ/	پتنګ moth	/pəθŋa:n/	پتنګان moths	Pathang
/deŋ/	ډينګ crane (bird)	/deŋa:n/	ډينګان Cranes	Ding
/tʃə.ɪə/	چاره dumb	/tʃə.ɪəga:n/	چاراگان Dumbs	Chara
/lɑ.tɔ:/	لاتو top (toy)	/lɑ.tɔ:ga:n/	لاتوگان tops (toys)	Latu
/su.rŋ/	سورنگ tunnel, Mine	/su.rŋa:n/	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 پېشو (*pesho*) “cat”, it becomes پېشوگان (*peshogaan*) “Cats”
پېشوگان = گان + پېشو

4) (Yaan) يان

Table 4: *Yaan Masculine Plural Marker in the Pashto language*

Phonetic Transcription	Pashto and English Singular	Plural Transcription	Phonetic Transcription	Pashto and English plurals	Root words
/gwa'i:/	غواي ox	/gwaɪ'a:n/		غوايان oxen	Gwayi
/mʌlə/	ملا mullah	/mʌlɑ:jən /		مليان mullahs	Mula
/kə'ka:ri/	بنڪاري hunter	/kə'ka:riən/		بنڪاريان hunters	Khkari
/bæŋgi/.	بانګي roaster	/bæŋ'ja:n/		بانګيان roasters	Bangi
/lʊ'wəʊ.nəɪ/	ليونے lion	/ləʊə'na:jən/		ليونيان lion	



	mad (person)		mad (people)	Lewana y
/mə'da:ri/	مداری conjurer	/mə'da:riən/	مداریان Conjurers	Madari
/gəu'wændi/	گاوندی neighbor	/gə:'wʌn.di.ən/	گاوندیان neighbors	Gawandi
/qə'sa:bi/	قصابی butcher	/qə'sæb.jən/	قصابیان butchers	Qasabi
/mis:ri/	مسری mason	/mis'rija:n/	مسریان Masons	Misri
/tʃa:si/	چرسی weeder.	/tʃa:sija:n/	چرسیان weeders	Charsi
/pə:rei/	پیرے ghost	/pə'ra:ən/	پیریان Ghosts	Peray
/tju:ti/	طوطی parrot	/tʌθjən/	طوطیان Parrots	Tuthi
/hɑ:dʒi/	حاجی pilgrim (one who has performed the Hajj)	/hə'dʒi:ən/	حاجیان Hajj pilgrims	Haji
/zæلمي/	زلمے Young man, youngster	/zæl'mi:ən/	زلمیان Youths, Young Men	Zalmi
/tɔ'rei/	تورے black person	/tɔ:ri:ən/	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.

e.g., by adding یان (*yaan*) with غوای (*gwayi*) "ox", it becomes غویان (*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 Transcription	Phonetic Pashto and English plurals	Root words
/sta:gə/	سترگه eye	/sta:gi/	سترگي Eyes	Starga
/wræz/	ورخ day	/wræ'zi/	ورخي Days	Wraz
/bra:'ka:/	برخه share	/brə'ki/	برخي shares	Brakha
/khæ.zə/	بنځه woman	/khæ'zi/	بنځي women	Khaza
/za:kə/	زرکه partridge	/za:k.ji/	زرکي (Partridges)	Zarka
/lɑm'ba:rə/	لومبره fox	/lɑm'ba:ri/	لومبري Foxes	Lumbara
/tʃin'dæxə/	چيندځه frog	/tʃin'da:khi/	چيندځي frogs	Chindakha
/wɒnə/	ونه tree	/wə'ni/	وني Trees	Wana
/ka:k'ha:/	کرينه line	/ka:k'hi/	کريني Lines	Karkha
/tʃa:gə/	چرگه hen	/tʃa:dʒi/	چرگي Hens	Charga
/bu'sa:rə/	بوساره rick	/bu'sa:ri:/	بوساري Ricks	Bosara
/mæɡə/	مړه mouse	/mə'gi:/	مري Mice	Maga
/spə'ga:/	سپړه louse	/spægi/	سپري Lice	Spaga
/zæ'ka:/	خځه pimple	/zæ'ki/	خځي Pimples	Zakha
/læktə/	لخته stick	/lækt'i/	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 *سره* (saray), and its plural form, "men," is *سري* (sari). Similarly, the word for "lion" is *زمره* (zmaray), while the plural "lions" is *زمرې* (zmarri). Additionally, this pattern extends to terms such as "grandson," which is *نوسه* (nwasay) in the singular and *نوسي* (nwasi) in the plural. The word for "dog" is *سپه* (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) يانې

Table 6: Yaani Feminine Plural Marker in the Pashto Language

Phonetic Transcription	Pashto English Singular	and Plural Transcription	Pashto English Plural	Root words
/kɔ:r/	خور sister	/kɔ:'rjɑ:ni/	خوريانې Sisters	Khor
/lɔ:r/	لور daughter	/lɔ:ri'ɑ:ni/	لوريانې Daughters	Lor
/trɔ:r/	ترور aunt	/trɔ:'riɑ:ni/	تروريانې Aunties	Tror
/mɔ:r/	مور mother	/mɔ:r'jɑ:ni/	موريانې Mothers	Mor
/də'wai/	دوائې medicine	/də'wei.jə.ni/	دويانې Medicines	Dawai
/tʃi'tai/	چټابې mates	/tʃi'taiəni/	چټايانې Mates	Chitai
/tʃu:ti/	چټې holiday	/tʃʌtɑ:jɑ:ni/	چټيانې Holidays	Chuti
/tu'lai/	تولابې bedding	/tu'laiəni/	تولايانې beddings	<u>Tulai</u>
/tʃɜ:'bɑ:ti/	چورباتې torch	/tʃʌbətjɑ:ni/	چورباتيانې Torches	Churbati
/indrə/	اندرور sister-in-law	/in.drəʊ.ri:ɑ:ni/	ايندرويانې Sisters-in-law	Indror
/jɔ:r/	يور brother's wife	/jɔ:'jɑ:ni/	يوريانې Brothers'	Yor



/ɪŋgʊə/	اينگور daughter-in-law	/ɪŋ'gʊərɪəni/	انگوريانې Daughters-in-law	Ingor
/kɛmʈʃi/	قینچی scissor	/kɛmʈʃjəni/	قینچيانې Scissors	Qainchi
/kʌn.dʒi/	کنجی key	/kʌn'dʒi:əni/	کنجيانې keys	Kunji
/gɛnθraɪ/	گینتری hoe	/gɛnθri:ɑ:ni/	گینتریانې hoes	Genthri

Description of (Yaani) يانې

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 يانې(yaani) with خور(khor) “sister”, it becomes خوريانې(khoryaani) “Sisters”.

Special Case

Word مور (mother) may have two plural Forms:

مور (mor) “mother” = موريانې (moryani) “mothers”, and مور (mor) “mother”, مياندى (miandi) “mothers”.

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

3) (Yai) ي

Table 7: *Yay- Feminine Plural Marker in the Pashto language*

Singular Transcription	Phonetic	Pashto English Singular	and Plural Phonetic Transcription	Pashto English plurals	and Root words
/ə'gai/		هگى egg	/ə'gai/	هگى Eggs	Agayi
/dʒə'nai/		جینى girl	/dʒə'næki: :ai/	جینکى Girls	Jenai
/ma:'geɪ/		مرغى bird	/ma:'gai/	مرغى Birds	Margai
/lə'kaɪ/		لكى tail	/lə'kaɪ/	لكى Tails	Lakai
/zæŋ'kaɪ/		زنكى caraway	/zæŋ'kaɪ/	زنكى Caraways	Zankai
/ʃæmfətai/		شمشتى tortoise, Turtle	/ʃæmfətai/	شمشتى Tortoises, Turtles	Shamshtai



/lɒlə.kai/	لولكى butterfly	/lɒlə.kai/	لولكى Butterflies	Lolakai
/tʃæm.tʃə'kai/	چمچكى lizard	/tʃæm.tʃə' kai/	چمچكى Lizards	Chamc hakai
/tʃəʊlai/	چولى skirt	/tʃəʊlai/	چولى Skirts	Cholai
/dəʊ'lai/	ډولى palanquin	/dəʊ'lai/	ډولى Palanquins	Dolai
/sə'plai/	سپلى slipper shoe	/sə'plai/	سپلى Slipper shoes	Saplai
/ælu,tʃai/	الوچى plum	/ælu,tʃai/	الوچى Plums	Alochai
/ʃpə'lei/	شپىلى flute (Musical instrument)	/ʃpə'lei/	شپىلى Flutes (Musical instrument)	Shpelai
/ka:kəʊ'rai/	كركورى Dove	/ka:kəʊ'r ai/	كركورى Doves	Karkor ai
/əʊ'sai/	اوسى Deer	/əʊ'sai/	اوسى Deer	Osai

Description of (Yai) ى

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 ډد) and (are ډي). For example, in the sentence "This is a beautiful butterfly," which translates to "دا خائسته لولكى ده" and "دا خائسته لولكى ډي" (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 "ى." 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 جينى (Jenai) translates to "girl." While it ends with the suffix "ى," its plural form is distinctly different; it becomes جينكى (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 "ى" 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 "ى" when used as a singular, in the plural it does not remain the same; it ends with another plural marker: "گانى."

Singular Form



بودی (bodai) “old woman.”

Plural Form

بودیگانی (bodaygani) “old women.”

Other examples are:

Grandma = اباي (abai), Grandmas = ابايگاني (abhaigani)

Skirt = چولي (cholai), Skirts = چوليگاني (cholaigani)

Bread = دودي (dodai), Breads = دوديگاني (dodaigani)

4) (Gaani) گاني

Table 8: Gaani- Feminine Plural Marker in the Pashto language

Singular Transcription	Phonetic	Pashto and English Singular	Plural Phonetic Transcription	Pashto and English plurals	Root words
/niə/		نيا Grandmother	/niə'ga:ni/	نياگاني grandmothers	Nia
/mæmi/		مامي Aunt	/mæmi'ga:ni/	ماميگاني aunts	Mami
/hə'wə/		هوا Wind	/həwə'ga:ni/	هواگاني winds	Hawa
/gwa:/		غوا cow	/gwa:ga:ni/	غواگاني cows	Gwa
/ʃædəu/		شادو monkey	/ʃædəuga:ni/	شادوگاني monkeys	Shadoo
/kə'rəu/		بڼارو Meena (bird)	/kə'rəuga:ni/	بڼاروگاني Meenas (birds)	Kharo
/bɒ'dai/		بودی old woman	/bɒ'daiga:ni/	بودیگاني Old women	Bodaii
/ba:'la:/		بلا witch	/bə'la:ga:ni/	بلاگاني witches	Balaa
/tu:lɪə/		توليه Towel	/tɒljə'ga:ni/	توليهگاني towels	Tuliya
/ʃə'ra:wə/		شوروا Broth	/ʃə:rə'wa:ga:n i/	شورواگاني broths	Shoraw a
/ranɔɑ/		رنا light	/ranɔɑ'ga:ni/	رناگاني lights	Ranra
/həl.wə/		حلوه Halva	/həl.wə'ga:n i/	حلواگاني halva	Halwa
/kuə.mə/		خورما date	/kuə'ma:gəni/	خورماگاني dates	Khurm a
/weɪ.nə/		وينا speech/statement	/wəɪnə'ga:ni/	ويناگان Speeches/statements	Waina
/lɒb.jə/		لوبيا Bean	/lɒbɪə'ga:ni/	لوبياگاني beans	Lobyia



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 نياگاني (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 ي (*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.

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Vol. 4 No. 3 (March) (2026)

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