

Verbs of Achievement and Tense Paradigms in Hazaragi

Hazaragi is a dialect of Dari (Eastern Iranian), mainly spoken among the people of Hazarajat and the Hazaras all around the world, including in Afghanistan and Pakistan. It is an SOV language with a complex tense/aspect paradigm that includes inflectional and derivational morphology and some periphrastic constructions. These interact with morphophonological processes, as the following table shows.

(1)

VERB	TENSE/ASPECT				
	Pres/Hab/Prog	PresPerf	Past/Hab/Prog	Perf	PluPerf
ride	michalana	michalana	michalandak	chalandak	chalanda bud
speak	muga	muga	muguftak	guftak	gufta bud

The overall verbal paradigm remains to be studied in detail. This study focuses on an ostensibly puzzling shift in the tense paradigm. Most verbs in Hazaragi show no distinction between present and future, thus encoding a past/non-past paradigm, as exemplified by *xordan* ‘eat’ below.

(2)

Pers/Num	Pronoun	Past	Present	Future
1 st Sg	ma	xordum	muxrum	muxrum
2 nd Sg	tu	xordi	muxri	muxri
3 rd Sg	o	xordək	muxra	muxra
1 st Pl	mo	xordi	muxri	muxri
2 nd Pl	ʃumo	xordm	muxrɪn	muxrɪn
3 rd Pl	ona	xordən	muxrən	muxrən

However, for a class of verbs the distinction between past and present forms is collapsed as opposed to a dedicated form for the future. This is exemplified by the paradigm for *amadan* ‘come/arrive’ in (3).

(3)

Pers/Num	Pronoun	Past	Present	Future
1 st Sg	ma	amadum	amadum	mayum
2 nd Sg	tu	amadi	amadi	mayi
3 rd Sg	o	amad/ək	amad/ək	maya
1 st Pl	mo	amadi	amadi	mayi
2 nd Pl	ʃumo	amadm	amadm	maym
3 rd Pl	ona	amadən	amadən	mayən

The fact that a language can “switch” between a past/non-past and future/non-future distinction with respect to certain verbs has not been generally attested in the literature, though each system individually has been attested. We show that the observed switch is not random but can be explained by the aspectual class of the lexical verb. The future/non-future distinction appears to

hold for achievement predicates, with verbs such as 'recognize' or 'die' patterning like 'come/arrive' above. The same future/non-future distinction is also observed in semelfactives like 'blink' or 'knock'. Specifically, the past paradigms of achievement verbs are compatible with both a perfective past and present temporal reference. Achievement verbs denote punctual eventualities where the endpoint of the action holds within a short time span of the commencement of the action. The past morphology can therefore also naturally be used to express present tense situations and we suggest that this lies at the heart of the past/present collapse in (3). This stands in contrast to predicates of durative activity (accomplishment, activity and stative predicates) which exhibit the past/non-past interpretative distinction in (2).