A Closer Look on the Oblique Plural of Words Terminating in the Letter Yey: Pashto Grammatical Case

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ABSTRACT

This article studies the grammatical case of the Pashto language, with its focus on the oblique plural case of words terminating in different types of the letter ی /Yey/, where such cases of words are formed by replacing its various types with either و /waaw/, or یو /yow/. A summative approach to qualitative content analysis was used to analyse the data. The current grammatical rules of such words were studied in-depth but did not include rules where the oblique plurals thereof end in یانو /yaanow/. The study aimed to explore the problems of related grammatical rules and the trend of making such plurals where, except for the long Yey ی, the writers tend to replace most types of the letter Yey with یو /yow/. The paper also investigates what type of the letter Yey ی must be replaced with و and what type with یو, and whether replacing every type thereof with و or replacing all with یو will create ambiguity concerning the meaning of words used in their oblique plural cases. The study found that replacing all or most types of this letter with و or replacing all or most types thereof with یو results in ambiguity leading to the wrong meaning of words. In addition, findings hereof showed that only the feminine Yey ی should be replaced with یو. A fresh approach to making the oblique plural cases of such words has been introduced, and new rules are proposed, thereby facilitating writers in figuring out the correct oblique plural case of words. This study is the first attempt at unearthing the problems associated with the oblique plurals, as prior to this, no such study has been done in regard thereto.

1. Introduction

Writers put forth their best efforts to avoid ambiguity in the texts they produce. An unambiguous sentence, whether written or oral, is essential for communicating one's point to the reader or listener in the best way. If a reader encounters a sentence where she or he has to think time and again to figure out what the writer is trying to communicate and still confuses the meaning thereof, perhaps, the related piece of writing is not written very well. Ambiguity in writing may arise if the writer or the reader is not well acquainted with the correct meaning of a word or usage thereof. It may also arise due to unclear grammatical rules or a lack of knowledge.

The Pashto language has a set of five types of the letter Yey ی differentiated by diacritic signs to incorporate vowel sounds. The oblique plurals of words terminating in the letter Yey ی are formed by replacing the last letter of such words with either و /waaw/ or یو /yow/ based on the type of the letter Yey. For instance, the oblique plural case of the word سری

/sarray/ 'man' is سرو /sarrow/ 'men' and that of کورنی /kowranai/ 'family' is کورنیو /kowranayow/ 'families', where the two types of Yey are replaced with و /waaw/ and یو /yow/ respectively. When it comes to making the oblique plural cases of words terminating in various types of the aforesaid letter, writers face a number of contrasting grammatical rules such that based on some rules, all types of the letter Yey can be replaced with the letter و, while as per others, all types thereof may be replaced with یو /yow/. In addition, some rules put it that all types of the letter Yey can be replaced with either و or یو while as per some, all types thereof, except the feminine Yey ی can be replaced with either و or یو. Apart from that, based on some rules, except the long Yey ی and the masculine Yey ی, the remaining types of it may be replaced with either و or یو. This difference of opinion on the grammatical rules has led to ambiguity pertaining to the meaning of words used in the sentence. It has been noticed that writers nowadays tend to replace most types of the letter Yey with یو /yow/ while making the oblique plurals of such words. In addition, it has been

observed that this method of making the oblique plurals of words may create ambiguity in relation to their meaning. For example, the Pashto word for "disappointment" is ناهیلي /naahili/, and for "disappointed" is ناهیلی /naahilay/. As per the current trend which has resulted from the difference of opinion among grammarians in regard to the rules thereof, both types of the letter Yey in these words can be replaced with یو /yow/ in their oblique plural forms resulting in the same oblique plural form ناهیلیو /naahilayow/ for both of these words. This means that there remains no difference between the words "disappointment" and "disappointed", leading to ambiguity that leaves the readers scratching their heads. The same is the case where the last letter of both of the aforementioned words is changed into و /waw/, resulting in ناهیلو /naahilow/. Common sense says, and the grammatical traditions require, that there should be two different words for the plural of "disappointment" and the plural of "disappointed", which in the aforementioned cases is not so.

Different authors, in their studies on the Pashto grammar, have touched on the rules thereof, such as Raverty (1867), Trumpp (1873), Lorimer (1902), Roos-Keppel (1922), Ayazi (1939), Penzl (1957), Zyar (1978), Rishtin (2003), Tegey & Robson (1996), David (2013) and Rasulzada (2016), to name some. In their works, these authors have defined rules for each type of letter Yey; however, none of them has highlighted the problem of ambiguity as discussed in the foregoing paragraph.

Studies on the Pashto grammar have contributed significantly to academic research. However, the linguistic case in the Pashto language has not been studied sufficiently (Masood & Rahman, 2013), especially when it comes to the oblique plural case of words ending in the letter Yey. In addition, the problem of ambiguity arising from the difference of opinions regarding the grammatical rules is still left to explore and no such grammarian or writer has addressed the issue, either of brief or detailed nature. Therefore, this study may be deemed as the cornerstone of future research in this regard. The reason the author chose to investigate the issue, was because many instances of ambiguity were observed in relation to the oblique plural cases of words in the written Pashto material both in digital and print media. The rationale behind this study was to bring to the fore the problems with current rules and trends of making the oblique plural cases of words, and the gaps in current grammatical rules by analyzing the rules, exploring the problems in the current rules and studying the way writers used the aforementioned rules thereby proposing clear rules for all types of the said letter in order to solve the problem of ambiguity of meanings and make the process of forming the oblique plurals easy and free of errors.

The author used the summative approach to content analysis to analyse the frequency of words in the oblique form in various written materials and the context of usage thereof. The paper did not study rules for making the oblique plurals of words terminating in the letter Yey where the oblique plural is formed by replacing the letter Yey with یانو /Yaanow/ as in لیونی /leywanay/, لیونیان /leywanyaan/, لیونیانو /leywanyaanow/. It also excluded rules for making the oblique plurals of words ending in letters other than the letter Yey and its different types. In addition, out of five types of the letter Yey, the study covered rules for all types of the letter Yey except the Verbal Yey ئ, as words ending in such type of Yey mostly may not have the oblique case. Therefore, the author investigated;

a) Is the trend of replacing most types of the letter Yey with یو /yow/ in oblique plurals of words terminating in the letter Yey, gaining currency among Pashtun writers?
b) What type of the letter Yey ی must be replaced with و /waaw/ and what type with یو /yow/ when making the oblique plural case of words terminating in different types of the letter Yey.
c) Will replace all types of letters yey with و /waaw/ or, replacing all types thereof with یو /yow/ create ambiguity in regard to the meaning of words while making the oblique plural case of words terminating in different types of the letter Yey?

2. Literature Review

Pashto grammarians have differing views on the Pashto cases. Raverty (1867) has provided a detailed account of the Pashto case system. He has classified the Pashto cases into seven groups. As per him, the oblique plurals of all nouns are formed by adding the letter و /waw/ thereto, with the exception of nouns that do not change their forms in oblique or vocative cases. It is evident from his work that each type of the letter Yey ی is replaced with و in oblique plurals of words. For instance, he has declined the word سری /sarray/ 'man' as /sarri/ and /sarrow/ where /sarrow/ is the oblique plural form of /sarray/, which ends in obvious Yey ي. In addition, the word /sxadza/ is formed by replacing the long yey ی with wa. Thus, the word /sxadzow/, and even the words ending in feminine yey ی are formed by replacing the last letter with و.

Trumpp (1873) has described seven cases in the Pashto language. He believes that all types of the letter Yey can be replaced with و or یو . He states the examples of گاوندی /gaawandday/ 'neighbor', as گاوندیو /gaawanddayow/ or گاوندو /gaawanddow/, placing the latter in a bracket which means this can be an alternate form thereof. Similarly, سیزني /sizni/ 'a swaddling band', سیزنی /siznai/, سیزنیو /siznayow/, or سیزنو /siznow/. He has even replaced the long Yey ی both with و /waw/ and یو /yow/ citing the example of بده /badda/ 'bribe', بدی /baddey/, بدیو /baddayow/ or بدو /baddow/.

In his book "Grammar and Vocabulary of Waziri Pashto" Lorimer (1902) has divided Pashto cases into two groups; nominative and oblique cases. Later, in his book, he added the vocative and numeral cases, too. Even though he does not provide sufficient information on the oblique plurals of words ending in different types of letter Yey, however, some examples of words ending in the letter Yey show that as per him most types of the said letter can be changed in یو /yow/ (in case of Waziri Pashto, یو is written and pronounced as یی /Yey/).

Roos-Keppel (1922) agrees with Raverty (1867) on the Pashto cases. However, he has added the Vocative case too. His views on oblique cases resemble those of Raverty. He has replaced the letter Yey ی with the letter و in relation to the types of ی. For instance, in his fourth declension, he has also given the example of the word سری /sarray/, which has been changed into سري /sarri/ and سرو /sarrow/ in its oblique form. In addition, the example of ونه /wa:na/ وني /wa:ney/ and ونو /wa:now/ is cited for the words ending in long yey ی . As per him, even the feminine yey ی may be replaced with و.

Ayazi (1939) is of the view that the Pashto language has six cases. As per him, the letter Yey ی is replaced with the letter و /waw/, and has presented some examples in this regard where he has discussed only two types of Yey; the obvious Yey ي and the long Yey ی. The remaining types thereof have not been discussed. For instance, for the obvious Yey ي, he has given the example of سري /sarri/ 'man' where he has replaced the obvious Yey with و by citing the example; سرو ووهلم /sarrow wa:wahala:m/. Also, for the long Yey ی, he has given the example of ښځی /sxadzey/ as ښځو ولیدم /sxadzow wa:lida:m/ 'the women saw me' where the long Yey ی is replaced with و. The author, however, has not touched on the types of Yey where it is replaced with یو /yow/ in its oblique plural forms.

Penzl (1957) puts Pashto cases in four groups. Unlike Raverty (1867), he has described the words ending in obvious Yey replacing it with either و /waw/or /yow/. For example, the word /sarray/ is changed into /sarrow/ or /sarrayow/. He, however, has not described an alternate form for the words ending in feminine Yey but unlike Raverty, he has changed it into /yow/.

According to Shafeev (1964), Pashto nouns are classified into seven cases, while Mackenzie has come up with four cases (Comrie, 1987). MacKenzie states the examples of the oblique plural of the word کلی /ka:lay/ as کلو /ka:lo/ by citing the sentence ستاسو د کلو کوڅی /staaso da: ka:low kucey/ 'the streets of your village'. However, in case of the word نوی /na:way/ 'new', he has described two forms of the oblique plural thereof; نوو /na:wow/ and نویو /na:wyow/ (Comrie, 1987).

Rishtin (2003) believes that Pashto has four cases. He says that those plural nouns and masculine names that terminate in the obvious Yey ي should be formed by replacing the obvious yey with و /waw/. He states the examples of حمید دغو سرو وواهه /Hamid daghow sarrow wa:waaha:/ 'Hameed was beaten by these men'. He has also changed the obvious Yey of words used in the vocative case; ای سرو /ay sarrow/ 'hey, men'. Further, he states the example of دا د مرو هدیره ده /daa da: ma:rrow hadira da/ 'This is the graveyard of the dead' where he has again changed the obvious yey into waw. By adding a note to the above rule, he says that sometimes, while combining ی with و, the obvious yey is not replaced by و and instead و is added to ی and gives the example of خپل عیب د ولیو منځ /khpa:l ayb da: wa:lyow mandz day/. As per him, the long yey ی changes into و and the feminine Yey changes into یو. Further, he adds that some individuals even change the said type of Yey into و too, stating the example of چوکی /chawkai/ چوکو /chawkow/.

Tegey & Robson (1996) have classified Pashto nouns based on the case, gender, and number, and have touched on the rules for making the oblique plurals of words. As per them, the words that terminate in masculine Yey ی, their oblique plural forms are formed by replacing the letter Yey of their singular form with the letter و /waaw/. The authors, however, have added that these words can also have an alternate form where the letter Yey can also be replaced with یو /yow/ in oblique cases. They have cited the example of the word سری /Sarray/ with its oblique plural form of either سرو /sarrow/ or سریو /sarrayow/. Furthermore, unlike the masculine Yey ی which they have replaced with either و /waaw/ or یو /yow/, the authors have replaced feminine Yey ی with یو /yow/ only, citing the example of کورنی /kowranai/ changed into کورنیو /kowranayow/. Other examples are also cited for such words, where the feminine Yey is changed into یو /yow/ only.

Zyar (1978), like Raverty (1867) has also based the declension of Pashto nouns on seven cases. According to David (2013), Pashto has four cases and has followed the same rules defined by Tegey & Robson (1996). As per this author, except for the feminine Yey ی, all other types are replaced with و. However, this author has also included an alternate form of replacing the different types of Yey with یو /yow/ excluding the feminine Yey ی.

Ali Rasulzada (2016) has also come up with the same rules as Tegey & Robson, however, the author has cited an example where he has deviated from the rule of changing the obvious Yey ي and masculine Yey ی into یو in its oblique form only for the sake of differentiating between the meanings of the feminine and masculine form of the word سپی /spay/ 'dog'. The author puts that in order to differentiate the gender of the word سپی (a dog) from the word سپی /spai/ 'a female dog' in their oblique forms, the letter Yey in the word سپی should not be replaced with یو (which is

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against the rules defined by him and the aforementioned authors) and only replaced with يو in the oblique form of the word سپی.

The review shows that there is no specific rule to stick with as to which type of the letter Yey must be replaced with و and which with يو /yow/, or pertaining to which all grammarians have reached an agreement. It is also obvious that in their works none of them has addressed the problem of ambiguity arising from the rules they defined. This gap in their work and lack of clarity in the aforementioned rules have resulted in confusion among the Pashtun writers which has led to the current trend of replacing most types of the letter Yey with يو /yow/ and ambiguity arising from that.

The conflict arises mainly due to the views of grammarians who have suggested an alternate form of replacing most types of the letter Yey with يو /yow/ while making the oblique plural case of words. This issue can be resolved by unearthing the problems with such a method of making the oblique plural case of words and specifying how it results in ambiguity. Therefore, it was necessary that the issue must be looked into. The author of this article aimed to investigate the problem in detail to find a solution thereto. In addition, no such research has been done in the past to study the aforementioned problem in the current rules.

2.1 The Pashto Language

Pashto is an Eastern Iranian language with 30–50 million speakers in the world (Austin, 2008; Lewis, 2009). Amongst Iranian languages, Pashto is the second most important language (David, 2013; Mackenzie, 1992). It is one of the two official languages of Afghanistan, the other being Dari.

Pashto is closely related to Persian, Kurdish, Baluchi, and Pamir languages. It is less closely related to Nuristani and Indo-Aryan languages such as Urdu, Punjabi, and Sindhi (David, 2013). The Pashto-speaking population mostly lives in Afghanistan and Pakistan. In Afghanistan, it is the mother tongue of the largest ethnic group in the country, and in Pakistan, it has the status of a regional language where it is spoken by 20-25 per cent of the population, mainly in the Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa and Baluchistan provinces (Brown & Ogilvie, 2009; Ostler, 2012). Significant Pashto-speaking populations are also found in Iran, United Arab Emirates, India, the United States, the United Kingdom, Canada, and Malaysia (Mostefa et al., 2012).

Pashto has been promoted as the national language of Afghanistan since the second half of the 19th century when Amir Sher Ali Khan (1863-1879) introduced military titles in the Pashto language and ordered that military command be delivered in this language (Dinakhel, 2018; Paul, 2017). In 1936, Zahir Shah, the King of Afghanistan, declared Pashto the national language of Afghanistan and in the 1964 constitution of Afghanistan, it was recognized as the national language of the country through Article 35 of the constitution. Along with the national language, the said constitution also declared it as one of the two official languages of Afghanistan.

In 2004, the Constitutional Grand Assembly or the Loya Jirga, which was convened to draft a new constitution, did not include Pashto as the national language. However, Article 16 of the aforesaid constitution declared both Pashto and Dari as the two official languages of Afghanistan. The English language has emerged as the third de facto official language of Afghanistan over the years.

The use of the English language in government and private institutions has increased and e-Tazkira—an electronic national identity card is issued in three languages that also include English. Historically, both Pashto and Dari have been treated as the de facto national languages of Afghanistan.

2.2 Transliteration of the Pashto Text

This article cites examples from English, Dari/Persian, Turkish, Arabic, and Hindi/Urdu languages, along with the Pashto language, where the latter is the main focus hereof. The Pashto, Dari/Persian, and Arabic words and sentences are written in their respective text and the Roman equivalent thereof, where non-English text is followed by its Romanized form written in slashes and, in most cases, the English meanings follow in single quotation marks. For example; سارا کتاب لولي /Saaraa ketaab lwali/ 'Sara reads the book'.

In the tables used in this article, the Romanized form is written below or above the Pashto text, and where necessary, the English meaning is written thereunder. Except for the letters, ی ، ۀ ، ړ ، ښ and ي where new Latin equivalents are introduced in this article for the aforementioned letters, as follows; ai, a:, gj, sx and ey, respectively, the Pashto text is transliterated by including the Roman equivalents of them used in the works of scholars like Penzl (1957), Lorimer (1902), Raverty (1867), and other English sources on the Pashto language.

The following table shows the Pashto alphabet with its Roman equivalents. The alphabet will be used throughout the text of this article.

Table 2.1 Arabic and Latin Alphabet of Pashto

No.	Pashto	Latin	Name	Pronunciation
1	ا	a	alef, alep	as in **a**pple, as in w**a**ll
2	آ	aa	alef mad	as in w**a**ll,
3	ب	b	bey	as in **b**ook
4	پ	p	pey	as in **p**ool
5	ت	t	tey	as in **t**heta
6	ټ	tt	ttey	as in **t**ower
7	ث	s	Sey	as in **s**mile
8	ج	j	Jim	as in **j**ungle
9	ځ	dz	Dzim	as in **z**ebra
10	چ	ch	Che	as in **ch**air
11	څ	c	Tsey	as ts in **ts**unami
12	ح	h	Hey	as in **h**ome
13	خ	kh	Khey	as in the Scottish lo**ch**
14	د	d	daal	as in **th**is
15	ډ	dd	ddaal	as in **d**ay
16	ذ	z	zaal	as in **z**ebra
17	ر	r	rey	as in **r**oom
18	ړ	rr	rrey	no equivalent in English.
19	ز	z	zey	as in **z**ebra
20	ژ	zh	zhey	as in lei**s**ure
21	ږ	gj	zhey, gey	as s in vi**s**ion and g as in **g**ift
22	س	s	sin	as in **s**mile
23	ش	sh	shin	as in **sh**ine
24	ښ	sx	sxin, khin, shin	no equivalent in English
25	ص	s	swaad	as in **s**old
26	ض	d, z	zwaad	th' as in **th**at, and z as in **Z**ebra
27	ط	t	twey	as in **t**heta
28	ظ	z	zwey	as in **z**ebra
29	ع	a, aa	ayn	a as in **a**pple when used in start of a word, or aa as in w**a**ll, when used in the middle of a word
30	غ	gh	ghayn	pronounced as the letter **r** in the French language
31	ف	f	fey	as in **f**ine
32	ق	k	kaaf/qaaf	as in **k**ite
33	ك	k	kaaf/kaap	as in **k**ite
34	ګ	g	gaaf	as in **g**old
35	ل	l	laam	as in **l**ife
36	م	m	mim	as in **m**oon
37	ن	n	noon	as in **n**ow
38	ڼ	nn	nnoon	no equivalent in English
39	و	w	waaw	as in **w**ind
40	و	u	Tsargand waaw	oo as in m**oo**n
41	و	ow	majhul waaw	oa as in r**oa**m
42	ه	h, a	ghwandda hey	h as in **h**en, a as in **a**pple
43	ۀ، ة	a:	zwarakay/ kajira hey	i as in sh**i**rt
44	ي	y, i	tsarganda yey	y as in yard, i as in sp**i**rit
45	ی	ey	ugjda yey	as e in el**e**phant
46	ی	ay	naarina yey	as in d**ay**
47	ۍ	ai	sxadzina yey	as in w**ai**t
48	ئ	ai	feyli yey	as in w**ai**t
49	َ	a	zwar	diacritic mark for vowel sound **a**
50	ُ	o	peysh	diacritic mark for vowel sound **u**, as in "p**u**t"
51	ِ	e	zeyr	diacritic mark for vowel sound e, as in "**e**nd"

2.3 The Letter Yey

Currently, there are five different types of the letter Yey which will be defined separately with examples in the forthcoming paragraphs.

Historically, the letter Yey and its types were not the same as they are today. When the current Pashto alphabet was introduced in the 16th century C.E (Hayat, 2019), there was only one type of the letter Yey represented by two horizontal dots beneath it as ي. Different types thereof were represented in the written text by adding the diacritic signs "Fatha" or "Zwar", and "Kasra" or "Zeyr" denoted by small dashes over or below the letter preceding the only type of the letter ي. It has also been noticed that sometimes different types of this letter have been represented by the letter ي or ى without writing the aforementioned diacritic signs over or below them and the reader had to comprehend and recognize the various pronunciation thereof in the written text from the context of the sentence. Later, the types of this letter increased throughout the years based on the need to incorporate various vowel sounds in the alphabet.

The Pashto Tolana was established in 1937 (Ahmad & Khan, 2018) and held its third meeting in 1957. Pashtun scholars from Afghanistan and Pakistan met in Peshawar which is known as the third decision of the Pashto Tolanah. Famous Afghan scholars such as Gul Pacha Ulfat, Sidiqullah Rishtin, and Qiyamuddin Khadim along with other Pashtun writers and poets from Baluchistan and Northwest Frontier Province of Pakistan, participated in the meeting (Hotak, 2016). In the second session of the meeting, Sidiqullah Rishtin presented the four types of the letter Yey as follows; ى، ي، ئ، ی. Pashto's written works show that these different types of Yey had been in practice in both Pakhtunkhwa and Afghanistan. However, based on the initiative of the Pashto Academy of the University of Peshawar, three days seminar of the Pashto Tolana was held in Baarra Gali, Swat, Pakistan, on 10-12 July 1990 where the above-mentioned four types of Yey were accepted along with the verbal Yey ئ. The use of these five types of Yey is put into practice to this day.

The five types of letters Yey in the Pashto language, which are currently practised, are defined as under;

a) **The Obvious Yey**: the obvious Yey, which is called معروفه يي /Maarufa/ or څرگنده /Carganda Yey/, is represented by ي and denoted by the Latin letter i. This type of Yey has two horizontal dots under it.
Example; خُواني /dzwani/ 'youth', کاميابي /kaamyaabi/ 'success'. سري /sarri/ 'men'.

b) **The Long Yey**: the long Yey, which is called مجهوله /Majhula/ or اوړده يي /Ugjda Yey/, is represented by two vertical dots under it as ې, and denoted by the Latin letters "ey".

Example; سندرى /sanda:rey/. سرى اوبه /sarrey oba/ 'cold water'.

c) **The Masculine Yey:** the masculine Yey, which is called نارينه يي /Naarina Yey/ is represented by ی. This type of Yey has no dots and is denoted by the Latin letters "ay". It is usually used in words of masculine gender.
Example; سرتېرى /sarteyray/ "soldier". سرى /sarray/ 'man'.

d) **The Feminine Yey:** the feminine Yey, which is called ښځينه يي /Sxadzina Yey/, is represented by a small tail on the terminating end of the letter Yey. The feminine Yey ۍ is denoted by the Latin letters "ai". This type of Yey is usually used in words of feminine gender.
Example; کورنۍ /kowranai/ 'family'. هګۍ /hagai/ 'egg'.

The difference between the above-mentioned *four types* of the letter Yey can be noticed in the following Pashto sentence where the four types of Yey are highlighted in bold;

يو سرى بل سرې ته سرى اوبه او ګرمه ډوډۍ ورکوي.
/yaw sarr**ay** ba:l sarr**i** ta sarr**ey** oba: aw garma ddowdd**ai** warkaw**i**/
'A man gives cold water and warm bread to another man'.

e) **The Verbal Yey:** the verbal Yey, which is called فعلي يي /Feyli Yey/, is represented by the diacritic sign hamza ء over the letter Yey and denoted by the Latin letters "ai". This type of Yey is also called مخاطبه يي /Mokhaateba Yey/.
Example; راشئ /raashai/ 'you come'.

The sage of Verbal Yey is decreasing and writers tend to replace it with the feminine Yey ۍ due to the fact that there seems little or almost no difference between the sounds of these two letters. In addition, prior to introducing it as verbal Yey, Pashto Tolana had accepted the letter ئ as the feminine Yey (Dost, 1974). Apart from that, in early Pashto texts and grammar books, there was no difference between the two, and both feminine Yey ۍ and verbal Yey ئ were represented by one type of Yey.

The review of Ayazi's work (1939) shows that till the 1930s three types of the letter Yey; ى, ئ and ي had gained currency, where ئ represented both Feminine Yey and Verbal Yey. Even though, in terms of types, he has defined five types of Yey, while in terms of shape, he has defined the five types thereof with the three shapes of the letter Yey mentioned above. For instance, he refers to the verbal Yey ئ stating it is used for representing words of feminine gender as well as words that command others to do something. He gives the example of the word سپئ /spai/ 'a female dog' written with verbal Yey ئ which is now written with the feminine Yey ۍ as سپۍ /spai/. He also gives the example of the word ځئ /dzai/ 'you go' written with verbal Yey which is still written with the said Yey.

2.4 Grammatical Case

In languages that exhibit a case system, words are inflected, or in simple terms, they change their form based on their function in a sentence (Qizi, 2020). In light of this modification, called inflexion, grammatical case refers to the way nouns, pronouns, adjectives, numerals, etc. are classified based on the role they play in a given phrase, clause, or sentence in relation to other words used therein (Crystal, 2008; Owens, 1998). Languages with case systems can have a varying number of cases which include the nominative case, the accusative case, the genitive case, and the oblique case, to name some. As languages evolve, they may drop, merge, or develop certain cases (Trijp, 2017). English language, for instance, is mainly based on subjective, objective, and possessive cases. These cases are usually referred to by their Latin names; nominative, accusative/oblique, and genitive cases respectively and the inflexion in the case system of English is mostly restricted to pronouns.

The nominative, also called the subjective case, usually refers to the subject in a given clause or sentence where it is mainly the doer of something. In the sentence; "I kissed the baby", the word "I", functioning as the subject of the sentence, is used in its nominative form. The same word is modified to "me" when it functions as the object of the sentence, or in its objective case, also called the oblique case. Oblique case covers the accusative and the dative cases. In the accusative case, the word defined by it acts as the direct object of a verb in a given clause or sentence which is affected by the action indicated by the word (ÖZdemir & öKten, 2015). The accusative case in Dari/Persian is denoted by the postposition "را" /raa/ with the noun or the specific word it is defining (Mouche et al., 2019). In the sentence من طفل را بوسیدم /man tefl raa bowsidam/ 'I kissed the baby', the postposition "raa" is transferring the act of kissing (the verb) from "I" (subject) to the baby (direct object).

The dative case refers to the indirect object of a given clause or sentence where it receives the direct object. For example, in the sentence; "He gave her a gift", the word "her" refers to the indirect object, or the dative case, where it receives the "gift". In the aforementioned sentence, the word "gift" functions as the accusative case and the word "her" as the dative case. The dative case is also seen in the Dari/Persian language where it is mostly marked with the preposition به /ba/, which means 'to", and برای /baraaye/, which means "for" (Mohammadirad & Rasekh-Mahand, 2019). In the sentence من به تو تحفه دادم /man ba tu tohfa daadam/ 'I gave you a gift', the words به تو /ba tu/ 'to you' denote the dative case. Similarly, in the Hindustani language, this is referred to by the word "ko" as in the sentence "Main ne tumko tuhfa diya" which means 'I gave you a gift'.

In Turkish, the dative case is formed by adding 'e' or 'a' to the end of the nouns (Kızıltan & Atlı, 2018). For example, in the sentence "Okula gidiyorum" (I'm going to the school) the word Okul (school) is inflected by adding the suffix "a" to it.

English has lost most of its cases when compared with Old English. For instance, the vocative case, which is used for addressing a noun or pronoun in a sentence, was present in Old English but ceases to exist now. However, limited usage of the vocative case can still be seen in formal texts such as religious texts and poetry writings. The vocative case in English is marked by "O" preceding the noun or pronoun being addressed. For instance, the English translations of the Holy Quran; "O Ye who believe," (in the Pilgrimage 22:77) and the Holy Bible; "O Ye righteous" (in Psalm 33:1) have preserved the use of the vocative case because it is present in the original language the text is translated from.

Nowadays, "O" is no longer used in modern English, and nouns or pronouns are addressed simply by writing that specific word without inflexion in the sentence. The Arabic language also has the vocative case (Al-Bataineh, 2019; Alkuwaihes, 2017) where it is marked by seven articles amongst which the most used one is يا /yaa/ (Kasher, 2013) as in the example يا اخي /Yaa akhi/ 'O brother'. The other articles are used based on the nature of the word in the sentence such as singularity and plurality etc.

Words in the ablative case usually mark movement away from something. For instance, in the phrase; "The distance from Kabul to Washington", the preposition "from" may mark the ablative case. Amongst others, the ablative case is mostly exhibited by Latin and Sanskrit as well as Turkish and Turkic languages of the Central Asian countries. In Turkish, for example, the ablative case is represented by adding the suffix den or dan, which means 'from' (Demir, 2020).

2.5 Grammatical Case in the Pashto Language

Languages may exhibit nominative-accusative or ergative-absolutive alignments, or split ergativity which is the combination of the foregoing. In nominative-accusative alignment, the subject of an intransitive verb behaves like the subject of a transitive verb but is different from the object of a transitive verb. Languages that exhibit nominative-accusative alignment are called nominative-accusative languages. In ergative-absolutive languages, the subject of an intransitive verb behaves like the object of a transitive verb (Atlamaz, 2012; Dixon, 1994) but is different from the agent of a transitive verb. The Hindi language is an example of ergative language (Verbeke & de Cuypere, 2009; Verbeke et al., 2015). Some languages exhibit split ergativity which means these languages show both nominative-accusative and ergative-absolutive alignments.

Except for a few traditional accounts, the linguistic case in the Pashto language has not been given sufficient attention perhaps mostly because Pashto grammarians have been oblivious in regard to the achievements made in the area of the linguistic case as a whole (Masood, 2014). The views of hose limited scholars, who have studied the linguistic case in Pashto, differ on the number of cases in this language (Masood & Rahman, 2013). However, the most recent literature in this regard describes the case system in Pashto based on four cases namely direct, oblique, ablative, also called oblique 2, and vocative (David, 2013). The direct case covers nominative, accusative, and absolutive cases in both present and past tense sentences, while the oblique is mostly used in the past tense sentences and as a prepositional case. Pashto shows split-ergativity (Masood & Rahman, 2021; Rahman & Bukhari, 2014), with nominative-accusative alignment in non-past sentences while ergative-absolutive in past tense sentences (Rahman & Bukhari, 2020).

The vocative case is represented by adding the suffix ه /a/, و /ow/ or يو /yo/ to the noun based on the singularity and plurality of the noun, or by adding ای /ay/ or يه /ya/ before the noun along with the said suffixes. For example, to address a boy; the Pashto word هلک /hala:k/ is modified by adding the suffix a to it, thus هلکه /hala:ka/ or by adding the prefix ای/ay/ before said word thus ای هلکه /ay hala:ka/.

The ablative case in Pashto is represented in two ways by either using the preposition لۀ /la:/ before the word it is defining and adding the suffix ه /a/ to the said word, or by adding the preposition د /da:/ before the noun and the preposition نه /na/ or څخه /ca:kha/ after the said word. For example, له کابله تر واشنگټنه /La: Kaba:la ta:r Waashingttana/ 'from Kabul to Washington'

The genitive case is formed by inflecting some of the pronouns and by adding the preposition د /da:/ which means "of" or the apostrophe in English showing possession. In the case of a noun, the noun is also preceded by the preposition د /da:/ 'of' in the genitive case. For example; د سارا کتاب /da: Saaraa ketaab/ 'Sara's book'.

Pashto inflects the adjectives and numerals as well. Nouns, pronouns, and adjectives are usually inflected based on the last letter of the word where the aforesaid is replaced by another letter added thereto. Inflexion occurs in both singular and plural forms.
In this article, the focus will be placed mainly on the inflexion of words ending in the letter ی in its oblique case.

3. Method

The summative approach to qualitative content analysis was adopted to conduct this study. As summative content analysis is used to count and compare specific words and phrases in the data followed by the latent meanings thereof (Hamuddin et al., 2020; Hsieh & Shannon, 2005), therefore the author chose it to study the usage of the oblique plurals of words terminating in different types of the letter Yey to see how often was the letter Yey replaced with يو /yow/ and how many times with و /waaw/, and to check in what context was the oblique plural of such a word used. The author used manifest content analysis to quantify and compare oblique plural forms of 16 selected words terminating in the letter Yey, in the famous Pashto news platforms such as the BBC Pashto, VOA Pashto, Radio Free Europe Pashto aka Azadi Radio, and DW Pashto focusing on the period between 2010 till 2020.

The aforementioned platforms were chosen due to their wide reach in Afghanistan considering the fact that they are easily available to almost all Afghans who have access to the internet and irrespective of whether they're based in the country or abroad. In addition, most of the digitally written Pashto work on a daily basis is produced through the aforesaid sources which help in keeping track of the trend of replacing the letter Yey with يو/yow/ in oblique plurals of words ending in different types of this letter. This was necessary for analyzing whether the said trend was gaining currency in Pashtuns or otherwise because news articles are produced almost every day which helps in observing the way certain words are used from time to time. The following table shows the aforesaid 16 words the author considered for this study;

Table 3.1. Words Selected for Content Analysis

No	Oblique Plural Form with يو	No	Oblique Plural Form with و
1	سريو	2	سرو
3	لوريو	4	لورو
5	چارواکيو	6	چارواکو
7	شويو	8	شوو
9	وګريو	10	وګرو
11	غريو	12	غرو
13	کونکيو/کونکيو	14	کونکو/کونکو
15	لورپوريو	16	لورپورو

These words were chosen due to their frequent use. Frequencies of each word's occurrence were compared with each other in each year of the period, and as a whole, such that one word was checked with its oblique plural form terminating in بو /yow/ and then the same word with its oblique plural form terminating in و /waaw/. In addition, the author selected books on Pashto literature to see how the writers used these words. For this purpose, the author chose the books Pata Khazana, and old hand-written Pashto manuscripts from the work of famous poets, Khushal Khan Khattak, Ahmad Shah Abdali, and Rahman Baba. However, importance was placed more on the websites mentioned above for the results. Latent content analysis was used to analyze the context and underlying meanings of the words used in these sources.

In order to dig into the aforementioned sources for identifying, quantifying, and analyzing the said set of words, the author used Google search tools and the web version of **Atlas.ti** which is qualitative data analysis, and research software. In Google, the searches were made using the word **site:** followed by a specific domain and extension and the targeted word. The searches were further narrowed down by selecting each year one by one from 2010 through 2020 for the whole set of words mentioned above and a total number of 31265 texts were analyzed for the final dataset.

In addition, the author analyzed material written on Pashto grammar in three languages; English, Pashto, and Dari. Apart from the case system in Pashto, the author analyzed the work of famous Pashto grammarians on the oblique case. For this purpose, the author chose books written in English, spanning from books written on Pashto grammar as

old as Raverty's (1867) to the latest Anne Boyle David's (2014). The author chose English books first because more literature is available on the Pashto case system in the English language. For this purpose, books were written by famous grammarians like Henry George Raverty, Earnest Trumpp, J. G. Lorimer, Roos-Keppel, D. N. MacKenzie, Herbert Penzl, D.A. Shafeev, Habibullah Tegey & Barbara Robson were analyzed. Secondly, the author dug into English papers written on the Pashto case system to bridge the gap between the materials written previously in relation to the topic of this article, and recent research written hitherto.

Books written in the Pashto and Dari language on Pashto grammar were also chosen to get acquainted, in detail, with the case system of the Pashto language from the point of view of Pashtun scholars such as Mohammad Azam Ayazi, Mojawir Ahmad Zyar, and Siddiqullah Rishtin. Furthermore, the author considered different dialects and accents of the Pashto language and interviewed speakers of the said dialects to distinguish between the different ways of pronunciation of words ending in different types of the letter ی, especially the masculine Yey ی, the feminine Yey ۍ, and the verbal Yey ئ. For this purpose, the author conducted face-to-face and on-the-phone interviews with speakers of different dialects and accents. This was necessary for the author to have a clear idea of how the different types of the letter Yey were pronounced in different Pashto dialects so there remains little or no room for the study to be influenced by the personal bias of the author of this article.

The following table summarizes the data source used in the study.

Table 3.2. Summary of the Data Sources Used in this Study

No	Source Name	Type	Language	Author	Purpose
1	BBC Pashto	Website	Pashto	-	analysis of 16 words
2	VOA Pashto	Website	Pashto	-	analysis of 16 words
3	DW Pashto	Website	Pashto	-	analysis of 16 words
4	Azadi Radio Pashto	Website	Pashto	-	analysis of 16 words
5	Pata Khazana	Book	Pashto	Mohammad Hotak	analysis of 16 words
6	Da Rahman Baba Kuliyaat	Book	Pashto	Rahman Baba	analysis of 16 words
7	Divani Ahmad Shah	Book	Pashto	Ahmad Shah Abdali	analysis of 16 words and types of the letter Yey
8	Diwaane Khushal Khan Khattak	Book	Pashto	Khushal Khan Khattak	analysis of 16 words and types of the letter Yey
9	A dictionary of the Puk'hto, or language of the Afghans	Book	English	Raverty, H. G	Analysis of grammar rules for oblique plurals
10	Grammar of the Pashto	Book	English	Earnest Trumpp	Analysis of grammar rules for oblique plurals
11	Grammar and Vocabulary of Waziri Pashto	Book	English	J. G. Lorimer	Analysis of grammar rules for oblique plurals
12	A manual of Pushtu	Book	English	Roos-Keppel	Analysis of grammar rules for oblique plurals

13	The World's Major Languages	Book	English	Bernard Comrie	Analysis of grammar rules for oblique plurals
14	A grammar of Pashto	Book	English	Herbert Penzl	Analysis of grammar rules for oblique plurals
15	A Reference Grammar of Pashto	Book	English	Habibullah Tegey & Barbara Robson	Analysis of grammar rules for oblique plurals
16	Descriptive Grammar of Pashto and its Dialects	Book	English	Anne Boyle David	Analysis of grammar rules for oblique plurals
17	Qavā'id-i Pushtū	Book	Dari	Mohammad Azam Ayazi	Analysis of grammar rules for oblique plurals
18	Pashto Grammar	Book	Pashto	Mojawir Ahmad Zyar	Analysis of grammar rules for oblique plurals
19	Pashto Grammar (Zhabshodana)	Book	Pashto	Sidiqullah Rishtin	Analysis of grammar rules for oblique plurals
20	Pashto Yeegane	Book	Pashto	Ali Rasulzada	Analysis of grammar rules for oblique plurals
21	Da Pashto Tolaney Aw Baarra Galai Faisaley	Website	Pashto	M.M Hotak	History and types of the Letter Yey
22	Da Afghanistan Zhabe aw Tokamuna	Book	Pashto	Dost Mohammad Dost	History and types of the Letter Yey

4. Results

4.3 Is the trend of replacing most types of the letter Yey with یو /yow/ in oblique plurals of words terminating in the letter Yey, gaining currency among Pashtun writers?

A thorough study of the Pashto grammatical rules for making the oblique plural of words terminating in the letter Yey reveals that grammarians are divided on their opinions concerning different types of the said letter when it comes to replacing them with the letter و or یو /yow/. From this difference of opinion, it is inferred that Pashtun writers are confused in regard to the replacing of different types of the letter Yey with و and یو which as a result, encourages a number of writers to opt for replacing most types thereof with یو /yow/ while using the oblique plurals of words terminating in the said letter, in their writings. As per the initial observations of the author of this article, it was turning into a trend to replace most types of this letter with یو, therefore, it was necessary to look into it.

A comprehensive study of the 16 words selected for the purpose of content analysis and the result thereof showed that this trend was moving at a very negligible pace as the occurrence of words where the letter Yey was replaced with و /waaw/ was considerably more than that of the same word where the letter Yey was replaced with یو /yow/ while making the oblique plurals of words terminating in different types of the letter Yey such that during the years 2010 to 2020 the trend of replacing the letter Yey with یو /yow/ was only 32.28 per cent compared with 67.71 per cent of replacing it with و /waaw/ in the data source. For the sake of brevity, the results of eight words of the sixteen words analyzed in this study are presented herein.

The occurrence of the words وګرو /waga:rrow/ 'people' and وګریو /waga:rriyow/ 'people', which are the two alternate oblique plural forms of the word وګری/waga:rray/ 'a person', were compared in the data sources focusing on the period of 2010 to 2020. The word وګرو /waga:rrow/ 'people' is formed by replacing the letter Yey with و and وګریو /waga:rriyow/ by replacing it with یو. The analysis showed that during the 11 years' period the word وګرو /waga:rrow/, where the letter Yey is replaced with و, had occurred in the data sources 99.07 per cent compared with less than 1 per cent of the word وګریو /waga:rriyow/, where the letter Yey is replaced with یو. The same words were also analyzed in the earlier written Pashto works. For instance, the text of the book Pata Khazana showed that both وګرو /waga:rrow/ 'people' and وګریو /waga:rriyow/ 'people' were used in the said book such that in one part of the book, it was وګرو /waga:rrow/ and in another part, it was وګریو /waga:rriyow/. The word وګرو /waga:rrow/ appears in the aforesaid book in the poem attributed to the first Pashtun poet Amir Kror. The word وګریو /waga:rriyow/ is used by the author of aforesaid book while introducing another Pashtun poet Shaikh Mathi and his work.

The majority of other words analyzed by the author also showed similar results. For instance, the percentage of the occurrence of the words غریو /gha:rriyow/ 'organs, members', and غرو /gha:rrow/ 'organs, members', which are the two possible oblique plural forms of the word غری /gha:rray/ 'an organ, a member' were compared. The occurrence of the word غریو /gha:rriyow/, formed by replacing the letter Yey with یو, was 9.83 per cent and that of the word غرو /gha:rrow/, which is formed by replacing the relevant letter Yey with و, was 90.16 per cent. This shows that writers, unlike the initial observation of the author of this article, mostly tend to replace the letter Yey with the letter و compared with

that of replacing it with يو /yow/ while using the oblique plural of words terminating in different types of the said letter. However, it was not the case with all the sixteen words selected for content analysis and in relation to some words, the writers' tendency toward replacing the letter Yey with يو while making the oblique plural of words, was higher than replacing it with و. For instance, the analysis of the words شوو /sha:wow/ 'done' and شويو /sha:wiyow/ 'done', which are the two alternate oblique plural forms of the word شوى /sha:way/ 'done', showed that the occurrence of the word شوو /sha:wow/, which is formed by replacing the relevant letter Yey with the letter و, was 16.84 per cent in the data sources while the percentage of the word شويو /sha:wiyow/ 'done', which is formed by replacing the letter Yey with يو, was used 82.48 per cent during the years 2010 to 2020 in the data source.

Similarly, a comparison of the words نوو /na:wow/ 'plural of new' and نويو /na:wyow/ 'plural of new', which are the two alternate oblique plurals of the word نوى /na:way/ 'new', shows that the frequency of the word نوو /na:wow/, which is formed by replacing the letter Yey with و, was 22.81 per cent while that of the word نويو /na:wyow/, which is formed by replacing the letter Yey with يو /yow/, was 77.18 during the mentioned period of time. However, the overall percentage difference of all words analyzed by the author showed that during the period of review writers showed a tendency toward replacing the letter Yey mostly with the letter و /waaw/ instead of replacing it with يو /yow/ while using the oblique plural cases of words terminating in the letter Yey.

It was also noticed that the trend of replacing most types of the letter Yey with يو /yow/ had gradually increased from the year 2016 through 2020 such that in the first five years from 2011 till 2015 the percentage of replacing the letter Yey with يو /yow/ while using the oblique plural cases of words terminating in the letter Yey, was 20.67 while for the years 2016 till 2020 it was 79.32. However, it is still lagging far behind the trend of replacing it with و /waaw/ as described in the foregoing paragraphs and the overall result shows that the answer to the first research question is not affirmative. It can be inferred that the 20.67 per cent tendency towards replacing the different types of the letter Yey while making oblique plural cases of words terminating in the said letter might be due to the different opinions of the grammarians on the rules thereof, the dialect factor and other reasons described in detail in the discussion section of this article.

4.4 What type of the letter Yey must be replaced with و and what type thereof with يو?

Analysis of the data source pertaining to the grammatical rules on making the oblique plurals of words terminating in the letter Yey showed that grammarians had a difference of opinion. Among ten authors, three of them, Raverty (1867), Roos-Keppel (1922), and Ayazi (1939) believe that all types of the letter Yey should be replaced by و /waaw/ when making the oblique plurals thereof, while as per one author, Lorimer (1902), all types of the said letter should be replaced with يو /yow/ while making such plurals. As per three authors, Trumpp (1837), Comrie (1987), and Rishtin (2003), based on the examples they provided in their works, all types of Yey can be replaced with either و /waaw/ or يو /yow/. One author, Penzl (1957) is of the opinion that all types of Yey, except for the feminine Yey ى, can be changed into either و/waaw/ or يو /yow/. Three authors, Tegey & Robson (1996), David (2013) and Rasulzada (2016) are of the opinion that except for the long Yey which is replaced by و /waaw/, the obvious Yey ي and masculine Yey ى can be replaced with either و /waaw/ or يو /yow/ and the feminine Yey ى can be replaced with only يو /yow/.

Based on the abovementioned explanations, as a whole the following set of rules are achieved in relation to making the oblique plural of a word terminating in the letter Yey and its types; In order to make the oblique plural case of a word terminating in the letter Yey, a writer has the following options to do so;

a) Replacing all types of letter Yey with و /waaw/ as defined by Raverty (1867), Roos-Keppel (1922), and Ayazi (1939)

b) Replacing all types thereof with يو /yow/, as defined by Lorimer (1902)

c) Replacing all types of this letter with either و /waaw/ and يو /yow/ as described by Trumpp (1873), Comrie (1987), and Rishtin (2003)

d) Replacing all types thereof with either و /waaw/ or يو /yow/ except for the feminine Yey ى which is only replaced with يو as defined by Penzl (1957)

e) Replacing all types with either و /waaw/ or يو /yow/ except for the long Yey which is replaced with only و /waaw/ and the masculine Yey which is replaced with only يو /yow/ as defined by Tegey & Robson (1996), David (2013), and Rasulzada (2016).

The findings reveal the fact that there is no touchstone for figuring out the correct oblique plural case of words ending in the letter Yey and its different types, as there exists no or very less agreement amongst grammarians in relation to their rules. This has resulted in confusion among some writers leading to ambiguity when it comes to different words and their meanings.

4.5 Will replacing all types of letter yey with و /waaw/ or, replacing all types thereof with يو /yow/ create ambiguity in regard to the meaning of words while making the oblique plural case of words terminating in different types of the letter Yey?

In regard to this question, it was found that confusion and ambiguity will arise in case;

a) all types of Yey are replaced with يو /Yow/, and if,
b) all types of Yey are replaced with و /waaw/ either.

The following table shows words with ambiguity in their oblique plural cases, with their English meaning written below them.

Table 4.1. Confusion in meanings of Words based on the Wrong Use of the Letter Yey in the Oblique Plural Forms

No	Singular	Direct Plural	Oblique Plural	Remarks
1	gaadday گاډی car gaaddai گاډی cart	gaaddi گاډي cars gaaddai گاډی carts	gaaddow گاډو cars gaaddai گاډيو carts	The meaning of the words *Cars* and *Carts* will be confused in their oblique plural case.
2	spay سپی dog spai سپی bitch	spi سپي dogs spai سپی bitches	spow سپو dogs spayow سپيو bitches	The meaning of *male dogs* and *female dogs* can't be differentiated in case the letter Yey is not replaced correctly.
3	مړی corpse مړی morsel	مړي corpses مړی morsels	مړو corpses مړيو morsels	If the letter Yey is replaced with يو in the oblique plural forms of both words, or even with waaw in both words, the difference between the meaning of *Corpse* and *Morsel* will be confused.
4	wa:ray وری sheep wa:rai وری gum	wa:ri وري sheep wa:rai وری gums	wa:row ورو sheep wa:rayow وريو gums	The meanings of *Sheep* and *Gums* will be confused.
5	garray ګری pitcher garrai ګری watch	garri ګري pitchers garrai ګری watches	garrow ګرو pitchers garrayow ګريو watches	The meaning of *Pitchers* and *Watches* will be confused.
6	peyttay پیټی backpack peyttai پیټی box	peytti پیټي backpacks peyttai پیټی boxes	peyttow پیټو backpacks pettayow پیټيو boxes	The meaning of *Backpacks* and *Boxes* will be confused.
7	kili کلي	kilai کلی	kilayow کليو	The meaning of *Pitchers* and *Watches* will be confused.

	key *ka:lay* کلی *village*	*keys* *ka:li* کلي *villages*	*keys* *ka:low* کلو *villages*	
8	*khpa:lsaray* خپلسری *rebellious* *khpalsari* خپلسري *rebellion*	*khpalsari* خپلسري *rebellious* *khpalsarai* خپلسری *rebellions*	*khpalsarow* خپلسرو *rebellious* *khpalsarayow* خپلسريو *rebellions*	The meaning of *Rebellion* and *Rebellious* will be confused.
9	*spin sta:rgay* سپین سترگی *impudent* سپین سترگي *Impudence*	*spin sta:rgi* سپین سترگي *impudent* سپین سترگی *Impudence*	*spin sta:rgayow* سپین سترگو *impudent* سپین سترگيو *Impudence*	The meaning of *Impudent* and *Impudence* will be confused.
10	*hila* هیله *hope* *hilai* هیلی *Deer*	*hiley* هیلي *hopes* *hilai* هیلی *Deer*	*hilow* هیلو *hopes* *hilayow* هیلیو *Deer*	The difference between the meaning of *Hopes* and *Deer* will be confused.
11	*kowtta* کوټه *Rooms* *kowttai* کوټی *Mansion*	*kowttey* کوټي *Rooms* *kowttai* کوټی *Mansions*	*kowttow* کوټو *Rooms* *kowttayow* کوټیو *Mansions*	The between the meaning of *Rooms* and *Mansions* will be confused.
12	*towray* توری *Letters* *towrai* توری	*towri* توري *Letters* *towrai* توری	*towrow* تورو *Letters* *towrayow* توریو	The difference between the meaning of *Letters* and *a certain type of vegetable* will be confused.
13	*ka:rrkai* کرکی *Window* *ka:rrkay* کرکی *Reed*	*ka:rrkai* کرکی *Windows* *ka:rrki* کرکي *Reeds*	*ka:rrkayow* کرکیو *Windows* *ka:rrkow* کرکو *Reeds*	The difference between the meaning of *Windows* and *Reeds* will be confused.
14	*gha:rray* غری *Member* *gharrai* غړی *Throat*	*gha:rri* غړي *Members* *gharrai* غړی *Throats*	*gha:rrow* غړو *Members* *gharrayow* غړیو *Throats*	The difference between the meaning of *Members* and *Throats* will be confused.
15	khwaarzwaakay خوارځواکی Weak khwaarzwaaki خوارځواکي Weakness	khwaarzwaaki خوارځواکي The weak khwaarzwaakai خوارځواکی Weaknesses	khwaarzwaakow خوارځواکو The weak khwaarzwaakayow خوارځواکیو Weaknesses	The difference between the meaning of *Weakness* and *The weak* will be confused.

As it can be seen from the above Table replacing most types of the letter Yey with یو or replacing most types thereof with و either, create the ambiguity of meaning. In order to address the above issues and remove the ambiguity thereof, it was important that, based on the aforesaid set of rules, clear rules be defined for making the oblique plurals of words ending in the letter Yey and its different types.

Based on the findings hereof, the author concluded that rules for each type of the letter Yey should be defined based on the *direct plural* forms of words where the letter Yey at the end of the words in their *direct plural* form plays an important role in the creation of its correct oblique plural form. Therefore, the following rules were proposed and put into practice which resulted in a solution to the ambiguity

of meaning mentioned above. The said problem will be looked into in detail in the Discussion section of this article.

4.3.1. Words with Direct Plurals ending in Obvious Yey

In case the *direct plural* form of a word ends in obvious Yey ي, the oblique plural form of that word is formed by replacing the obvious Yey ي with the letter و /waaw/. For instance, the direct form of the word ttaattowbay/ تاتوبي /ttaattowbi/, to form its oblique plural form; the obvious Yey ي is replaced with the letter و /waaw/ resulting in the word تاتوبو /ttaattowbow/.

The following table contains other such words with their correct oblique plural forms:

Table 4.2. Oblique Plural of Words with Direct Plurals ending in Obvious Ye ي

No	Singular	Direct Plural	Oblique Plural
1	*gaadday*	*gaaddi*	*gaaddow*
	گاډی	گاډي	گاډو
	car	*cars*	*cars*
	gaaddai	*gaaddai*	*gaaddai*
	گاډی	گاډی	گاډیو
	cart	*carts*	*carts*
2	*spay*	*spi*	*spow*
	سپی	سپي	سپو
	dog	*dogs*	*dogs*
	spai	*spai*	*spayow*
	سپی	سپی	سپیو
	bitch	*bitches*	*bitches*
	مړی	مړي	مړو
	corpse	*corpses*	*corpses*
	مړی	مړی	مړیو
	morsel	*morsels*	*morsels*
3	*wa:ray*	*wa:ri*	*wa:row*
	وری	وري	ورو
	sheep	*sheep*	*sheep*
	wa:rai	*wa:rai*	*wa:rayow*
	وری	وری	وریو
	gum	*gums*	*gums*
4	*garray*	*garri*	*garrow*
	ګری	ګري	ګرو
	pitcher	*pitchers*	*pitchers*
	garrai	*garrai*	*garrayow*
	ګری	ګری	ګریو
	watch	*watches*	*watches*
5	*peyttay*	*peytti*	*peyttow*
	پیټی	پیټي	پیټو
	backpack	*backpacks*	*backpacks*
	peyttai	*peyttai*	*pettayow*
	پیټی	پیټی	پیټیو
	box	*boxes*	*boxes*
6	*kili*	*kilai*	*kilayow*
	کلي	کلی	کلیو
	key	*keys*	*keys*
	ka:lay	*ka:li*	*ka:low*
	کلی	کلي	کلو
	village	*villages*	*villages*

7	*khpa:lsaray*	*khpalsari*	*khpalsarow*
	خپلسری	خپلسري	خپلسرو
	rebellious	*rebellious*	*rebellious*
	khpalsari	*khpalsarai*	*khpalsarayow*
	خپلسري	خپلسری	خپلسریو
	rebellion	*rebellions*	*rebellions*
8	*spin sta:rgay*	*spin sta:rgi*	*spin sta:rgayow*
	سپین سترګی	سپین سترګي	سپین سترګو
	impudent	*impudent*	*impudent*
	سپین سترګي	سپین سترګی	سپین سترګیو
	Impudence	*Impudence*	Impudence
9	*hila*	*hiley*	*hilow*
	هیله	هیلي	هیلو
	hope	*hopes*	*hopes*
	hilai	*hilai*	*hilayow*
	هیلی	هیلی	هیلیو
	Deer	*Deer*	*Deer*
11	*kowtta*	*kowttey*	*kowttow*
	کوټه	کوټي	کوټو
	Rooms	*Rooms*	*Rooms*
	kowttai	*kowttai*	*kowttayow*
	کوټی	کوټی	کوټیو
	Mansion	*Mansions*	*Mansions*
12	*towray*	*towri*	*towrow*
	توری	توري	تورو
	Letters	*Letters*	*Letters*
	towrai	*towrai*	*towrayow*
	توری	توری	توریو
13	*ka:rrkai*	*ka:rrkai*	*ka:rrkayow*
	کړکی	کړکی	کړکیو
	Window	*Windows*	*Windows*
	ka:rrkay	*ka:rrki*	*ka:rrkow*
	کړکی	کړکي	کړکو
	Reed	*Reeds*	*Reeds*
14	*gha:rray*	*gha:rri*	*gha:rrow*
	غړی	غړي	غړو
	Member	*Members*	*Members*
	gharrai	*gharrai*	*gharrayow*
	غړی	غړی	غړیو
	Throat	*Throats*	*Throats*
15	*khwaarzwaakay*	*khwaarzwaaki*	*khwaarzwaakow*
	خوارځواکی	خوارځواکي	خوارځواکو
	Weak	The weak	The weak
	khwaarzwaaki	*khwaarzwaakai*	*khwaarzwaakayow*
	خوارځواکي	خوارځواکی	خوارځواکیو
	Weakness	Weaknesses	Weaknesses

It can be seen in the table above that the oblique plural forms of words ending in masculine Yey with their direct plural form terminating in obvious Yey should be formed by replacing the obvious Yey with the و /waaw/ to achieve the correct oblique plural forms thereof.

4.3.2. Words with Direct Plurals ending in Feminine Yey

In case the *direct plural* form of a word ends in feminine yey ی, the oblique plural form of that word will be formed by replacing the feminine Yey ی with یو /yow/. For instance, the direct form of ځواني /dzwaani/ is ځوانی /dzwaanai/, to form its oblique plural form, the feminine Yey ی is replaced with یو /yow/ resulting in the word ځوانیو /dzwaanayow/. Table 4.3 contains other such words with their correct and wrong oblique plural forms.

cdSingular	Direct Plural	Oblique Plural	Wrong form
سيالي	سيالى	سياليو	سيالو
syaali	*syaalai*	*syaalayow*	*syaalow*
زندګي	زندګى	زندګيو	زندګو
zindagi	*zindagai*	*zindagayow*	*zindagow*
خپلسري	خپلسرى	خپلسريو	خپلسرو
khpa:lsari	*khpa:lsarai*	*khpa:lsarayow*	*khpa:lsarow*
خواخوړي	خواخوړى	خواخوړيو	خواخوړو
khwaakhugji	*khwaakhugjai*	*Khwaakhugjayow*	*khwakhugjow*
ناروغي	ناروغى	ناروغيو	ناروغو
naaraowghi	*naarowghai*	*naarowghayow*	*naarowghow*
زورواکي	زورواکى	زورواکيو	زورواکو
zowrwaaki	*zowrwaakai*	*zowrwaakayow*	*zowrwaakow*
اتلولي	اتلولى	اتلوليو	اتلولو
atalwali	*atalwalai*	*atalwalayow*	*atalwalow*
ولسوالي	ولسوالى	ولسواليو	ولسوالو
wa:laswaali	*wa:laswaalai*	*wa:laswaalayow*	*wa:laswalow*
ښادي	ښادى	ښاديو	ښادو
sxaadi	*sxaadai*	*sxaadayow*	*sxaadayow*

The above table shows that to avoid the ambiguity of meaning, the oblique plural of words with their direct plural forms ending in feminine Yey should be formed by replacing the aforesaid Yey with يو /yow/ to achieve the correct oblique plural form thereof. The problem of ambiguity arising from oblique plurals of the words خپلسرى /khpa:lsaray/ and خپلسري /khpa:lsari/ is easily solved by considering the rules defined in part A above and part B herein.

4.3.3. Words with Singular and Direct Plural Forms ending in Feminine Yey

In case the *singular* form and *direct plural* form of a word terminate in feminine Yey ى, the Oblique plural form of such word will be formed by replacing the feminine Yey ى with يو/yow/ For instance, the direct *Plural* of کورنى /kowranai/ 'family' is also کورنى /kowranai/, to form its oblique plural form, the feminine Yey ى is replaced with يو /yow/, resulting in کورنيو /kowranayow/ 'families'. Table 4.4 below contains other such words with their correct and wrong oblique plural forms;

Singular	Direct Plural	Oblique Plural	Wrong Form
ډولى	ډولى	ډوليو	ډولو
ddowlai	*ddowlai*	*ddowlayo*	*ddowlow*
کورنى	کورنى	کورنيو	کورنو
kowranai	*kowranai*	*kowranayo*	*kowranow*
ډوډى	ډوډى	ډوډيو	ډوډو
ddowddai	*ddowddai*	*ddowddayow*	*ddowddow*
اونى	اونى	اونيو	اونو
ownai	*ownai*	*ownayow*	*ownow*
بهرنى	بهرنى	بهرنيو	بهرنو
bahranai	*bahranai*	*bahranayow*	*bahranow*
هګى	هګى	هګيو	هګو
hagai	*hagai*	*hagayow*	*hagow*
سلګى	سلګى	سلګيو	سلګو

From the above table, it is evident that the feminine Yey in the words terminating in such Yey should be replaced with يو to form the correct oblique plural form thereof. Which in case otherwise, will result in ambiguity of meaning. Consider, for example, the words توری /towray/ 'a letter', and توری /towrai/ 'a type of vegetable'. The correct oblique plural form of these two words will be تورو /towrow/ 'letters', and توريو /towrayow/ 'plural form of a type of vegetable', respectively.

4.3.4. Words with Direct Plurals ending in Long Yey

If the *direct plural* form of a word ends in *long* Yey ی, the Oblique plural form of that word will be formed by replacing long Yey ی with the letter و. The following table contains such words with their correct and wrong oblique plural forms.

Table 4.5. Oblique Plural forms of Words with their Direct Plural forms ending in Long Ye ی

Singular	Direct Plural	Oblique Plural	Wrong Form
دنده	دندی	دندو	دنديو
danda	*dandey*	*dandow*	*dandayow*
زده کړه	زده کړی	زده کړو	زده کړيو
zdakrra	*zdakrrey*	*zdakrrow*	*zdakrayow*
بېلګه	بېلګی	بېلګو	بېلګيو
beylga	*beylgey*	*beylgow*	*beylgayow*
ونده	ونډی	ونډو	ونډيو
wandda	*wanddey*	*wanddow*	*wanddayow*
توره	توری	تورو	توريو
tura	*turey*	*turow*	*turayow*
سندره	سندری	سندرو	سندريو
sandara	*sandarey*	*sandarow*	*sandarayow*

The above table shows that the direct plural form of ښځه /sxadza/ 'woman' is ښځی /sxadzey/ 'women', formed by replacing the letter ه with *long* Yey ی. To form the oblique plural form of its *direct plural*, the letter ی of the word ښځی /sxadzey/ is replaced with the letter و resulting in ښځو /sxadzow/ 'women'.

This also applies to the words where the direct plural form of a word ends in long Yey ی preceded by the letter و. The oblique plural form of such words will be formed by replacing the long Yey with the letter و. Table 4.6 contains such words with their correct and wrong oblique plural forms.

Table 4.6. Oblique Plural Form of the Words with their Direct Plural forms ending in long Yey ی preceded by و

Singular	Direct Plural	Oblique Plural	Wrong Form
خوا	خواوی	خواوو	خواويو
khwaa	*khwaawey*	*khwaawow*	*khwaawayow*
بریا	بریاوی	بریاوو	بریاويو
baryaa	*baryaawey*	*baryaawow*	*baryaawayow*
ارتیا	ارتیاوی	ارتیاوو	ارتیاویو
arrtyaa	*arrtyaawey*	*arrtyaawow*	*arrtyaawayow*
دعا	دعاوی	دعاوو	دعاويو
duaa	*duaawey*	*duaawow*	*duaawayow*
خطا	خطاوی	خطاوو	خطاويو
khataa	*khataawe*	*khataawow*	*khataawayow*
وینا	ویناوی	ویناوو	ویناويو
wainaa	*wainaawe*	*waainawow*	*wainawayow*
اسانتیا	اسانتیاوی	اسانتیاوو	اسانتیاويو
asaantyaa	*asaantyaawey*	*asaantyaawow*	*asaantyaawayow*
ښکلا	ښکلاوی	ښکلاوو	ښکلاويو
sxkolaa	*sxkolaawey*	*sxkolaawow*	*sxkolaawayow*
ښبړا	ښبړاوی	ښبړاوو	ښبړاويو
sxeyraa	*sxeyraawey*	*sxeyraawow*	*sxeyraawayow*
ستړیا	ستړیاوی	ستړیاوو	ستړیاويو
sta:rryaa	*sta:rryaawey*	*sta:rryaawow*	*sta:rryaawayow*

Table 4.6 clarifies that the direct plural form of a word ending in long Yey ی preceded by the letter و is formed by replacing the long Yey ی with the letter و as shown in the table for word خوا /khwaa/ 'side' with its direct plural form خواوی /khwaawey/ 'sides', resulting in the word خواوو /khwaawow/.

4.3.5. Exceptions

Some words, especially adjectives ending in obvious Yey ي do not change their original form as they're defining a singular/plural noun alike. (Usually, in Pashto, adjectives are also pluralized.) The word **ملي** /Milli/ 'national' will always be ملي /Milli/, whether used with a singular word or a plural word. For instance, د ملي اداری دندی /Da milli idarey dandey/ 'the duties of a national institution' or د ملي ادارو دندی

/Da milli idaarow dandey/ 'the duties of national institutions'.

Adjectives that change in their oblique plural forms can be formed by considering the gender of the word it is defining. If the masculine noun is defining a plural word, the oblique plural form of the adjective ending in the obvious ي will be formed as per rule A above. For instance, لیوني سړي /leywani sarri/ 'mad men', will become لیونو سړو /leywanow sarrow/. However, in case the plural noun is of the feminine gender, as the direct plural of adjective ends in the feminine Yey ی, the oblique form thereof will be formed as per rule C above. For example, لیونی ښځی /leywanai sxadzey/ 'mad women' will change into لیونیو ښځو /leywanayow sxadzow/. The following table contains other words for the exceptions thereof.

Table 4.7. Exceptions; Oblique Plural of Words with Singular and Direct Plurals ending in Obvious Ye ي

Singular	Direct Plural	Oblique Plural	Remarks
ملي *milli*	ملي *milli*	ملي *milli*	No change
افغاني *afghani*	افغاني *afghani*	افغاني *afghani*	No change
دولتي *dawlati*	دولتي *dawlati*	دولتي *dawlati*	No change
محلي *mahalli*	محلي *mahalli*	محلي *mahalli*	No change
مزاري *mazaari*	مزاري *mazaari*	مزاري *mazaari*	No change
چاپي *chaapi*	چاپي *chaapi*	چاپي *chaapi*	No change
ديني *dini*	ديني *dini*	ديني *dini*	No change
امنيتي *amniyati*	امنيتي *amniyati*	امنيتي *amniyati*	No change
ناڅاپي *naacaapi*	ناڅاپي *naacaapi*	ناڅاپي *naacaapi*	No change
كاري *kaari*	كاري *kaari*	كاري *kaari*	No change
كشفي *kashfi*	كشفي *kashfi*	كشفي *kashfi*	No change

It is evident from the above table that not all words terminating in obvious Yey can be changed in their oblique plural cases such as the words ملی /milli/ 'national', and افغاني /afghani/.

Words ending in the suffix والی /waalay/ as in چمتووالی /Chamtuwaalay/, یووالی /yawwaalay/, تاوتریخوالی /taawtrikhwaalay/, etc. also do not change their forms in its oblique plural form. Also, while the words terminating in different types of the letter Yey may also end in یانو /yaanow/ in their oblique plural forms along with یو /yow/, for instance, لیونی /lewanay/ ' a mad man' can have both لیونو /lewanow/ and لیونیانو /leywanyanow/ as its oblique plural forms, this may not be the case for all words ending in letter Yey. For instance, the word قرباني /korbaani/ can have two meanings; 'sacrifice' (noun) and 'a victim' (adjective). The letter Yey in both words can not be replaced with

یو while making the oblique plural case thereof. In case the word قرباني /korbani/ is used as a noun, which here means 'sacrifice', then the oblique plural case of this word will be قربانیو /korbaanayow/, keeping in view the direct plural form قربانی /korbaanai/ of this word. In case, it is used as an adjective, which means "victim", then the direct plural of this word will be قربانیان /korbaanyaan/ 'victims' and the oblique plural thereof will be قربانیانو /korbaanyaanow/ 'victims'. An example in this regard can be the following sentence; دولت د جنگ قربانیانو سره مرسته وکړه /dawlat da: jang korbaanyanow sara mrasta wakrra/ 'The government helped the victims of war'.

The following table contains the oblique plurals of words with their *Singular* and *Direct Plural* forms ending in the suffix والی /waalay/.

Table 4.8. Exceptions; Oblique Plural of Words with Singular and Direct Plurals ending in the word والی /walay/

Singular	Direct Plural	Oblique Plural
چمتووالی	چمتووالی	چمتووالی
chamtuwaalay	*chamtuwaalay*	*chamtuwaalay*
یووالی	یووالی	یووالی
yawwaalay	*yawwaalay*	*yawwaalay*
نژدي والی	نژدي والی	نژدي والی
nigjdeywaalay	*nigjdeywaalay*	*nigjdeywaalay*
سپین والی	سپین والی	سپین والی
spinwaalay	*spinwaalay*	*spinwaalay*
تاوتریخوالی	تاوتریخوالی	تاوتریخوالی
taawtrikhwaalay	*taawtrikhwaalay*	*taawtrikhwaalay*

Table 4.8 shows that some nouns ending in suffix والی /walay/ can not be changed in their oblique plural form and should be written without changing them.

When the last letter of a singular word ends in masculine Yey ی preceded by the letter Alif ا, the

oblique plural forms of such words are formed by replacing the masculine Yey ی with یو /yow/. For instance, the oblique plural forms of the words رای /raay/ will be رایو /raayow/ and ځای /dzaay/ will turn into ځایو /dzaayow/.

Table 4.9. Exceptions; Oblique Plural of Words with Direct Plurals ending in the masculine Yey ی preceded by Alif [ا]

Singular	Direct Plural	Oblique Plural
رای	رای	رایو
raay	*raay*	*raayow*
ځای	ځای	ځایو
dzaay	*dzaay*	*dzaayow*
سرای	سرای	سرایو
saraay	*saraay*	*saraayow*

In some cases, if the last letter of the direct plural of a word ends in masculine ی preceded by و, the oblique plural of such word will be formed by replacing the letter Yey with /yow/, and in some cases with و. The following table contains the oblique plurals of words ending in masculine ی preceded by و.

Table 4.10. Exceptions; Oblique Plural of Words with Direct Plurals ending in the masculine Yey ی preceded by *Waaw* [و]

Singular	Direct Plural	Oblique Plural
لوی	لوی	لویو
loy	*loy*	*loyow*
ساتندوی	ساتندوی	ساتندویو
saata:ndoy	*saata:ndoy*	*saata:ndoyow*
څارندوی	څارندوی	څارندویو
caara:ndoy	*caara:ndoy*	*caara:ndoyow*
مرستندوی	مرستندوی	مرستندویو
mrasta:ndoy	*mrasta:ndoy*	*mrasta:ndoyow*
هغه	هغوی	هغو
hagha	*haghoy*	*haghow*
دغه	دغوی	دغو
dagha	*daghoy*	*daghow*
دا/دۀ	دوی	دو
Daa/da:	*doy*	*dow*

As it can be seen, the rules and the examples cited in the tables above set a clear method for making the oblique plurals of words ending in the letter Yey and its different types, leaving less or no room for the ambiguity of meaning arising from the difference of opinion among grammarians in regard thereto.

5. Discussion

As described in the findings section, based on the answer to research question one, it is evident that, unlike the view of the author of this article, the trend of replacing most types of the letter Yey with یو /yow/ hasn't gained currency among writers and is not very significant to be counted as a trend. Concerning research questions two and three, it was also found that there existed a difference of opinion among grammarians as to what type of the letter Yey must be replaced with yow and what type with و, which had led to different sets of rules, resulting in confusion among writers and ambiguity in relation to such words. Therefore, the author aimed to put into practice the five abovementioned different options pertaining to the rules defined by grammarians and unearthed the problems a writer or a reader may encounter in relation to the oblique plural forms of words. For the sake of brevity, the author restricted himself to one or two examples for each set of options. For more examples, see Table 4 in the Finding section hereof.

Based on the above-mentioned rules, if the *option I* is considered, where all types of letter Yey can be replaced with و /waaw/ as defined by Raverty (1867), Roos-Keppel (1922), and Ayazi (1939), the oblique plural case of the word ناهیلی /naahilay/ 'disappointed', which terminates in masculine Yey ی, will be ناهیلو /naahilow/ 'plural of disappointed'. However, considering the related noun thereof which is the word ناهیلي /naahili/ 'disappointment', terminating in obvious Yey ي, the oblique plural thereof will be ناهیلو /naahilow/ which is the oblique plural case of the adjective ناهیلی /naahilay/ 'disappointed' as well.

In the same manner, considering the word سیالي /syaali/ 'competition', based on this option, as defined by Raverty (1867), Roos-Keppel (1922), and Ayazi (1939), the oblique plural thereof will be سیالو /syallow/ which is also the oblique plural form of the word سیال /syaal/ 'competitor'. In this case, there remains no difference between the oblique plural cases of the word's "competition" and "competitor". This means the oblique plural case of these words is ambiguous and the readers are mixed up whether the said word means the plural of competition or competitor.

If *option II* is put to test, where all types of the letter Yey can be replaced with یو /yow/ as defined by Lorimer (1902), the oblique plural case of the word خپلسری /khpa:lsaray/ 'rebellious', terminating in masculine Ye ی, will be خپلسریو /khpa:lsariyow/ 'plural of rebellious'. However, the oblique plural case of the word خپلسري /khpa:lsari/ 'rebellion', which terminates in obvious Yey ي, will be the same خپلسریو /khpa:lsariyow/ which is the plural form of rebellious as well.

Similarly, the oblique plural of the word هیلی /hiley/ 'plural of hope', based on rules defined by Lorimer (1902), will be هیلیو /hiliyow/ which is also

the oblique plural form of the word هيلى /hilai/ 'a deer'. This means for a reader to figure out what the writer meant by the word هيليو /hiliyow/ is a tough thing to do and the reader will be confused whether to accept it as the plural of "hope" or the plural of "a deer".

Based on *option III*, where all types of the letter Yey can be replaced with either يو /yow/ or و /yow/, as defined by Trumpp (1873), Comrie (1987), and Rishtin (2003), the same confusing results are achieved. For instance, making the oblique plural case of the word گادى /gaadday/ 'vehicle', terminating in masculine Yey ى, can be done in two ways; replacing the masculine Yey thereof with و /waaw/ or replacing the said letter with يو /yow/. If the letter Yey is replaced with و /waaw/, the oblique plural thereof will be گادو /gaaddow/ 'vehicles'. Similarly, if replaced with يو /yow/, it will result in the word گاديو /gaadayow/.

However, for the word گادى /gaaddai/ 'a cart', based on the rules defined by Trumpp (1873), Comrie (1987), and Rishtin (2003), the oblique plural form thereof will be گادو /gaaddow/, considering the feminine Yey thereof being replaced with و /waaw/. Also, if the feminine Yey of this word is changed into يو /yow/, as the grammatical rules of Trumpp (1873) and Rishtin (2003) allow us to do so, the oblique plural form of the said word will be گاديو /gaadayow/. This results in two oblique plural words گادو /gaaddow/ and گاديو /gaaddayow/. The question is which one of these two words is the oblique plural of گادى /gaadday/ 'a vehicle', and which one of them means گادى /gaaddai/ 'a cart', as both words can have the same two forms thereby creating confusion in respect to the meanings thereof.

Considering *option IV*, where as per Penzl (1957) all types of Yey can be replaced with either و /waaw/ or يو /yow/ except for the feminine Yey which is replaced with يو /yow/, the same results are achieved as described in the foregoing paragraph. For instance, the oblique form of both گادى /gaadday/ 'a vehicle' and گادى /gaaddai/ 'a cart' will be گاديو /gaaddayow/.

Even though the rules defined by Penzl (1957) are clearer than those defined by Raverty (1867), Roos-Keppel (1922), Ayazi (1939) and Lorimer (1902), however, the problem of ambiguity remains unsolved.

Based on *option V*, as defined by Tegey & Robson (1996), David (2013), and Rasulzada (2016), all types of the letter Yey can be replaced with و /waaw/ or يو /yow/ except for the feminine Yey ى which can only be replaced with يو /yow/, and the long Yey ى which can only be replaced with و /waaw. Compared with other Options this set of rules has provided further clarity based on the types of Yey, however, the problem of ambiguity has remained unsolved. For example, as per these rules;

a) The masculine and obvious Yey can be replaced with either و /waaw/ or يو /yow/ as seen in the rules defined by Trumpp (1873), Comrie (1987), and Rishtin (2003)

b) The feminine Yey can only be replaced with يو /yow/ as defined by Penzl (1957)

c) The long Yey can only be replaced with و /waaw/ as seen in the rules defined by Tegey & Robson (1996), David (2013), and Rasulzada (2016)

In view of the abovementioned, and avoiding the repetition of examples presented in the paragraphs hereinabove, the oblique plural case of the word خواخورى /khwaakhugji/ 'sympathy', and خواخورې /khwaakhugjay/ 'sympathetic', will be خواخوريو /khwaakhugjayow/ for both of the aforesaid words. In the same manner, the word خواخورو /khwaakhugjow/ will also be the oblique plural case of both of the abovementioned words. Common sense says, and the grammatical traditions also require that there should be two different oblique plural cases of these two words. Such that one should be خواخوريو /khwaakhugjayow/ and the other should be خواخورو /khwaakhugjow/ instead of saying that both can be used as the alternate form of the other.

Also, the oblique plural cases of the word بناپيرى /sxaapeyray/ 'a male fairy', and بناپيرى /sxaapeyrai/ 'a female fairy', will be represented by the words بناپيريو /sxaapeyrayow/ and بناپيرو /sxaapeyrow/ for either of them. This means the reader will not be able to differentiate between the genders in the oblique plural form while in the singular and direct plural forms the genders thereof are clear.

It is noticed that all sets of options discussed herein have the problem of ambiguity when it comes to replacing different types of the letter Yey with و /waaw/ or يو /yow/ even though some of the grammarians and authors such as Tegey & Robson (1996), David (2013), and Rasulzada (2016) have decreased the level of ambiguity to some extent as compared with Raverty (1867), Roos-Keppel (1922), Ayazi (1939), Trumpp (1873), Comrie (1987), and Rishtin (2003) by narrowing down on the types of letter Yey, however, the problem of ambiguity remains when it comes to the obvious Yey ي and the masculine Yey.

From the above discussion, it can be concluded that not all types of letter Yey should be replaced with يو /yow/. It is also clear that all types thereof should not be replaced with و /waaw/, either; instead, some types should be replaced with و and some with يو /yow/. While making the oblique plural case of the words terminating in different types of the letter Yey, to avoid ambiguity, the author suggests, in light of all sets of rules discussed above, the following solution;

a) The oblique plural cases of words terminating in different types of the letter Yey are made considering the *direct plural* form of the word and not on the basis of the *singular form* of the word terminating in different types of the letter Yey.

b) Only the feminine Yey ی is replaced with یو /yow/.

c) The masculine Yey ی, the obvious Yey, and the long Yey ي are replaced with و /waaw/ only.

d) As the obvious Yey ي in words terminating in such Yey changes into feminine Yey in its *direct plural* form, therefore, the *oblique plural* form of the words terminating in the obvious Yey ي is made by replacing the feminine Yey in its direct plural form with یو /yow/.

Now, if considered in light of the rules suggested by the author of this article, the problem of ambiguity does not remain in relation to the oblique plural cases of the words presented as examples in all the abovementioned options. For instance, the oblique plural forms of the words ناهیلی /naahilay/ 'disappointed' and ناهيلي /nahili/ 'disappointment', will be as follows;

a) The direct plural form of the word ناهیلی /naahilay/ 'disappointed' is ناهيلي /naahili/ 'plural of disappointed'. In order to make its oblique plural form, the obvious Yey ي of the direct plural form thereof should be replaced with و /waaw/ resulting in ناهیلو /naahilow/ 'plural of disappointed'.

b) The direct plural form of the word ناهيلي /naahilay/ 'disappointment' is ناهیلی /naahilai/ 'plural of disappointment'. In order to make its oblique plural form, the feminine Yey ی of the direct plural form thereof should be replaced with یو /yow/ resulting in ناهيلیو /naahilayow/ 'plural of disappointment.'

In the above example, it is clear that the oblique plural form of the word ناهیلی /naahilay/ 'disappointed' is ناهیلو /naahilow/ 'plural of disappointed', and the oblique plural form of the word ناهیلي /naahili/ 'disappointment' is ناهيلیو /naahilayow/ 'plural of disappointment'.

Similarly, in the case of the long Yey, the word هیلي /hiley/ 'plural of hope' which is the *direct plural* of the word هیله /hila/ 'hope', the long Yey thereof is replaced with و /waaw/ resulting in هیلو /hilow/ 'plural of hope'. Also, the *oblique plural* case of the word هیلی /hilai/ 'a deer' is made by replacing the feminine Yey ی of the *direct plural* form thereof, هیلی /hilai/ 'deers', with یو /yow/, resulting in هیلیو /hilayow/ 'deers'.

In the same manner, regarding the obvious Yey, the example of خواخوري /khwaakhugji/ 'sympathy' as discussed in the foregoing paragraphs, is presented here in the light of the rules suggested by the author of this article. The *direct plural* form of خواخوري /khwaakhugji/ 'sympathy' is خواخوری /khwaakhugjai/ 'sympathies'. In order to make its *oblique plural* case, the feminine Yey ی of its *direct plural* form is changed into یو, resulting in خواخوریو /khwaakhugjayow/ 'sympathies'. Comparing the adjective خواخوری /khwaakhugjay/ 'sympathetic' with

the foregoing word, the word خواخورو /khwaakhugjow/ 'plural of sympathetic' is achieved by replacing the feminine Yey ی with یو /yow/. This shows that there is a clear difference between the oblique plural forms of the aforesaid words; خواخوریو /khwaakhugjayow/ 'sympathies', and خواخورو /khwaakhugjow/ 'plural of sympathetic'.

From the explanation above, it is evident that the problem of ambiguity arises mainly due to the two types of Yey; the masculine Yey ی and the obvious Yey ي. This is due to the fact that apart from other grammarians, Tegey & Robson (1996), David (2013), and Rasulzada (2016) have also suggested that these can be replaced with either و /waaw/ or یو /yow/, even though, unlike others, these three authors were clear about the long Yey ي, and the feminine Yey ی. As the obvious Yey ي of the word terminating in this letter also changes to feminine Yey ی in its direct plural form, therefore, the oblique plural forms of the words terminating in the obvious Yey also end in یو /yow/ as described in the foregoing examples in the light of the proposed rules. However, the reason writers tend to replace the masculine Yey ی with یو /yow/ can be due to the fact that as per the rules defined by grammarians mentioned herein, this type of Yey is replaced with either یو /yow/ or و /waaw/ which results in ambiguity and the wrong oblique plural form as discussed previously in this part.

Apart from that, the reason why grammarians have defined an alternate form for the words ending in masculine Yey ی, and why some writers today also replace it with یو /yow/, seems to be the dialect factor, too. In some dialects of the Pashto language, the words that end in the masculine Yey ی are also pronounced almost similar to the feminine Yey ی. For instance, in some dialects of Pashto, the type of Yey used in the word سړی /sarray/ 'man' is pronounced as Verbal Yey ئ in which case the pronunciation of the word sarray sounds like سړئ /sarrai/, almost similar to the feminine Yey in the word سیالی /syaalai/ 'competition'. Also, before the introduction of the five types of Yey in the Pashto language, there used to be only four types of Yey; the obvious Yey ي, the masculine Yey ی, the long Yey ي, and the verbal Yey ئ which excluded the Feminine Yey ی. Words of feminine nature were also written with Verbal Yey ئ, for instance, in Mohammad Azayi's book, Qavaid-i Pashto (1939-40), while defining the types of Yey, he has defined the Verbal Yey ئ both for feminine words and for verbs where someone is addressed to do something. For instance, he has written the word سپی /spai/ 'a female dog' is written with the Verbal Yey as سپئ /spai/ and used the same Yey in the example ځئ /dzai/ meaning 'You go'. The use of this type of Yey for the aforementioned types of Yey can also be seen in the work of other writers published before the feminine Yey ی was introduced (Rasulzada 2016). However, the use of verbal Yey ئ for words of feminine gender is restricted now in written

publications because the said words are now written with feminine Yey ی.

As the words ending in masculine Yey ی and feminine Yey ی are pronounced almost the same in some dialects of Pashto, writers tend to make the oblique plurals of words ending in masculine Yey in the same manner as they make such plurals for words ending in the feminine Yey. This problem has worsened due to the current rules as most of them are defined based on the letter Yey and its types in the singular form of the words.

One other reason that writers tend to replace most types of the letter Yey with یو /yow/ might be the inclination of Pashtun writers towards verbosity. It has been noticed that Pashtun writers tend to opt for wordy sentences and the principle of brevity seems to create a sense of incompleteness in them. Brevity and conciseness which have gained currency in almost all languages are being incorporated at a very slow, and even negligible pace, especially compared with other languages that are close to Pashto. Pashtun writers deliberately choose unnecessarily long words and prefer wordy sentences. If some of the sentences are observed in the platforms mentioned hereinabove, it can be noted that the relevant authors are preferring wordy sentences. For instance, comparing the sentences; د ایکو سازمان ترونونه په نړيواله کچه لاسليک کيږي /da: eikow saazmaan tarrununa pa: narraiwaala kacha laaslik kigji/ 'The agreements of the ECO organization are signed on international level' (BBC Pashto, 2013), and د ۳۰ هېوادونو د استازو په شتون کې د /da: 30 طالبانو او امريکايانو ترمنځ د سولې ترون لاسليکيږي hewaadunow da: astaazow pa: shtun key da: taalibanow aw amrikaayaanow ta:r manz da: sowley tarrun laaslikigji / 'Peace agreement will be signed between Americans and the Taliban in the presence of 30 representatives' (BBC Pashto, 2020), it becomes clear that in both sentences the Pashto word used for the word signed are لاسليک کيږي /laaslik kigji/ and لاسليکيږي /laaslikigji/. Both of these words are used by the same platform in different pieces of writings, however, the longer version لاسليک کيږي /laaslik kigji/ is preferred such that more than the shorter one. Same is the case for the comparison of other words such as پيل کوي /payl kawi/ 'starts'(Azadi Radio Pashto, 2020; Deutsche Welle Pashto, 2012; VOA Pashto, 2016), and پيلوي /paylawi/ 'starts'(Azadi Radio Pashto, 2021; Deutsche Welle Pashto, 2018; VOA Pashto, 2020).

In addition, the phrase عيد مبارک /Eid Mubarak/ 'Happy Eid', in Arabic, Persian and Urdu has paved its journey of brevity throughout the years such that in Arabic عيدکم مبارک /Eidokom Mobarak/ 'Happy Eid to you', is shortened to عيد مبارک /Eid Mubarak/ 'Happy Eid', dropping the word کم/kom/ 'your'. Also, the same phrase is written as عيدکم سعيدا /Eidokom Saeedan/ 'Happy Eid to you', which has an alternative brief form of عيدا سعيدا /Eidan Saeedan/ 'Happy Eid" dropping کم /kom/ 'your'.

In Persian, the aforementioned phrase has been used as عيد شما مبارک باشد /Eide shomaa mobarak baashad/ 'Happy Eid to you', عيد تان مبارک /Eide taan mobarak/ 'Happy Eid to you' and عيد مبارک /Eid Mobarak/ 'Happy Eid'. The latter is now used as the widely used version thereof in written Dari/Persian dropping the words شما/ shoma/ 'your/ and باشد /baashad/ 'be'. However, in conversations and spoken Dari, the former versions are still used. Similarly, in Urdu, the said phrase is written as آپکو عيد مبارک هو /aapko Eid mobarik ho/ 'Happy Eid to you'. This phrase has an alternate form of عيد مبارک /Eid Mobarik/ 'Happy Eid' which is now the commonly used form thereof. However, this trend is not seen in relation to the Pashto phrase اختر مو مبارک شه /Akhta:r mow mobaarak sha/ or اختر دي مبارک شه /akhta:r dey mobaarak sha/ 'Happy Eid to you'. Even though recently an alternate form thereof, اختر مبارک /akhtar mobarak/ 'Happy Eid' is noticed on social media, however, it has not become common and widely used due to the inclination of writers toward verbosity.

Another example is the excess use of the preposition د /da:/ 'of' in sentences even if the sentence makes sense without using it in some parts of the sentence. The phrase د دفاع د وزارت د ويناد وينا /da: defaa da: wezaarat da: wayaand wayna/ 'Defense Ministry spokesperson's speech/ can be written in three different ways with the reduced number of preposition د /da:/ 'of', as under;

a) د دفاع د وزارت وياند وينا /da: defaa da: wezaarat wayaand waynaa/

b) د دفاع وزارت د وياند وينا /da: defaa wezaarat da: wayaand wayna/

c) د دفاع وزارت وياند وينا /da: defaa wezaarat wayand waynaa/, and

d) دفاع وزارت وياند وينا /defaa wezaarat wayaand wayna/.

As it can be seen, the same sentence can be written with different numbers of the preposition د /da:/ 'of' with a maximum of 3 times and a minimum of one or even with no use thereof, conveying the same meaning. However, the writers tend to opt for the one with more usage of د /da:/. The same sentence can also be written, even in English, in four different ways by using the preposition 'of' and possessive apostrophes. The use of possessive apostrophes has declined throughout the years in the English language (Sklar, 1976). And a reduced usage of the preposition 'of' is preferred.

a) The speech of the spokesperson of the Ministry of Defense,

b) Speech of Defense Ministry's spokesperson

c) Ministry of Defense spokesperson's speech,

d) Defense Ministry's spokesperson's speech, or

e) Defense Ministry spokesperson speech.

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Analysis of the foregoing points shows that only the feminine Yey ی should be replaced with یو /yow/ while making the oblique plural case of words terminating in different types of the letter Yey. Replacing all types of Yey with یو /yow/ or replacing all with و /waaw/ while making the oblique plural of words terminating in different types of the letter Yey leads to ambiguity and wrong meaning of words. It is clear that grammarians' opinions differ when it comes to the rules of making the oblique plural of words ending in different types of the letter Yey which has led to confusion amongst Pashtun writers as to what type of this letter must be replaced with و and what type thereof with یو, resulting in the ambiguity of meaning in relation to different words when used in their oblique plural form.

The difference of opinion among grammarians in regard to the oblique plural of words terminating in the letter Yey, the dialect factor, and the tendency of writers toward verbosity, have led to the current trend of writers to replace most types of letter Yey with یو /yow/ leading to ambiguity in written material. Apart from that, there exists no touchstone to figure out the correct oblique plural case of words ending in the letter Yey and its different types. It is also evident that the problem of ambiguity arising from the lack of clarification in the rules thereof has not been explored and looked into by any grammarian or author in their work.

Therefore, it is the first study in this regard and new rules hereof solve the problem of ambiguity of meaning by proposing specific and clear rules for each type of the letter Yey. The new rules provide writers with a set of guidelines to make such oblique plurals and avoid ambiguity in their writing. This study opens a window into future research for grammarians to look into the current and proposed rules and the related areas thereof. In addition, the issue of Pashtun writers' tendency toward verbosity is brought to the fore in this article which is also one of the reasons they stick to the practice of replacing all types of Yey with یو while making the oblique plural of words. The issue of verbosity in writing by Pashtun writers, for instance, the excess use of the preposition د /da:/ 'of' is also brought to the attention of those interested in Pashto language research, which is worth studying in detail.

6. Conclusion

In view of the above, and in light of the answers to the research questions hereof, the paper concludes that replacing most types of the letter Yey with یو while making the oblique plural cases of words terminating in different types of the said letter is not a very popular trend and as per the results, during the years 2010 till 2020 the occurrence of the words where the oblique plurals of such words were obtained by replacing the relevant type of the letter Yey with یو /yow/ was 32.28 per cent compared with 67.71 per cent of words where the oblique plurals were obtained by replacing the relevant type of the letter Yey with و /waaw/.

The result also showed that the trend of replacing most types of the letter Yey with یو /yow/ had only gained pace after the year 2016, however, it was lagging far behind compared with that of replacing it with و /waaw. This infers that not all types of the letter Yey should be replaced with و, or with یو either as replacing all types thereof with یو /yow/, or replacing all, or most of them, with و /waaw/ either, will create problems in differentiating the meaning of words used in the related text. It is also proven that only one type of the letter Yey i-e the feminine Yey ی can be replaced with یو /yow/ while making the oblique plural of words terminating in the letter Yey. The study resulted in clear rules for each type of the letter Yey to form the oblique plural cases of words terminating in different types thereof on the basis of the said letter in the direct plural form of words, unlike the previous rules where most of them are based on the letter Yey in the singular form of the word that led to ambiguity. The new rules provide the writers with a simple and easy-to-follow guide for making the oblique plural cases of such words thereby avoiding the problem of ambiguity. This research is the first of its kind on the problems associated with the grammatical rules of the oblique plural cases of words terminating in the letter Yey and will open the door to further research in this area.

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