



The Phonological Process in the Plurality of Pashto Nouns

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ABSTRACT

This research aims to provide a comprehensive representation of the intricate phonological processes involved in Pashto noun pluralization. The study focuses on identifying these phonological processes, examining the patterns of plural formation, and understanding their implications for Pashto's phonological structure. To obtain the objectives of the study, the researchers collected the data from the native speakers of Pashto especially joined the elders. Along with this, the data were collected from Pashto books, magazines and dictionaries followed by the discussion of experts. The finding of the study showed that Pashto carries complicated pluralization of noun phonologically. It revealed that there are nouns having single pattern, two patterns, three patterns, four patterns and some nouns even don't carry plural form. This complexity underscores Pashto's versatility conveying precise meanings and contextual differences through diverse pluralization forms, distinguishing it from other languages.



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INTRODUCTION

Background of the study

The study of plural noun formation stands as a pivotal area within Pashto linguistics, demanding comprehensive examination. A profound exploration is imperative due to Pashto's standing as an Indo-European language renowned for its intricate phonological traits, exposing a multifaceted structure dictating noun pluralization. This work meticulously delves into the linguistic evolution of plural nouns within Pashto's phonological realm. By methodically dissecting these intricacies, this research seeks to unveil the fundamental phonological patterns and mechanisms that underpin this crucial facet of the language, contributing significantly to our understanding of Pashto's linguistic intricacies related to its noun pluralization. Tegey and Robson (1996) assert that Pashto holds a primary position in

Afghanistan and enjoys widespread usage in Pakistan. Over half of Afghanistan's populace, an estimated 7,500,000 individuals, consider it their first language, while approximately 90% of the Northwest Frontier Province's (now Khyber Pakhtunkhwa) 14,000,000 residents in Pakistan are Pashto speakers. Karachi has a community exceeding two million native Pashto speakers, and there are around 50,000 individuals in Iran who converse in Pashto as their mother tongue. Additionally, Pashto is prevalent in Baluchistan, a region situated directly south of central Afghanistan within Pakistan.

The Pashto-speaking community identifies themselves as Pashtuns or Pathans worldwide. Historically entrenched, Pashto language represents a distinct civilization spanning five millennia, characterized by robust principles, ethics, and customs. The close ties between the Pashtuns and their cultural ethos, portraying them as stalwarts on the global stage (Mehmood, et al., 2022). Pashto, an Indo-Iranian language originating from the east, boasts a speaker base ranging between forty to fifty million individuals. In Afghanistan, designated as one of the country's two national languages, Pashto comprises five primary dialects (Rahman & Bukhari, 2014). It thrives as a native tongue in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and is prevalent in various localities in Baluchistan. Despite its significance, Pashto hasn't received substantial attention in research endeavours. Socioeconomic and cultural influences have led to the division of Pashto into two main dialects: Qandahari and Khattak (Munir, 2016).

Pashto, a Western Iranian language, traces its lineage back to Avestan roots. Initially, in the eighteenth century, its unique blend of sounds and grammatical structures led scholars to speculate on its origins, suggesting a fusion of Semitic and Indic influences. However, it was Darmesteter in 1888 who definitively revealed its Iranian origins while highlighting the incorporation of Indo features. Presently, around 6,000,000 people in Afghanistan and Pakistan utilize four distinct Pashto dialects (Henderson, 1983). This study focuses on the Yousafzai dialect, renowned for its usage in literary works. Pashto stands as a major language in both Afghanistan and Pakistan, boasting a nuanced phonological system that intricately governs noun pluralization. The study delves into the phonological processes specifically related to the formation of plural nouns in Pashto. Unravelling these intricacies not only enriches our understanding of Pashto's morphology but also offers profound insights into the language's broader linguistic framework.

Research Objectives

1. To identify the phonological processes involved in the formation of plural nouns in Pashto.
2. To analyse the patterns and regularities in the pluralization of Pashto nouns.
3. To examine the effects of these phonological processes on the phonological structure of Pashto nouns.

Significance of the Study

This study explores the understudied phonological components of Pashto linguistics, making major linguistic advancements. It advances our understanding of Pashto's intricate structural details and aids in the language's survival. Additionally, it is useful for translating, creating resources, and teaching languages, which supports initiatives at language revitalization. In the end, it provides useful understandings of linguistic dynamics and processes.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Pashto classified within the Indo-European language family, holds prominence in regions across Afghanistan and Pakistan. Pashto is mainly categorized into three dialects: the Kandahar or Western dialect, the Kabul or Central dialect, and the Nigrahar or Eastern Yousifzai dialect. Each of these variants is marked by distinct phonetic characteristics (Tegey & Robson, 1996).

Within the domain of linguistics, language assumes the role of a multifaceted and intricate communication system employed by humans to convey an extensive spectrum of abstract concepts, encompassing thoughts, emotions, ideas, and informational content. It manifests as a meticulously organized medium, characterized by symbolic elements, such as words, sounds, or gestures, each adhering to precise rules and conventions that dictate their systematic amalgamation, culminating in the generation of meaningful expressions (Hakim, 2018). According to Chomsky (1979), language as an innate capacity within native speakers, enabling them to comprehend and construct grammatically sound sentences. Mariani (2019) stated in linguistic terms, language can be broken down into several key components: Phonology; refers to the study of the sounds used in a language and the rules governing their combination. Morphology: Morphology deals with the structure of words, including how words are formed from smaller units called morphemes. Morphemes are the smallest meaningful units in a language. Syntax: Syntax focuses on the rules governing the arrangement of words into phrases and sentences. It explores how words are combined to form grammatically correct sentences. Semantics: Semantics is the study of meaning in language. It investigates how words and sentences convey meaning and how people interpret and understand language. However, this study focusses the phonological formation in the polarization of Pashto nouns.

Chen (2009) examines the importance of the singular/plural linguistic divide across languages. He concludes that differentiation is not always necessary, providing examples where languages rely on context. It highlights how flexible language is in expressing singularity and plurality while highlighting the complex nature of plural forms that go beyond a simple suffix. On the other hand, Ivanovska (2014) explored the distinctions and similarities between the plural forms of nouns in the German and Macedonian languages. He stated that the division of noun in German and Macedonian, both into singular and plural grammatical classes, with singularia and pluralia tantum serving as exceptions. Despite substantial lexical similarity between the two languages, the research focused on significant variations in their plural systems. While German has five different sorts of plural forms, Macedonian plural classes include unmarked plural forms, collective plurals, and countable plurals. It also examined the use of indefinite articles, which serve as singularia tantum in both languages. The study emphasised the importance of the number grammatical category in both languages' noun descriptions and sentence meanings. Other than above mentioned, there are so many other researches on the plurality in nouns.

According to Penzl (1961), nouns are fundamental parts of language that can refer to a wide range of objects, ideas, and concepts. They have historical significance in the field of linguistic analysis and are divided into numerous categories based on factors including gender, responsibility, and ownership. Nouns are essential components of sentences because they interact extensively with other parts of speech to give language richness and depth. Nouns in Pashto display a thorough grammatical system that includes cases, gender (masculine and feminine), and number (single and multiple). These cases include the accusative case for direct objects, the oblique case for sentence objects, and the direct case

for sentence subjects. Pashto also uses the locative case to define a noun's place, the vocative case for direct address, the possessive (genitive) case to denote ownership, and the ablative case to represent movement away from a certain location. In addition to adding to the language's complexity, this detailed and methodical framework also enhances its communicative powers, making it an important subject of study in the academic setting.

A research work of Hayat (2022) examines Pashto grammar, in particular the formation of oblique plural forms for words ending in various "Yey" types. It examines the common practise of replacing most "Yey" types with, except for "Yey". It identifies potential word meaning ambiguity when universally substituting "Yey" with or. It suggests that only feminine "Yey" be replaced with and introduces new rules for forming oblique plurals to help writers. But a consensus has not yet been reached on all fundamental concepts in the field of Pashto grammatical analysis, namely the classification and distinguishing characteristics of noun classes. Pashto displays a difference of scholarly opinions, marked by different interpretations and the use of separate criteria for the classification of these noun classes, in contrast to extensively studied languages like Latin, where researchers have long established unanimous agreement. This problem is further complicated by the lack of thorough lexicographic resources and word frequency databases. The urgency of thorough academic research to rectify and clarify the grammatical ambiguities present in Pashto is highlighted by this circumstance.

The fundamental process for pluralisation in the English language is the simple addition of "-s" or "-es" to singular nouns. In unusual situations, where the noun's internal phonological structure is altered to express plurality, this process might diverge from predictability. For instance, the phonological process of pluralisation varies, with some nouns undergoing a straightforward addition of a suffix, such as "cat" becoming "cats" by adding "-s," while others follow more complex patterns, as seen in "child" becoming "children" where the internal phonological structure changes from /a/ to /e/ before appending the suffix "-ren," illustrating the complexity found in irregular plurals (Yunanda & Husda, 2022). In contrast, Schmidt, 1999 observe languages like Urdu introduce a more intricate system of pluralisation. The rules governing pluralisation in Urdu are multifaceted and encompass considerations of gender, grammatical case, and the phonological composition of the noun. This complexity often necessitates alterations within the noun stem, and the choice of suffix is contingent upon these linguistic variables. For instance, in Urdu, masculine nouns like "kitaab" (book) adopt the plural form "kitaaben," while feminine nouns like "taalibah" (female student) take on the plural "taalibaat." Such examples illuminate the intricate phonological adjustments inherent in the pluralization of nouns in Urdu and analogous languages.

Turning our attention to Pashto's grammatical structure, it emerges as a linguistically evolved language, akin to more widely recognized languages. Esteemed scholars and authors, including Bellews (1880), Lorimer (1915), and Penzl (1955), have undertaken comprehensive investigations into Pashto's grammatical framework, syntactical intricacies, and comparative analysis vis-à-vis other linguistic systems, but Pashto still requires research from linguistic point of view to analyse its noun polarization.

The phonological process that determines how nouns are pluralized includes the linguistic mechanisms used by a language to denote the change from a noun's singular to plural form. Depending on the language in question, this procedure may involve the insertion of particular suffixes, sound changes within the noun, or the use of irregular patterns. The above literature review, in sum, has laid the foundation for the current study. This study has to cover the noun

pluralization of noun, establishing the groundwork for a focused investigation of this complex Pashto phenomenon. This work aims to offer fresh perspectives on Pashto grammar and phonology. By doing so, the study will fill a significant gap in the literature.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The current study employs a qualitative research methodology to delve into the intricate nuances of the Pashto language. Specifically, it focuses on the intricate process of pluralizing Pashto nouns, a notably complex aspect within the language's phonological framework. This complexity presents a gateway to understanding Pashto's broader phonological landscape. The study encompasses various angles, aiming first to identify and elucidate the phonological processes underlying Pashto noun pluralization. Additionally, it seeks to uncover recurring patterns or tendencies in pluralization across different nouns and contexts. Lastly, it endeavours to grasp how these phonological processes contribute to the overall structure of Pashto nouns and their broader implications in linguistics. Ultimately, this research aspires to deepen our understanding of Pashto linguistics and contribute to the wider realm of phonological processes.

Data Collection

To thoroughly explore the intricate phonological dynamics guiding the pluralization of Pashto nouns, this study employs a multifaceted data-gathering approach. Firstly, engaging with native Pashto speakers, particularly elder individuals renowned for their linguistic expertise and traditional insights, forms the primary data collection method. This involves creating an audio corpus featuring diverse plural forms of Pashto nouns and their corresponding pronunciation shifts. Alongside this primary approach, an exhaustive review of Pashto linguistics literature constitutes the secondary data stream, drawing from books, journals, and academic papers focusing on Pashto grammar, specifically noun pluralization. This literature assessment enriches the study's analytical framework by incorporating insights from prior scholarly works, facilitating a comparative analysis with our primary data.

The research design was purposefully crafted in alignment with the study's objectives. Opting for a qualitative-method approach was deliberate, owing to the exploratory nature of the research inquiries and the imperative for profound qualitative analysis. This strategy amalgamates facets of content analysis and ethnographic research, offering a well-rounded methodology to grasp the intricacies of the research topic. Leveraging multiple data sources and methodological triangulation ensures the robustness and comprehensiveness of the investigation into Pashto noun plurality's phonological facets, strengthening the reliability and depth of the study's findings.

Data Analysis

The primary goal of the data analysis in this study is to elucidate the intricate phonological mechanisms governing Pashto noun pluralization. This involves a meticulous examination of the collected data using a diverse set of words having phonological changes. First and foremost, a comprehensive phonological analysis is conducted on the audio corpus derived from interactions with native Pashto speakers. This entails systematically identifying and organizing phonetic and phonological variants within the plural forms of Pashto nouns. Special attention is devoted to discerning articulatory and auditory properties that differentiate singular from plural forms, with a focus on recognizing emerging patterns and regularities in the dataset.

Simultaneously, content analysis is applied to the textual information acquired through an extensive survey of Pashto linguistic literature, encompassing books, articles, and research papers on Pashto nouns and pluralization. Emphasis is placed on uncovering grammatical patterns and phonological insights embedded in various textual sources. The textual analysis facilitates the exploration of phonological processes across diverse linguistic references, providing a contextual framework for a comprehensive understanding of the data. Ultimately, the data analysis component aspires to contribute a thorough comprehension of the phonological intricacies underpinning Pashto noun plurality, shedding light on the underlying regularities, patterns, and phonological structures that characterize these linguistic phenomena within the realm of Pashto linguistics.

DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

In this section, an in-depth exploration and discussion of the collected data take center stage, illuminating the intricate findings of the study. The primary objective was to unravel the complex phonological mechanisms underpinning Pashto noun pluralization. To achieve this, the researcher engaged with native Pashto speakers, specifically seeking out elder individuals possessing substantial linguistic acumen. This extensive consultation aimed to discern patterns and structures inherent in Pashto noun plurality across different noun types, including gender cases, feminine, and masculine nouns.

However, this study takes an innovative approach by categorizing these pluralizations into distinct patterns based on their structural characteristics—single-pattern, two-pattern, three-pattern, and four-pattern nouns. This novel classification system is designed to facilitate a more accurate comprehension of the Pashto pluralization process, thereby enhancing the study of Pashto pluralization patterns and contributing significantly to the broader understanding of the Pashto language. Each type receives meticulous examination in this section, delving into its significance within Pashto linguistics and elucidating the precise phonological processes inherent in each type.

Table 4.1: Single Pattern Nouns

Base/ single form	Meaning	Plural form with /u:/
wahal	Beating	wahalu:
kaṭal	Looking	kaṭalu:
līkal	Writing	līkalu:
awreḡal	Hearing	awreḡalu:
χwṛal	Eating	χwṛalu:
kena:ṣṭal	Sitting	kena:ṣṭalu:
skal	Drinking	skalu:

The above Table 1 shows a unique aspect of Pashto that some nouns can be derived from verbs, as the table above displays. In Pashto, Table 1 contain verb, but they are used as nouns as well. *wahal* (beating), *kaṭal* (looking), *līkal* (writing), *awreḡal* (hearing), *χwṛal* (eating), are verbs and frequently used as nouns.

1. The sentence, *ḡa deru: wahalu: ḡa waḡzi: saṛe maṛ fo* (The man died as a result of being beaten) contains the word *wahalu:* as a noun. In this statement, *wahal* functions as a noun and *maṛ fo* (died) as a verb. The word *wahal* is singular and plural form is made with the addition of *-u:* *wahalu:*. This *-u:* is used both phone and morpheme based on context.

2. The noun *kaṭal* is the primary verb, but used here as a noun. For example, *ṣṭa kaṭal ḵkuli: ḡi:* (The way you see is quite appealing). The word *kaṭal* is used as verb, but here it is used as a noun and the plural form is formed by adding the *-u:*, *kaṭalu:*.

3. In the sentence, *zar zar ḵwaṛal ḡa ḵwara:k kawalo ḵa aḡaṭ na ḡe* (Eating hastily is a bad habit), the main verb is *kawalu:*, along with this, the word *ḵwaṛal* is also used as a verb, but here it is used a noun. The word *ḵwaṛal* is singular and *ḵwaṛalu:* is plural which takes *-u:* for plurality.

The above table presents the nouns having single patter of nouns. Alternatively, some nouns present two, three, or four distinct patterns for forming plurals, encompassing various plural forms within these categories. Such nouns introduce heightened complexity in their pluralization patterns, prompting this study to delve deeper into the diverse forms and governing rules specific to each pattern.

Table 2: Two-Pattern Nouns (Plural with adding /i:/ and /u:/)

Base/singular	Meaning	/i:/	/u:/
ḵaza	Woman	ḵazai:	ḵazu:
wana	Tree	wani:	wanu:
malgare	Friend	malgari:	malgaru:
ṣṭarga	Eye	ṣṭargi:	ṣṭargu:
ṭḡarga	Hen	ṭḡargi:	ṭḡargu:

In the above presented table, Pashto nouns exhibit a fascinating linguistic characteristic—they possess dual plural forms. These nouns, including *ḵaza* (woman), *malgare* (friend) etc. are pluralized in two distinct ways. The singular noun *ḵaza* is converted into its first plural form *ḵazi:* by simply adding the *-i:*. The second plural form *ḵazu:* can be formed by adding the *-u:*. The particular context of the discourse determines which of these two types to use. When referring to women in an interactive setting, like when they are present or engaged in face-to-face conversation, the term *ḵazu:* is used. On the other hand, *ḵazi:* is used in a more passive setting or when talking about women who are not present. Also it is necessary to note that the nouns *ḵaza* and *wana* are the feminine nouns. This dual pluralization pattern demonstrates how language can change to provide specific contextual information about the presence or absence through nouns in discussions and general use, and it also highlights the flexibility of Pashto nouns.

Table 3: Two-Pattern Nouns (Plurals with adding /ni:/ and /nu:/)

Base/singular form	Meaning	Plural form with /ni:/	Plural form with /nu:/
bodar	Old woman	bodaiga:ni:	bodaiga:nu:
jor	Brother-in-law's wife	jorjani:	jorjanu:
wraṇḡa:r	Sister-in-law	wraṇḡa:ra:i:	wraṇḡa:ra:u:
ma:mi:	Aunt	ma:mi:ga:ni:	ma:mi:ga:nu:

In the presented Table 3, there is group of nouns in Pashto that fall under the category of feminine nouns. These nouns include *bodar* (old woman), and *jor* (Brother-in-law's wife).

Notably, these nouns are also the kind of two-pattern plurals; they can be pluralized in two distinct ways through the addition of specific segments and suffixes such as /ni:/ and /nu:/.

In the two patterns, the first pluralization pattern is created by adding the suffix /ni:/ to the singular noun. For example, *bodai* can be pluralized as *bodaga:ni:* by applying this suffix. The second pluralization pattern created by the addition of the suffix /nu:/ to the singular form. Using this pattern, *bodai* would become *bodaga:nu:*.

These two pluralization patterns exemplify the linguistic diversity present in Pashto, where different suffixes can be applied to create plural forms with specific meanings and contextual nuances.

Table 4: Two-Pattern Nouns (Plurals with adding /-na/ and /nu:/)

Base/singular	Meaning	Plural with /-na/	Plural with /nu:/
la:s	Hand	la:sona	la:sonu:
qamis	Shirt	qamisona	qamisonu:
χob	Sleeping	χobona	χobonu:
darja:b	River	darja:bona	darja:bonu:
wayt	Time	waytona	waytonu:
sind	River	sindona	sindonu:
ywag	Ear	ywagona	ywagonu:
wor	Fire	worona	Woorono
wrara	Nephew	wrerona	wreronu:
ba:y	Garden	ba:yona	ba:yonu:
yar	Mountain	yrona	yronu:
dewa:l	Wall	dewa:lona	dewa:lonu
war	Door	wrona	wronu:

Several nouns in Pashto, including masculine, feminine, and neutral forms, share a pattern of pluralization that consists of two forms. This indicates that two-pattern pluralization is common among many Pashto nouns, making it a prevalent linguistic feature in the language.

In the presented Table 4, there are several nouns that belong to the category of two-pattern plurals like previous tables. This category includes a vast number of nouns such as *la:s* (hand), *qamis* (shirt), *χob* (sleeping). These nouns can be pluralized using two specific suffixes: (-na) and (nu:). For instance, if we take two examples, *la:s* (hand) and *qamis* (shirt), and apply the first suffix (-na), the resulting plural forms would be *la:sona* and *qamisona* and when we apply the second suffix (nu:) the resulting plural forms would be *la:sonu:* and *qamisonu:*. This linguistic phenomenon in Pashto underscores the presence of dual pluralization patterns, offering diverse ways to convey the plural forms of nouns and enriching the language with multiple means of expression.

Table 5: Two-Pattern Nouns (Plurals with adding suffixes /-a:n/ and /nu:/)

Base/singular	Meaning	/-a:n/	/nu:/
fa:do	Monkey	fa:doga:n	fa:doga:nu:
ƒarg	Cock	ƒarga:n	ƒarga:nu:
ka:ka	Uncle	ka:kaga:n	ka:kaga:nu:
buda	Old man	budaga:n	budaga:nu:
ma:r	Snake	ma:ra:n	ma:ra:nu:

ma:rya	Crow	ma:rya:n	ma:rya:nu:
ʃa:qo	Knife	ʃa:qwa:n	ʃa:qwa:nu:
da:ko	Thief	da:kwa:n	da:kwa:nu:

Another set of Pashto nouns, *ʃa:do* (monkey), *ʃarg* (chicken), and *boda* (old man) is in the above table. These nouns have the same remarkable quality as the nouns in the previous table but the suffixes for pluralization of these nouns are different. The dual pluralization procedure is noticeably different for these nouns and there are so many others than the mentioned. The suffix */-a:n/* forms one plural form, and the suffix */nu: /* creates another. These suffixes contribute to a particular pluralization pattern in Pashto by representing separate phonological elements. The context as well as the distinctive pluralization guidelines connected to each suffix that determine which of these two variants is preferred. This phenomenon is a reflection of Pashto's grammatical complexity and diversity, as many pluralization processes can be applied to the same nouns. These two distinct pluralization patterns offer an intriguing perspective into how language can be used to convey complex meanings in a variety of conversational circumstances.

Table 6: *Three-Pattern Nouns (plurals with suffixes /-a:n/), /-na/ and /-nu:/)*

Base/ Singular	Meaning	/-a:n/	/-na/	/-nu:/
pla:r	Father	pla:ra:n	pla:rona	pla:ronu:
sʰar	Father-in-law	sʰara:n	sʰarona	sʰaronu:
gat	Stone	gata:n	gatona	gat onu:onu:
gol	Flower	gola:n	golona	golonu:
nok	Nail	noka:n	nokona	nokonu:
χat	Clay	χata:n	χatona	χatonu:

Table 6 presents an overview of a special class of Pashto nouns that are different from the previous discussed nouns with extraordinary linguistic characteristic: they have three different processes of pluralization, which means that they are three-pattern plurals in the Pashto. There are three distinct plural forms that these nouns *pla:r* (father), *sʰar* (father-in-law), and *gat* (stone) possess the same structure. *pla:ra:n* is the first plural form produced by suffixing the noun with */-a:n/*. In the second process of pluralization, the single noun is suffixed with */-na/* to create a unique plural form, like *pla:rona*. Using the suffix */-nu:/*, the third pattern of pluralization creates another distinct plural form, like *pla:ronu:*. This adding suffix is the same in all nouns presented in the present table. In these nouns there are some masculine nouns i.e. *pla:r* and *sʰar* but there are some neutral nouns; *gat* and *nok*, but come under the category of masculine not the feminine.

Table 7: *Four-Pattern Plural Nouns (plurals with suffixes /ni:/, /-nu:/, /ɖi:/ and /ɖu:/)*

Base/Singular	Meaning	/ni:/	/-nu:/	/ɖi:/	/ɖu:/
mor	Mother	morjani:	morjanu:	maɳɖi:	maɳɖu:
χor	Sister	χorja:ni:	χorja:nu:	χwaɳɖi:	χwaɳɖu:
ingor	Daughter-in-law	ingorjani:	ingorjanu:	ingaɳɖi:	ingaɳɖu:

In contrast to the examples previously described, the table 7 in this study presents a unique category of Pashto nouns, highlighting the linguistic diversity of the Pashto language. For these nouns, four different suffixes can be used to pluralize them, making them four-pattern plurals. The category under consideration features distinct nouns that are categorized as feminine: *mor* (mother), *χor* (sister), and *ingor* (daughter-in-law).

For these nouns, the initial pattern of pluralization is to add the suffix */ni:/* which generates the plural form *morjani:*. The plural form *morjanu:* is produced by adding the suffix */nu:/* to generate the second plural pattern. The plural form *mamḡi:* is created by adding the suffix */ḡi:/* to create the third plural form. Finally, the plural form *mamḡu:* is obtained by attaching the suffix “/du: دو/” to the fourth form.

These four different ways of pluralizing *mor*, *χor*, and *ingor* highlight how complex the Pashto pluralization is. They indicate how flexible the language is in expressing complex meanings and contextual differences, especially concerning feminine nouns. Such a wide range of pluralization patterns emphasizes Pashto's strength to express variation and specific meanings while adding to its complexity.

Table 8: Four-Pattern Plural Nouns (Plurals with Suffixes */an:/*, */-nu:/*, */-oo/*, and */-na:/*)

Base/singular	Meaning	<i>/-a:n/</i>	<i>/-u:/</i>	<i>/-na/</i>	<i>/-nu:/</i>
inzar	Fig	inzara:n	inzaru:	inzaru:na	inzaronu:
ror	Brother	rorja:n	ronu:	rona	rorja:nu:
χwaraje	Nephew	χwaraja:n	χwaraja:nu:	χwaraju:na	χwaraju:nu:
lewar	Brother-in-law	lewarja:n	lewronu:	lewaru:na	lewru:nu:
gudar	Watercourse	gudara:n	gudara:nu:	gudaru:na	gudaru:nu:

Like the previously discussed tables, this table 8 provides a set of nouns that are notable for their unique four-pattern pluralization process. This table include a set of nouns such as *inzar* (fig), *ror* (brother), *χwaraje*. These nouns are distinguished due to their unique ability to assume four distinct plural forms, which highlights Pashto's linguistic complexity and diversity. This set of nouns includes both neutral nouns, which do not fit into either the feminine or masculine categories, and masculine nouns, including *ror*, *χwaraje*, and *lewar*.

The variety of pluralization patterns found in this group shows Pashto's liveliness and effectiveness in conveying particular meanings and contextual details. These nouns, which can be either masculine or neutral, show how flexible the language is, in using pluralization to express certain meanings and contextual differences.

The diversity of pluralization patterns found in this group is evidence of the complexity and adaptability of the Pashto language. It highlights the language's complexity and adaptability by demonstrating how its pluralization system could convey complex meanings and contextual distinctions.

The nouns that are the focus of this research study are plurals with single, two, three, and four patterns. They are representative of a specific collection taken from the Pashto language, namely the Yousfzai dialect. These nouns can be distinguished from one another by their particular characteristics and ways of pluralizing. It is clear from contrasting Pashto's pluralization processes with those of other languages, such as English and Urdu, that Pashto carries interesting and complex structure because of its extensive noun pluralization. Notably,

some nouns in Pashto—like *lewantob*, *nartob*, *peyalṭob*, *paxṭob*, and *zalmi:ṭob* cannot be pluralized. These nouns always end with -ṭob.

CONCLUSION

To conclude, this study offered a thorough examination of the complex phonological processes included in Pashto noun pluralization. The identification of these phonological processes, comprehensive analysis of the patterns and identifying regularities directed plural formation of nouns. The data for this clarification were collected from the native speakers, books, magazine and dictionary. With the adoption of this multifaceted method, Pashto noun plurality has been thoroughly explored, illuminating the grammatical complexities present in the language. The findings of the study showed that Pashto noun pluralization is extensive and carries various patterns. These nouns are divided into single, two, three, and four-pattern plurals, each of which exhibits distinct grammatical nuances. Pashto nouns respond to particular contextual nuances in addition to displaying a variety of pluralization processes. This complexity highlights Pashto's richness and versatility by enabling speakers to express specific meanings and contextual variations through a variety of pluralization forms. Pashto's linguistic identity is fundamentally shaped by its multiple pluralization processes, which distinguish it from other languages.

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