A Descriptive Analysis of Inflectional Morphology of Shina Language

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Abstract

This paper investigates the functions and patterns of inflectional morphemes of Shina language. The data was collected from native speakers and the Item-and-Process approach was used as the theoretical framework. The qualitative approach was employed for data analysis, utilizing linear tables and theoretical discussions to represent relevant examples of inflectional morphemes of Shina. It has been observed that Shina has strongly suffixing inflectional morphology, affixes are exclusively suffixal. Accent is strongly marked in Shina. Phonetic reduction and addition also marks the cases in it. And Shina is a pitch accented language, which means every word has one syllable that is accented stressed or prominent in comparison to the rest of the syllables. Every word in Shina has only one accented syllable irrespective of whether the word is monosyllabic or polysyllabic.

Keywords: Polysyllabic, Inflectional Morphemes, Item-and-Process Approach, Monosyllabic

1. INTRODUCTION

The objective of this paper is to explore different patterns of inflectional morphology of Shina language. Understanding how Shina language employs various inflectional morphemes to denote case, number and gender in nouns remains an intriguing area. By investigating the variations in inflectional system, the paper seeks to uncover the underlying grammatical frameworks of the language. This effort enhances the understanding of linguistic typology and highlights the significance of language structure. Such insights can prove beneficial for second language learners dealing with the complexities of a new language with distinct morphology.

1.2 Shina Language

Shina is a Dardic language spoken by people living in a large mountainous region that stretches from northern areas of Pakistan, northwestern India, including Azad Kashmir, Indian-held Kashmir and northeastern parts of Afghanistan. The local pronunciation of Shina varies slightly with some people pronouncing it as /ʃìnã̃/ and others as /ʃìŋã̃/. According to Kohistani and Schmidt (2006), Shina-speaking areas in Pakistan are include Gilgit, Tangir-Darel, Lower hunza, Astor and Chilas. While In

India, it is spoken in the Neelam drainage, the Tiliel valleys and Gurez, Ladakh and Drass plain. In Jammu and Kashmir, there are two main varieties of Shina: Gurezi, which is spoken in the valley known as Gurez in District Bandipora (Schmidt et al., 2008; Shams et al., 2022) According to Bagoro (2019) Shina has approximately two million native speakers across Gilgit-Baltistan. Bailey (1924) categorized Shina into three dialects based on geographic regions. Gilgiti dialect group is spoken in the Gilgit region including varieties spoken in the towns of Gilgit, Ghizer and Danyore. While Astorii: spoken in Gurez and Dras regions of Pakistan. The 3rd is Kohistani group; it is spoken in Chilas regions (Kohistani & Schmidt 2006, Shams et al. 2022).

Radloff (1992) has found four main groups of how Shina is spoken and these groups are a bit similar to each other. The first group is in the north, including the Gilgit valley, Hunza and other nearby places. The second group is in the east, including the Astor valley, Baltistan and Dras valley on Indian side. The third group is in the Diamer area starting from Chilas and other valleys nearby. The fourth group is in Kohistan which is made up of three valleys on the east side of the Indus River.

Gilgiti is the main dialect of Shina has been put forward by scholars based on historical and political considerations. According to Radloff (1992) Gilgiti is generally well understood by speakers of other Shina dialects and could be considered as standard dialect. Lorimer (1927) noted that the Gilgiti dialect is considered the "standard speech".
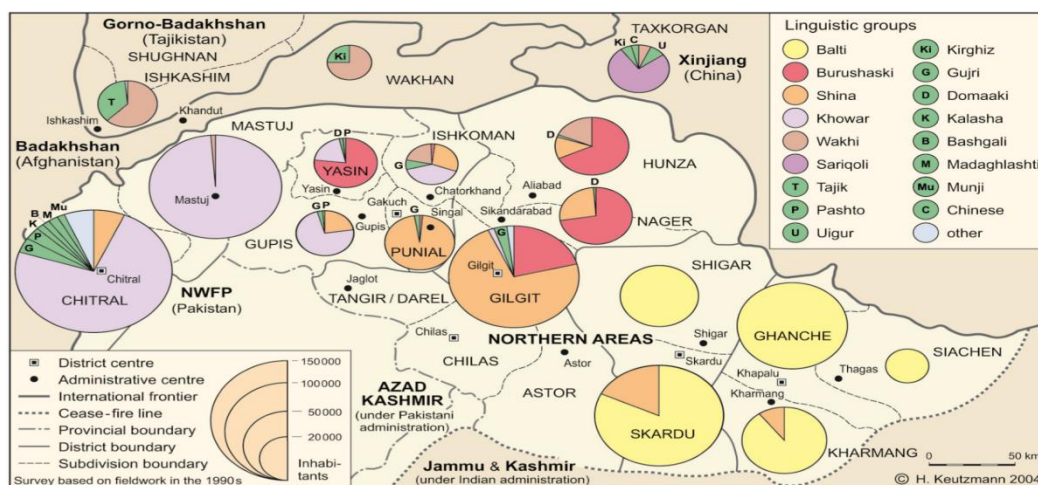

Figure 1.1 Linguistic Diversity of Northern Areas of Pakistan

1.3   Theoretical Framework

This paper employs the theoretical framework known as the Item-and-Process approach, initially proposed by Hockett (1954) this framework serves as the lens through which the study explores how complex words in languages are formed through the operation of various processes on simpler words. For instance, the transformation of *"Rat" to "Rats"* through suffixation or *"Proper"* to *"Improper"* through prefixation showcases this characteristic. And the Shina language employs suffixation as its primary word formation process. For instance, the word "*Bat"* (stone) becomes *"Bati"* (stones) and *"Musha"* (man) becomes *"Mushei"* (Men). And both "*Bati" and "Mushei"* represent plural forms and are formed by applying the "make plural" function to the lexeme's *"Bat" and "Musha."* An intriguing aspect of word formation process of Shina is the variability in plural markers which depends on the ending of the singular noun (Shams, et al. 2022). This variation in plural markers, a unique characteristic of Shina is explored in greater detail in this paper. This paper not only highlights the patterns and functions of inflectional morphology of Shina language but also contributes to the broader field of linguistics by emphasizing the diversity and intricacies of linguistic structure.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Morphology is the study of the structure and word formation. It observes how words are built from smaller components called morphemes which are the smallest elements of meaning Anwar et al. (2023) suggested that in Shina, a morpheme is considered *"Free"* when it can exist independently as a separate word without needing to be attached to another morpheme. For example, *"Tom" "Buut" and "Paa"* are all examples of free morphemes. Each of these words can convey meaning on its own without additional context representing specific items or concepts. Inflections are linguistic elements that bring grammatical information to words without altering their fundamental meanings. Inflectional morphemes modify the form of a word to carry specific grammatical information, such as, number, case, or gender without creating an entirely new word. These affixes are added to the base or root word to provide additional details about its grammatical function within a sentence. In the context of number, inflectional morphemes can signal whether a word represents a singular or

multiple entities. In terms of case, inflectional morphemes contribute in distinguishing grammatical functions within a sentence and differentiate between the subjects and object roles. Additionally, when it comes to gender, these morphemes play a crucial role in marking distinctions between masculine and feminine forms in languages that exhibit gendered nouns.

Fromkin & Rodman (1998) explained that the study of word structure and rules, by which these words are formed is called morphology. In Shina, the morpheme is an abstract category, which has either grammatical or lexical meaning. A morpheme can either be bound or free, it can be a root, base or an affix. A morpheme can be a content or functional morpheme (Anwar et al. 2023) In Shina language, there are two versions of nouns: Singular and Plural. To make plural you add the suffix "-i" to the singular form without altering it. Such as '*'Kut''* means *"Wall"* and *''Kuti''* means "*Walls"* while '*'Kor''* means *"Mountain"* and *''Kori''* means *"Mountains".* In some cases, you may find the suffix *"-éh"* and occasionally *-éh"* used for pluralization: such as *[ʤak]* means *"People"* and *[ʤakéh]* means *"Peoples".*

2.1 Inflectional Categories in Shina

According to Aronoff & Fudeman (2011) The inflections of Shina language is all about creating different grammatical forms like present and future, past and plural, feminine and masculine, case and number. Shina language features two noun genders: feminine and masculine, the gender assignment for nouns related to the animal kingdom including humans and animals aligns with their biological sex. While for other nouns there are no consistent rules and they can be either masculine or feminine. Schmidt (2008, p. 40)

According to Bailey (1924, p. 5) accent plays an important role in Shina language influencing the way nouns decline and verbs conjugate. During the process of inflection, morphophonemic changes occur, where the accent shifts and moves towards the end of the root. This change leads to the attachment of suffix vowels directly to the root such as, the oblique suffix and the plural suffix. The oblique suffix represented by '/-e/', precedes various case markers indicating location, direction and possession, such as '/-t/' for 'to' '/-r/' for 'in' '/-kaar/' for 'for', and such as. */Baabu/*

'Father' (sing) /Baabei/ (Plural) /Baab-e-t/ (Sing oblique /- e / and dative marker /-t / 'to') /Baab-o-t/ (Plural oblique /-o / dative marker /-t /. The Shina language has only one agent case denoted as Agent ''I'' or ''se'' with the suffix '-s' marking the subjects of all tenses of transitive verbs. *In Shina the possessive singular case suffix remains unchanged regardless of the gender of the possessed noun.* (Radloff 1999)

In Shina morphology, terms like 'base' 'root' and 'stem' are interchangeably used to describe the essential part of word after removing all affixes. Shina marks cases with suffixes which are affixed to the base. (Bailey 1924). According to Anwar et al. (2022). In Shina language words undergo various changes by adding extra parts to indicate their role in a sentence such as timing or participants involved. These changes are grouped into two main categories: One for nouns and another for verbs. For nouns, the endings they acquire depend on factors like, plurality, masculine or feminine gender and their grammatical function in a sentence such as, being the subject or indicating ownership (Shams et al., (2022).
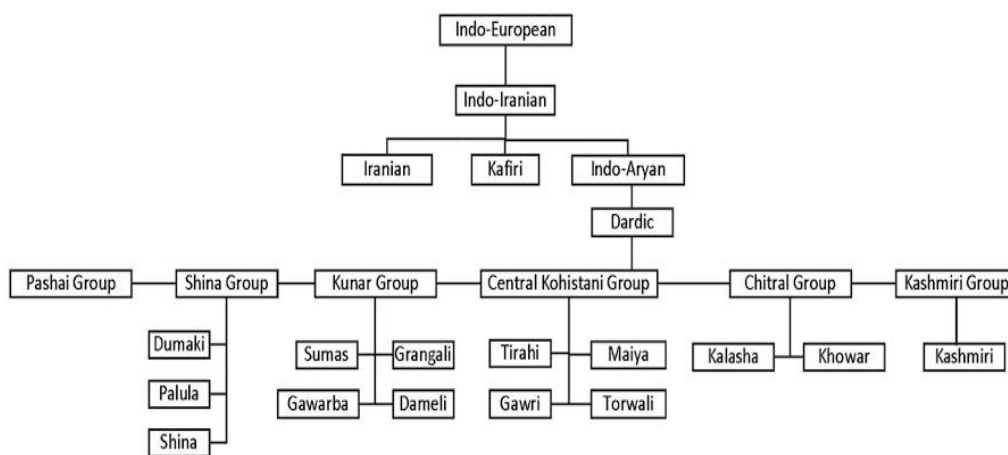

Figure 2.1 Dardic Language Family

METHODOLOGY

This paper adopts a qualitative methodology focusing on library research to examine aspects of language, with a specific emphasis on inflectional morphemes of Shina. The researcher selects specific linguistic elements from Shina to identify the functions of inflectional morphemes. It also employs a descriptive analysis approach following Dornyei (2014) framework meticulously studying various nouns, verbs, adjective forms in language and describing their functions and patterns by undertaking an in-depth investigation.

The scope and nature of the research are grounded in the ontological stance of constructivism and subjective reality. According to constructivists, reality is subjective and is derived from the experiences of individuals who participate in the study (Kim, 2005) Descriptive linguistics serves as the foundation for describing a language and it begins by collecting data from various speakers within the linguistic community (François & Pasonnet, 2013). In the context of structural linguistics, the collected data can be analyzed by linguists in a manner that allows language structures to emerge through system internal analysis rather than imposing structures from other languages. This approach ensures the linguistic structures observed in the Shina language within their own linguistic context.

The data is displayed by combining two methods namely theoretical discussion and linear tables. The investigator creates tables that include essential content of inflectional morphemes from Shina. The purpose of each table is to demonstrate a particular role of morphemes in a certain part of speech in this language. A theoretical explanation is given right after each table to provide more clarification.

Data Analysis

Inflectional morpheme is generalized to a specific paradigm based on its morphological structure and grammatical category that must occur with all the various words of the similar paradigm. The final phoneme of the base form in Shina determines the inflectional morpheme, which obtains its inflections according to the phonological form of the word. As a result, the inflectional morpheme "-eh" is used to pluralize nouns that finish in "B" such as *Kitab→ Kitabeh, Rabab→Rababeh, and Merab→Merabeh*. See the table below

Table 4.1 Nature of Inflectional Morphemes in the Shina Language

Kitab/Merab /Rabab	Kitabeh/ Merabeh/ Rababeh	-eh
Baal /Kon /Bat	Bali /Koni /Bati	-i
Chey /Musha /Ashpu	Cheyai /Mushai /Ashpai	-ai

4.1 Inflections in Shina Common Regular-Nouns

The inflectional morphemes in Shina common nouns serve three main functions. It shows the number, gender and case of common nouns. One important thing to know is that the difference between feminine and masculine is made only by the language phonology. On the basis of its final phoneme, each inflection is assigned to the common nouns.

Table 4.2 Inflectional Morphology of Shina Common-Noun

Noun	Fem Noun	Direct case	Mas. oblique	Direct case fem	Fem oblique
Ispaa	Ispaai	Baal	Bali	Mulai	Mulaye
Bodu	Bodi	Baru	Bary	Bari	Barie/baroo
Khacho	Khachi	Mishto	Mishteh	Mishit	Mishto/mishti
Dewano	Dewani	Dewano	Sheyo	Sheyi	Chateh/dewaneh
Ajonu	Ajoni	Nawachu	Kineh	Kini	Kino/kineh

It's clear that Shina common nouns are quite extensive and sophisticated. Nouns are inflected for gender (feminine/masculine) and case (oblique/direct) and number (singular/plural). Additionally, according to the last phoneme of the noun, Shina employs a variety of different inflectional morphemes. Because it includes the phonological interference in morphological formations.

4.2 Inflections in Shina Irregular Common Nouns

In kinship terminology, Shina contains a large number of irregular nouns. Kinship nouns have irregular constructions in almost all of their direct and oblique plural forms. But in all of these irregular nouns, inflections serve the same function that they do in regular nouns.

Table 4.3 Inflections in Common Irregular Nouns in Shina

Basic Noun	Direct Sing.	Direct Plural	Oblique Sing.	Oblique plural
Aaji (mother)	Aajy/mayary	Maly/mayary	Mali	Mayaro /ajoo
Dee (daughter)	Dee/desochi	Dejary/desochy	Deyo	Dejaro/desocho
Jaa (brother)	Jaa	Jary/jaro	Jaa	Jaro /jary
Picha (uncle)	Picha	Pichey/pichaai	Picha	Picharo/picho

The number and case of nouns are marked in Shina by a vast number of irregular inflections. A wide range of Shina irregular inflections is a result of the interaction between its morphology and phonology.

4.3 Shina Proper Noun Inflections

Usually proper nouns cannot be made plural in languages. Functions of inflections is quite limited in proper nouns. But Shina inflects the gender of proper nouns in the vocative case. As an indicator of the vocative case in masculine proper noun, the inflectional morpheme "-o" is usually added to the end of the names of animals and male humans.

Table 4.4 Vocative Case in Masculine Proper Nouns

Masculine proper Noun	Vocative form	Inflections
Haris	Hariso	-o
Izhar	Izharo	-o
Abid	Abido	-o
Sajid	Sajido	-o

However, the morpheme "-I" in the vocative case inflects the feminine proper nouns.

Table 4.5 Vocative Case in Feminine Proper Nouns

Feminine Proper Noun	Vocative Form	Infl. Morpheme
Farzana	Farzani	-i
Sakeena	Sakini	-i
Naila	Naili	-i

However, the rule can be applied to all proper nouns with intonation and stress not only those ending in vowel sounds are inflected, whereas consonant-ending nouns can

also be inflected.

Table 4.6 Vocative Case in Feminine Proper Nouns

Proper noun	Vocative form	Infl. Morpheme
Kawsar	Kawsari	-i
Yasmeen	Yasmeni	-i
Shireen	Shireeni	-i

4.4 Shina Plural System

In Shina the differentiation between singular and plural forms of nouns is mainly achieved by attaching plural suffixes to singular nouns indicating their plurality. However, there are instances where nouns remain unaltered and serve as both singular and plural forms. These nouns are termed collective nouns. Furthermore, various plural suffixes exist each following to distinct rules of distribution. Such as:

Table 4.7 Shina Plural System

Singular	Plural	English meaning
Sin	Sine	River
Pon	Pone	Roads
Bako	Bakeh	Branch of a tree
Zuk	Zuke	Wood
Shari	Sharey	wife's brother
Ajo	Aje	Rain
Osho	Oshe	Guest

It can be observed that the singular noun *"Sin"* alters into the plural form *"Sine"* by adding the plural suffix "-e" while *"Pon"* becomes *"Pone"* with the same suffix. Similarly, the singular noun *"Zuk"* becomes plural *"Zuke"* by attaching the suffix "-e" The plural suffix "-e" replaces the last vowel in the singular form of certain nouns sometimes leading to the reduction of the second-to-last vowels. Additionally, another plural suffix, *"-yé"* is employed in specific cases. This suffix may replace the final vowel "í" or drop the final vowel "-i" from the singular form as observed in the alteration of *"Shari"* to *"Shariye."*

4.5 Noun paradigm in Shina

In Shina the way nouns are structured and categorized plays an important role in understanding how words are used and interpreted. The noun paradigm which refers to the way nouns are organized and categorized is divided into three main components: gender, case and number.

4.6 Gender in Shina

Gender in the context of Shina nouns refers to whether a noun is classified as feminine or masculine. This distinction is marked by specific suffixes attached to the nouns but some nouns remain unmarked. An interesting observation is that nouns ending in vowels often indicate their gender through these suffixes while those ending in consonants do not exhibit such markings. There are distinctions within these categories based on the type of vowel ending a noun has. For example, nouns ending in unaccented and accented long vowels or short vowels may inflect differently from one another. The way these nouns change in form mainly in terms of gender marking can vary based on the vowel sound at the end of the word.

4.7 Nouns Ending in Unaccented Short Vowels

Nouns in Shina that end with unaccented short vowels are classified into two groups based on their gender. In these groups it's observed that masculine nouns usually conclude with the gender suffixes "U" and "O" and feminine nouns usually end with "-i".

a) Masculine Nouns

Table 4.8 Masculine Nouns in Shina

Noun	Singular	Plural	Meaning in Eng.
Nominative	Ashpo	Ashpei	Horse
Oblique	Natu	Natei	Nose
Nominative	Chato	Chatei	Crazy
Oblique	Taroo	Tarei	Stars
Nominative	Khuto	Khutei	Dwarf
Oblique	Ajono	Ajonei	Strangers

It can be observed that nouns that are masculine commonly end with gender suffix 'U' or 'O'. When these nouns are pluralized the 'U' suffix changes to '-ei' and the '-O'

suffix changes to '-i'. For example, the singular form *'Khuto'* becomes plural as *'Khutei'* due to this rule. Similarly, masculine nouns ending in 'u' simply add '-i' to form the plural. While In the plural oblique form the '-o' suffix is slightly extended compared to the nominative singular a distinction particularly noticeable in certain Shina dialects like Chilasi Shina, Kohistani and Astori. Since the oblique singular suffix remains '-e' across all nouns.

b). Feminine Nouns

Table 4.9 Feminine Nouns in Shina

Noun	Singular	Plural	Meaning in Eng.
Nominative	Khacheli	Khachelye	Miser
Oblique	Bujuti	Bujotye	Ugly (female)
Nominative	Sudachi	Sudachye	beautiful
Oblique	Nawachi	Nawachye	Strangers

Nouns end in vowel sounds have gender-specific suffixes, those end in consonants are considered without any suffixes. The majority of feminine nouns end with '-i' suffix which can be either short or long. The process of pluralization involves altering the vowel sound at the end of a base noun which affects the singular form. In developing plurals in both nominative and oblique cases, plural suffixes are attached to the base noun. In the nominative singular the gender suffix ''I'' which is replaced by 'Ye' to form the plural.

4.8 Nouns Endings in Accented Short Vowels or in Long Vowels

Table 4.10 Short and Long Vowels in Shina

Noun	Singular	Plural	Meaning in Eng.
Nominative	Becharo′	Becharei	Helpless
Nominative	Khachelo′	Khachelei′	Miser people
Oblique	Mushe′	Musheyo′	Men
Nominative	Tatoo	Tatei	Hot thing
Oblique	Shidalo`	Shidalei	Cold thing

It can be seen that masculine nominatives show endings such as long *"oo"* and "o" There is consistency in the oblique singular form but in the oblique plural form there is diversity. It's observed that the long vowels in the nominative singular forms

specifically *"oo"* are substituted with "ei" in the oblique plural and this principle applies universally to nouns with these vowel sounds.

4.9 Nouns Ending in Consonants

In Shina language Nouns that end in consonant sounds are considered unmarked and can be either masculine or feminine. Either a noun is masculine or feminine in this category depends on the verb used in the sentence beside it. In the nominative plural form these nouns take a suffix of "-i"

Table 4.11 Nouns Endings of Shina Consonants

Noun	Singular	Plural	Meaning in Eng.
Nominative	Jamaat	Jamaati	Wife
Oblique	Jamate`	Jamatoo	-
Nominative	Balugun	Baluguni	Tomatoes
Oblique	Balugune`	Balugunoo	-
Nominative	Bat	Bati	Stone
Oblique	Bate	Batoo	-
Nominative	Chakur	Chakuri	Youth
Oblique	Chakuri`	Chakuroo	-

It can be seen that the oblique singular form carries ''-e'' as a case marker whereas the plural form exhibits "-o" as a case markers. The final consonant of the nominative singular form remains unchanged when changing to the plural and it retains its original form while taking "-i" as a plural marker. Shina nouns which end in a consonant usually adopt "-i'' as a plural marker during the process of pluralization.

4.10 Shina Case Suffixes

The unique characteristic of Shina nouns is their structure composed of two layers such as an amalgamation of stem and affix directly attached in the cases of plural and oblique forms while another layer where the affix is indirectly connected to the stem through the use of a postposition in the oblique case. In Shina language cases are indicated by suffixes that are added to a base. These two layers in Shina case markers are characterized as follows:

Case layer 1: It involves direct attachment of the suffix to the noun stem as seen in the plural and oblique forms.

Case layer 2: which Involves the attachment of the suffix to the noun stem indirectly via the oblique case such as with postpositions (Anwar et al. 2022).

Table 4.12 Shina Case Layers

Noun	Case layer-I	Case layer-II	Example	Gloss
Mulae	Se		Mulae se	Gilrs (agent)
	-e		Mulaye	Girls
	-e	-y	Mulay	Of the girl
	-e	-T	Mulaet	To the girl
	-e	-r	Mulayer	In the girl
	-e	-j	Mulaej	on the girl
	-e	-jo	Mulaejo	from the girl
	-e	-katch	Mulaekatch	near the girl
	-e	-waar	Mulaewaar	towards the girl
	-e	-kaar	Mulaelakaar	for the girl
	-e	-saa~t	Mulaesaa~t	with the girl

Shina has an intricate case system categorized by various types of cases each distinguished by different case markers. Examples of these cases include nominative, accusative and agent, oblique, genitive and dative as well as ablative and two locative cases namely locative I and locative II.

Table 4.13 Shina Case layer I and II

NOUNS	GIRL	WIFE	COW	EAR
Nominative	Mulao	Chey	Gaw	Kono
Agent	Mulaese`	Cheyse`	Gawse`	Konse`
Oblique	Mulaye`	Cheyei`	Gawe`	Konate`
Genitive	Mulaye`	Cheyae`	Gawe`	Kone`
Dative	Mulaete`	Cheyate`	Gawete`	Konete`

Ablative	Mulaejo	Cheyejo	Gawejo	Konejo
Locative I	------		Gawer	Koner
Locative II	Mulaej	Cheyaje	Gawej	Konej

In this context we can observe a process where affixes are added to base words changing their forms. For example, the word "*Mulaye" (Girl)* undergoes changes to produce different words for various cases such as *"Mulayete" "Mulayse"* and "*Mulayejo"* and so forth. These changes are achieved through the application of Item-and-Process model wherein affixes are directly attached to base. For example, case markers like ''-te'' (dative case) and ''-se'' (agent case) these are directly affixed to stem as illustrated in example provided below.

(1) Mulaise baletei kitab di

- The Girl-AGENT which is a (case layer I) Boy- DATIVE that is a (case layer II) book gave

  (The Girl gave a book to the Boy).

In Case Layer II the attachment of affixes to the stem occurs indirectly through the oblique case which fundamentally functions as fused postpositions. Therefore, the oblique case becomes readily identifiable when it precedes postpositions that initiate with independent postpositions or consonants (Schmidt & Kohistani, 2001). In the given example ''-se'' serves as the marker of agent case that is directly linked to the subject noun. Conversely, ''tei'' as a dative marker is affixed to the indirect object 'Balete'.

(2) Baalse mulaesa~t bujok inkaar thugo.

- The boy- AGENT that is a (case layer I) girl-OBL that is a (Case layer I) with (case layer II) declined did
- (The boy declined to go with the girl).

In sentence (2), It can be observed where two suffixation methods are concurrently employed: one directly with stem 'Baal+se' or 'baal' and the other with *'saath',* which functions as a postposition which is indirectly attached with oblique case. The term *'saath'* acts as a bound morpheme needing a base for full semantic clarity. The symbol '~' signifies the length of word and its nasalized quality. It has been detected that the marker of dative case exhibits significant variation across different Shina dialects.

Baily (1924, p. 211) describes the plural as '-re' and dative singular suffix as 'ra' while Schmidt & Kohistani (2008, p. 123) indicate 'r' for both singular and plural in Kohistani Shina. In Astore and Gilgit '-te' is usually used as the marker of dative case. Grierson (1927, p. 331) also references the similar dative marker '-t (e) for both plural and singular nouns in Shina spoken in Gilgit and Astori.

(3)Tus asote gota-katch intezaar tharaiga

- You –OBL that is a (case layer I) us DAT (case layer I) home–OBL (case layer I) at/near the (case layer II) wait made.

- (You made us wait near/ at the home).

In this context bound morpheme '-e' functions as oblique marker while '-te' serves as dative marker while *'katch'* acts as a layer II case suffix attached to the oblique. While *'katch'* is depicted as a standalone word to illustrate in Shina language case layer II lacks meaning on its own and operates as bound morpheme requiring addition to base form to convey meaning. According to Grierson (1927 page 331) there are eight different case endings for Shina nouns along with their matching markers for both singular and plural forms.

Table 4.14 Case Endings and Matching Markers in Shina

Singular	Plural
Nominative and Acc., u, o-e`,	-e`, -i
Agent. –s (e`)	-s(e`)
Oblique. -e`	–u, -o
Genitive. -e`	-u, -o
Dative.-t (e`).	–t (e`).
Ablative.-ju, -jo.	–Jo, -ju
Locative I. –r(o)	-(o)
Locative II. –ch -j.	–ch –j

4.11 Numbers in Shina

The process of creating plural nouns in Shina is both intriguing and complex. It involves three categories of nouns: those end with a vowel and those end with a consonant sound and those with zero morph.

4.12 Nouns End with a Vowel Sound

The Item-and-Process approach is applied to create plural nouns where singular nouns undergo modification. Nouns final vowel sounds can undergo various patterns of alteration resulting in a transformation to a different vowel although this process is not consistently predictable. For instance:

- Kato (wood) ->   katei, last ''o'' sound altered into 'ei' to make plural.
- Rupai (ropy) ->   Rupei, last 'ai' sound reformed to diphthong 'ei'.
- Bori (sack) ->   Borei, a short 'I' sound is replaced by 'ei' sound.
- Laa (cucumber)-> Pai 'a long sound 'aa' is substituted by a diphthong 'ai'
- Ho~nto (lip) - >   hontei 'o' sound changed by a short 'i' while the 1st 'o' of singular is nasalized.
- Mulai (girl) -> mulai, a dropping 'ai' sound is changed by raising 'ai' sound.

The transformation process altering the vowel sound to form plurals at the end of a base has influenced the shape of the noun in singular. As these examples show that the morpheme remains unchanged but the increase and decrease of tone (as seen in *'Mulai' > 'Mulaaye')* transforms the nouns from singular into plural. This highlights that Shina due to its close closeness to Chinese also exhibits tonal features further contributing to its linguistic complexity.

4.13 Nouns End with a Consonant Sound

In Shina language unlike nouns end with a vowel sound, there is consistency in forming plurals for nouns ending in consonants similar to English regular nouns. Adding an 'i' sound to the base noun alters singular nouns into plural with 'i' acting as bound morpheme. This reveals a direct correlation between the 'i' morpheme and the free morpheme. Consequently, the rule for pluralizing such consonant-ending nouns is straightforward by adding the plural marker 'i' to the base. For example:

- Saman (luggage) → Samani (luggages)   Nplural - N-i
- Mehman (guest)→ Mehmani (guests)   Nplural - N-i
- Arman (desire)→ Armani (desires)   Nplural - N-i
- Dukan (shop)→Dukani (shops)   Nplural - N-i
- Jawan (young)→Jawani (youngs)   Nplural - N-i

- Jakun (donkey)→Jakuni (donkeys)   Nplural - N-i

The above provided examples in table illustrates that 'i' functions as a bound morpheme affixed to consonant-ending base nouns. Among the examples given 'Jawan' and 'Dukan' are borrowed from Urdu while *'Jakun' and 'Jat'* are native Shina nouns. The plural construction pattern in Shina is consistently applied to both borrowed and native words. Nouns end with a /s/ sound transformed into /zi/: such as *Jahas (airoplane) → Jahazi (airoplanes)* 's' is substituted by ''zi'' morph. Moas (meat) → Mozi (meat is countable in Shina but uncountable in English) While in English the term *"Eggplant"* consists of one morpheme its Shina counterpart *"Shino balugun"* includes three morphemes *(shin + o + balugun).*

4.14 Zero Morph in Shina

Similar to English, Shina language also includes some nouns with zero morphemes where base remains unchanged. Despite this the feature of plural is still attached to noun yet the base remains unchanged. An example in English would be the plural rule for 'sheep' which according to the Item-and-Process approach would be *'SHEEP plural →SHEEP'.* The same process is useful to the Shina zero morph, the examples can be observed below:

Singular	Plural	
Tike (Bread)	Tike	N_{plural} --N (uncountable & countable in Eng.)
Paju (salt)	Paju	N_{plural} --N (Uncountable in English)
Way (water)	Wey	N_{plural} --N (uncountable in Eng.)
liti (a small branch of tree)	liti	N_{plural} --N (it is countable in English)

The provided information and examples show that zero morphemes in Shina follow similar plural creation process as English nouns such as, 'fish' and ''sheep''.

DISCUSSION

Shina is a language with Indo-Aryan origins that displays a notably intricate inflectional morphology. Its complexity is evidenced in the complicated system of affixes employed which are attached to word stems to convey various linguistic features such as case, tense and person, possession, gender and others. This complex system can be broadly characterized into nominal and verbal inflections. In the realm

of nominal groups inflectional system of Shina includes aspects such as number, gender and case. Notably Shina presents a different gender division for nouns categorizing them into masculine and feminine genders. Gender assignments for animate beings while humans and animals are determined by their biological sex. However, for inanimate entities there is no inflexible rule resulting in instances where nouns can assume either masculine or feminine gender. Both masculine and feminine nouns display gender-specific suffixes that denote their respective gender characteristics.

Typically, Shina nouns that end in vowels are associated with gender suffix, while those concluding with consonants remain unmarked in terms of gender. The composite nature of inflectional morphology of Shina highlights its richness and complexity reflecting both its cultural heritage and linguistic depth. Through a nuanced system of gender distinctions noun endings and affixes Shina shapes the form and semantics of words. In the Shina language word alteration contains a sophisticated process involving the addition of extra elements to convey various aspects such as syntactic role, temporal relations and participant identity. (Shams et al., 2022).

The examination of noun declension and gender distinctions of Shina language emphasizes the complexity of the language by revealing the intricate interactions among gender suffixes, case endings and linguistic progression. The varied applications of these rules provide insights into both the cultural and linguistic development of Shina demonstrating a language shaped by complex patterns and nuanced contexts. Bailey (1924, pp. 11-3) investigates deeply into the complexities of Shina noun declension proposing a thorough overview of seven distinct case suffixes that shape both singular and plural forms.

This scholarly inquiry further clarifies the essential rules governing the use of cases. The cases discussed comprise the Nominative/1st Accusative/Vocative Case, and Genitive, Dative, and the Prepositional Case, moreover, the Locative Case and the 2nd Accusative Case finally the Agent Case. Bailey's thorough analysis provides valuable insights into the structural intricacies of Shina noun's declension enhancing the understanding of this linguistic aspect and serving as a foundational reference for

language enthusiasts and researchers alike. In Shina language there are distinct pronouns for referring to individuals or objects based on their gender with distinct masculine and feminine forms. This applies to singular third-person references covering living beings and inanimate objects according to their grammatical gender. However, in plural references the same pronoun is used for both masculine and feminine entities. Additionally, in Gilgiti Shina there are isolated forms for the nominative (subject) and ergative (agent) cases for masculine and feminine nouns. This means that depending on gender the subject or the entity performing an action can take on different forms. Gender plays an important role in verb structures across different Shina dialects although with variations. It often involves person agreement where the gender of the action performer effects the verb form.

Moreover, gender agreement extends beyond verbs to other parts of speech including demonstratives like "this" or "that" Some languages within the Shina group even feature specific pronouns for males and females. This understanding of gender dynamics within Shina languages supports linguists in their study and description despite the complexity arising from the diverse ways gender is expressed across these languages (Liljegren, 2019).

Additionally, while in numerous languages the feminine gender holds special significance but in Shina it is parallel to the default choice. In Shina the verb agreement is mainly determined by the subject rather than the object presenting a distinctive feature compared to the functioning of similar languages. Even when the subject is in ergative case, the verb still aligns with it. For example, if "She" is the subject performing an action the verb corresponds to "She" regardless of the object. This is demonstrated in the example sentence "She brought the apricot kernels down from the roof" the verb remains unaffected based on the object case even if it's in the nominative case. Additionally, Shina employs distinct masculine and feminine forms in adjectives but their agreement with the subject and object introduces complexity in sentence structure. At times adjectives can align with either the subject or the object depending on the emphasis speaker wants to convey. When the object is feminine and related to feelings or psychology the adjective may match with it even if the subject is an object.

In Shina the use of feminine singular forms of words such as verbs may indicate a standard or default selection. This occurs when Shina grammar employs this form in the absence of a specific subject to control the linguistic structure. Default Usage of Feminine Singular Morphology in Predicate Adjectives: If feminine singular forms are observed in descriptive words (adjectives) or words modifying actions (adverbs) it could be the default choice. This default form emerges when the entity performing the action lacks the ability to influence or control the language structure. Blocking Agreement and Default Feminine Gender: In the Gilgiti Shina language when there is a discrepancy between a noun and the words describing or modifying it a default feminine gender is employed. The exact application of this mechanism depends on whether the noun is animate or inanimate.

CONCLUSION

The primary focus of this paper centered on exploring the inflectional morphology of Shina. Within its linguistic framework, words undertake multiple layers of suffixation to denote various grammatical features such as case and tense, person and gender. In the realm of nominal morphology Shina displays a binary gender system comprising masculine and feminine genders with the gender of a noun determined by its suffix. Nouns may terminate with either a vowel or a consonant sound with the latter considered unmarked. Furthermore, the singular-plural distinction in Shina nouns is manifested through distinct suffixation patterns. Nouns ending in consonants usually take the plural marker 'i' while those concluding with vowels undergo alternative inflectional processes where the final suffix is replaced with another. This complex system reflects the language's nuanced approach to indicating plurality. It has been observed that Shina has strongly suffixing inflectional morphology, affixes are exclusively suffixal. Accent is strongly marked in Shina. Phonetic reduction and addition also marks the cases in it. And Shina is a pitch accented language, which means every word has one syllable that is accented stressed or prominent in comparison to the rest of the syllables. Every word in Shina has only one accented syllable irrespective of whether the word is monosyllabic or polysyllabic.

Additionally, Shina features a comprehensive case system including eight distinct case endings that are affixed to the base noun. These case markers denoted by specific

suffixes, serve to indicate various grammatical functions within the syntactic structure of language.

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