

CHAPTER 5

TENSE AND ASPECT

5.0 Introduction

Tense relates the time of an event or action referred to at the time of speaking. Payne in discussing tense states, “Tense is the grammatical expression of the relation of the time of an event to some reference point in time, usually the moment the clause is uttered” (1997:236).

Aspect is a different way of viewing the internal time element of an event or action. Tense and aspect are marked on verb or verb phrase in Chodri. Tense is indicated by either verbal affixes or sometimes a tense auxiliary (only for the present) while aspect is indicated only by verbal affixes.

The morphemes marking person, gender-number, and tense are sometimes fused in Chodri. As a result it is impossible to separate them into separate morphemes. Since they are fused morphemes we need to discuss them in relation to one another. In particular, tense and aspect, as in other fusional languages, are quite complex.

The tense system is discussed in detail in this chapter. Aspect in Chodri is grouped into perfect and progressive and is discussed in the section on complex tenses in this chapter. Abilitative aspect, which overlaps with voice in Chodri is briefly discussed in chapter 7.

Tense is an obligatory category of the verb without which the verb will be non-finite. Finite verb forms are marked for a definite tense whereas the non-finite verb forms conform to the tense of the finite verb in a clause or sentence. The two kinds of tenses, simple and complex are shown in Figure 4 below.

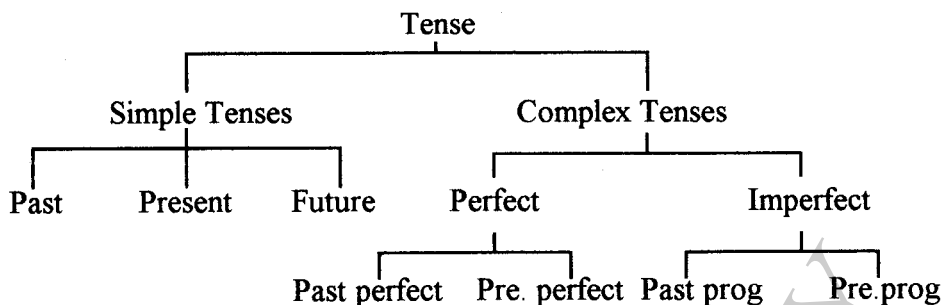


Figure 4. Classification of tenses

Simple tenses are expressed by verbal suffixes while present progressive and present perfect tense of the complex are expressed by either fused morphemes or auxiliaries. Simple tenses are discussed in section 5.1 followed by complex tenses in 5.2 below.

5.1 Simple tenses

The simple tenses are simple present, simple past and simple future. The term simple is used because these tenses do not have different categories to express nearness or remoteness based on relative temporal proximity. Each tense occupies a fixed position in the time continuum. Simple present refers to any time at the present time, simple past refers to any time in the past time and simple future refers to any time in the future time.

5.1.1 Simple present

The simple present tense refers to an event or action occurring at the moment of speaking. It may be used to express a habitual action, and to indicate an event or action about to happen in the immediate future. It also functions as a historic present in narratives to denote background activities which happened in the past more vividly to the hearers in the present.

The simple present tense on the verb is realized by a suffix which immediately follows a verb root or stem. These suffixes also include information about the person and number of subject as well as tense. Thus they are fused morphemes. Verbs in simple present tense are not marked for gender. Depending on whether the verb root or stem ends in a consonant or vowel determines which of several possible forms of the tense suffix may occur (see Table 19).

Environment	Person	Singular	Plural
Verb stems ending in a consonant	1 st	-ə	-dʒe
Verb stems ending in a vowel	1 st	-m	-dʒe
Verb stems ending in a consonant	non-1 st	-e	-at
Verb stems ending in a vowel	non-1 st	-j	-t/jat

Table 19. Present indefinite tense suffixes

As shown in Table 19, the plural, non-1st person simple present tense suffix following a verb root ending in a vowel has two free variants: *-t* and *-jat*.

In example 125, the verb *dʒa* 'go' is used in simple present tense. It shows the event happening at the 'present' time.

(125) "Story of a tiger killer" (S 002)

radʒaj tijē hali vahande kər-ne dʒa-j
king of there she dish wash do-to go-non1, s, pre

'She goes to the palace to wash dish.'

To express a habitual action⁹

Although simple present tense refers to an action or event occurring at the moment of speaking, it is also used to express habitual action and the following examples are given to illustrate this.

⁹ This is similar to use of the aorist tense found in Greek.

(126) “Story of a tiger killer” (S 005)

ak^ha diha mǎ tihī makɾe mar-e
 whole day in thirty flies kill-non1,s,pre

‘He kills thirty flies in a day.’

(127) “Story of monkeys” (S 003)

tijě vandre bəhũ kədr-av-at
 there monkeys much bother-caus-non1,p,pre

‘There the monkeys bother the old man very much.’

In example 126, the man in the “Story of a tiger killer” is idle and does nothing other than killing flies every day. This habitual action is indicated by the simple present. In example 127, the monkeys in the “Story of monkeys” come to the cucumber garden and bother the old man every day by destroying the cucumbers. This habitual action is indicated by the simple present.

To express a general truth

Simple present may be used to express a general truth which is always told in non-1st person and the following examples illustrate this.

(128) “Elicited Data” (S 019)

mane hijala mǎ hamɾə hĩhĩ nag-e
 to me winter in much cold feel-non1,s,pre

‘I feel very cold in the winter.’

(129) “Elicited Data” (S 020)

nitske kajəm-udɟ rəm-ŋe heŋd-at
 children always-Emp play-to like-non1,p,pre

‘Children always like to play.’

In examples 128 and 129, the general truth about the climate in the winter and the character of the children are expressed by the use of simple present tense. The non-1st

person, the number and the tense are indicated by the verbal suffixes *-e* and *-at* in examples 128 and 129 respectively.

To refer to a past situation

Occasionally simple present refers to past situations in narratives. It is used to make the incident more vivid to the hearers. Examples 130 and 131 illustrate this.

(130) “Story of a sister’s long hair” (S 005)

tija pəli ɔjə ʃol-e
then she head rub-non1, s, pre

‘Then she washes her head.’

(131) “Story of the monkeys” (S 006)

bidze dihi pase vandre av-at
next day again monkeys come-non1, p, pre

‘Next day the monkeys again come.’

In example 130, in the “Story of a sister’s long hair”, the previous sentence which says, ‘she went to the river to bathe’ is in past tense and in the example cited above, simple present tense is used to refer to an action done in the past. In example 131, in the “Story of the monkeys”, the previous sentence, ‘the old man went to the cucumber garden and hid knives in the cucumbers’ is in past tense and the example cited above refers to an event that happened in the past using simple present tense. This use of the simple present to express actions which in fact occurred in the past is a discourse device.

5.1.2 Simple Past

The simple past tense indicates that an action took place in the past and came to an end in the past. Simple past is much used in everyday speech. Verbs used in simple past show the routine and ordinary events or actions which happened in the past. A

verb in simple past in a narrative discourse expresses that the action or event is in the story-line. It indicates that an event or action is pivotal. Another point about past tense is that this is one of the constructions where the ergative marking system is found in Chodri.

The suffix *-j* on a verb root or stem marks the simple past tense. The usual gender-number agreement marker follows the *-j* element. The suffix on a verb root or stem which indicates gender and number is fused.

Gender	Singular	Plural
m	-j-o	-j-a
f	-j-i	-j-e
n	-j-ə	-j-e

Table 20. Past tense suffix with gender-number suffix¹⁰

In example 132 below, the verb in simple past tense is boldfaced and indicates that the action happened in a specific time in the past. The verb is intransitive so it agrees with the gender-number of the subject in accordance with ergative marking system.

(132) “Story of a snake god’s daughter” (S 025)

*eṭle tʃar-o tʃar dʒəŋa **nikil-j-a***
so four-all four persons **leave-pt-pm**

‘So all the four persons left (their home).’

The simple past tense marker *-j* has phonologically conditioned allomorphs as shown below. The allomorphs are given in order of frequency from most to least.

{-j} → -j ~ -d ~ -tʃ ~ -dʒ ~ -s ~ -ɲ ~ -tʃʰ “past tense marker”

¹⁰ A variant form of simple past tense suffix *-i* marked for singular feminine is used in the place of *-ji*. This may be a borrowing from Gujarati.

The environments of the phonologically conditioned allomorphs of the simple past tense marker are discussed below. In the examples given for each allomorphic variant the gender-number suffix occurs following the simple past marker.

Past tense allomorph *-tʃʰ*

Past tense allomorph *-tʃʰ* occurs following alveolar sibilants and voiceless aspirated palato-alveolar affricate. This is illustrated in examples 133 and 134.

(133) “Elicited Data” (021)

adʒe məjě bəhũ movɾe Ø vis-tʃʰ-e
today I (ERG) much Movdo ABS flowers collect-pt-pn

‘Today I collected lots of Movdo flowers.’

(134) “Elicited Data” (S 022)

bab-e mane ek səval Ø putʃʰ-tʃʰ-ə
brother-ERG me one question ABS ask-pt-sn

‘Brother asked me a question.’

Past tense allomorph *-ɲ*

Past tense allomorph *-ɲ* occurs following nasals and this is illustrated in examples 135 and 136.

(135) “Elicited Data” (S 023)

vandr-e tʃəŋa-j dəbba mā hatʰ Ø kʰen-ɲ-o
monkey-ERG lentil-of tin in hand ABS push-pt-sm

‘The monkey pushed his hands into the lentil tin.’

(136) “Elicited Data” (S 024)

nitʃke Ø apre āŋa mǎ rəm-ɲ-e
children ABS our courtyard in play-pt-pn

‘Children played in our courtyard.’

Past tense allomorph -s

Past tense allomorph -s occurs following voiceless aspirated stops and this is illustrated in examples 137 and 138.

(137) “Story of Bilawanti queen (S 015)

eʃle tije te kagr-aj nak^h-s-ə
so he(ERG) ptl crow-to drop-pt-sn

‘So he gave (some sweets) to the crow.’

(138) “Story of a king’s son” (S 070)

pəlo av-i-n tirkamʃ^h-e mar-i nak^h-s-o
he come-cp-cnj arrow-INS kill-cp drop-pt-sm

‘He came and killed (the giant) with a bow and arrow.’

In example 137, the verb *nak^h* ‘drop’ functions as the head and in example 138, it is compounded with the main verb and is marked for past and gender-number.

Past tense allomorph -dʒ

Past tense allomorph -dʒ occurs following voiced stops and this is illustrated in examples 139 and 140.

(139) “Story of a thief” (S 035)

kuv-e nedʒa-i-n band-dʒ-o
well-to take-cp-cnj tie-pt-sm

‘He took him to the well and tied him.’

(140) “Story of a rabbit and a fox” (S 040)

tije te ek moʃo lilo dep^hηo-∅ p^hāg-dʒ-o
he(ERG) ptl one big green stick-ABS break-pt-sm

‘He broke a big green stick (from the tree).’

Past tense allomorph *-tʃ*

The past tense allomorph *-tʃ* occurs following voiceless unaspirated stops and this is illustrated in examples 141 and 142.

(141) “Story of a camel and a fox” (S 067)

bidʒo tãtʃo muk-tʃ-o eʃle boka mã kʰus-i go
 next leg **keep-pt-sm** so stomach in enter-cp go(pt, sm)

‘The (fox) hit (the scarecrow) with the other leg. So the leg entered into the stomach.’

(142) “Story of Bilawanti queen” (S 014)

naɖuva e tore pʰodʒai-e kər-i ap-tʃ-a
 sweets these your aunt-ERG **do-cp give-pt-pm**

‘Your aunt made these sweets for (you).’

In example 142, the past tense and the gender-number suffixes are added to the vector verb *ap* ‘give’ which is compounded with the main verb.

Past tense allomorph *-d*

Past tense allomorph *-d* occurs following all front vowels and central low vowels and this is illustrated in examples 143 and 144.

(143) “Story of a rabbit and a fox” (S 022)

kona-ŋe pag-aŋe tʰer-i ne-d-o
 fox-of leg-ABS catch-cp **take-pt-sm**

‘He grabbed the fox’s leg.’

(144) “Story of a Bhil’s wife” (S 061)

to dʒaŋ-i go eʃle kajni kʰa-d-ə
 he know-cp go(pt, sm) so not **eat-pt-sn**

‘Since he knew it, he didn’t eat.’

Past tense allomorph -j

Past tense allomorph -j occurs following all other consonants and vowels and this is illustrated in examples 145, 146 and 147.

(145) “Elicited Data” (S 025)

andarno majē p^heherə-Ø du-j-ə
 morning I (ERG) buffalo-ABS milk-pt-sn

‘This morning I milked a buffalo.’

(146) “Story of a camel and a fox” (S 067)

radza bant^haŋ ne balu vindaŋ niki-j-a
 king Banthan and Balu Vindan come out-pt-pm

‘King Banthan and Balu Vindan came out.’

(147) “Story of a crocodile (S 017)

hāj mogra-ŋe iŋdə nav-o ne p^hoŋ-av-j-ə
 I crocodile-of egg bring-pt,sm and break-caus-pt-sn

‘I brought a crocodile’s egg and got it hatched.’

In example 147, the verb *p^hoŋav* ‘cause to break’ ending in *v* is suffixed by past tense and gender-number. The irregular verb *nav* ‘bring’ in this example is treated as an intransitive verb hence agrees with the gender-number of the subject.

A summary of the past tense allomorphs and their environments is given in Table 21 below. The allomorphs are listed in order of least to the most.

Past tense marker	Environments of occurrence
-tʃ ^h	following alveolar sibilants and v.l asp. Palato alveolar affricate
-ɲ	following nasals
-s	following voiceless aspirated stops
-dʒ	following voiced stops
-tʃ	following voiceless unaspirated stops
-d	following all front vowels and central low vowel
-j	elsewhere

Table 21. Past tense allomorphs and their environments

Gender and number are indicated by a fused morpheme when the verb is in past tense. The phonologically conditioned allomorphs indicating the past tense is followed by gender-number suffix on verb root or stem. Intransitive verbs agree in gender-number with the subject and the transitive verbs in past and perfect tenses agree with the gender-number of the object.

5.1.3 Simple future

A verb in the simple future tense expresses that an action or an event is yet to take place any time after the present. Similar to the present tense suffixes, the simple future suffixes agree in number and person with the subject but not the gender. They are fused morphemes and include several meanings besides future tense. The only difference from simple present is that non-1st person is now further elaborated into 2nd and 3rd person.

In example 148 below, the simple future indicates that the event will happen after the moment of speaking. The first person and the singular number of the subject is marked on the verb and on only one of the verbs in a compound sentence.

(148) “Story of a pumpkin” (S 013)

hāj bapa-ŋe k^havaŋə ap-i av-ihĩ
 I dad-to food give-cp come-1, s, fu

‘I will give food to dad and come.’

The verbal suffixes which show the simple future vary depending on the final phoneme of the verb root. These are shown in the Table 22 below.

Environment	Person	Singular	Plural
Verb roots ending in a vowel	1 st person	-hĩ	-hũ
	2 nd person	-he	-hat
	3 rd person	-i	-it
Verb roots ending in a consonant	1 st person	-ihĩ	-uhũ
	2 nd person	-ehe	-ahat
	3 rd person	-i	-it

Table 22. Future tense suffixes

The fused morphemes, as shown above in Table 22, have a morphophonemic process of epenthesis and vowel harmony. Examples 149 and 150 below illustrate the occurrence of future tense suffixes.

(149) “Story of a tiger killer” (S 043)

radza dzəŋe mane vid-i
 king ptl me scold-3, s, fu

‘The king will scold me.’

(150) “Story of a headman and an old man” (S 095)

hatfu-dz dzəŋe tume bəhũ nav-ahat
 really-Emp ptl you(pl) much bring-2, p, fu

‘Really, you will bring very much.’

In examples 149 and 150, the simple future tense suffixes are added to the verb roots *vid* ‘scold’ and *nav* ‘bring’ to indicate that the event is yet to happen after the

moment of speaking. The fused morphemes in a verb in future indicates the number and person of the subject.

5.2 Complex tenses

Complex tenses indicate past or present time but not future and the 'completed' versus 'not completed' meaning of an action or event. Complex tenses comprise past perfect, present perfect, past progressive and present progressive tenses. The ways of expressing these tenses are different from those of the simple tenses. Verbs in present progressive and present perfect tenses are followed by an auxiliary 'be' verb to indicate the tense. Verbs in past progressive and past perfect tenses are indicated by verbal suffixes.

The perfect tenses relate one state to another state and do not tell us anything about the present situation. They are divided into past perfect and present perfect. Imperfect tenses in general imply a situation in progress and they describe the continuity of an action or event over a period of time. They are divided into past progressive and present progressive tenses. Each of these is discussed in turn in the sections that follow.

5.2.1 Past perfect

Past perfect indicates that something happened in the past prior to other events in the past. Chodri past perfect denotes that the action or event happened at some point in past time and before another action was commenced. In narratives it is used to express a flashback and indicates that the events are out of sequence and not in focus. Past perfect is also one of the constructions where the ergative marking system is found.

There are two forms of the past perfect suffix. The suffix *-dn* occurs with verb roots or stems ending in any front vowel or a central low vowel while the suffix *-in* occurs

in all other environments. Following the tense suffix is the gender-number suffixes, which are the same as those found in the simple past. The person of the subject or object is not marked on the verb. A sample of the suffixes with an intransitive verb stem *tʃəɾ* ‘climb’, (ending in a consonant) and a transitive verb stem *k^ha* ‘eat’, (ending in the central low vowel) is displayed in Table 23.

Environment	Gender	Singular	Plural
Verb stem ending in a consonant or a back vowel	masculine	tʃəɾ-in-o	tʃəɾ-in-a
	feminine	tʃəɾ-in-i	tʃəɾ-in-je
	neuter	tʃəɾ-in-ə	tʃəɾ-in-e
Verb stem ending in a front vowel or central low vowel	masculine	k ^h a-dn-o	k ^h a-dn-a
	feminine	k ^h a-dn-i	k ^h a-din-je
	neuter	k ^h a-dn-ə	k ^h a-dn-e

Table 23. Past perfect tense suffixes

In the Table 23 shown above, when a verb root or stem ending in a front vowel or a low central vowel is suffixed by future tense agreeing in feminine gender and plural number of the subject, the vowel *i* is inserted between *dn* in accordance with phonological system of the language. In Chodri a medial consonant cluster of *dnj* is not possible.

Examples 151 and 152 illustrate the occurrence of verbs with past perfect tense.

(151) “Story of a lost sister” (S 044)

mane hurdzi p^hun-e taŋ-i ne-dn-i
 me sun flower-ERG pull-cp take-pt, pft-sf

‘A sun flower had pulled and taken me.’

(152) “Story of a snake god’s daughter” (S 186)

bidza radzvaɾ-a mā bāglo-Ø bād-in-o
 next kingdom-LOC in bungalow-ABS build-pt, pft-sm

‘(They) had built a bungalow in the other kingdom.’

Examples 151 and 152 are in past perfect tense. The past perfect in example 151 is indicated by *-dn* ‘past perfect marker’ because the verb root *ne* ‘take’ ends with a front vowel. The verb agrees with the feminine gender and singular number of the object *mane* ‘me’. In example 152 the past perfect is indicated by *-in* because the verb root *bãd* ‘build’ which does not end with front vowel or low central vowel but rather a consonant. The verb agrees with the gender-number of the object *bãglo* ‘bungalow’.

5.2.2 Present perfect

The present perfect tense indicates that something has happened prior to events taking place in the present. Present perfect tense is used to express the relation between a present state and past situation. The present state is referred to as being the past situation. It shows that an action has just been completed or describes an incident which happened sometime in the past but has relevance in the present. The present perfect tense is formed by a combination of past tense and gender-number suffixes attached to a verb root and present tense auxiliary (which is also the present tense copula, *has*, as discussed in chapter 2). The present tense auxiliary can occur as a separate word or be fused with the past tense marker. As discussed already, an ergative system is at work in this tense. Table 24 below shows how present perfect tense is indicated. A transitive and an intransitive verb root are used in the table to illustrate this.

Verb root	Absolutive NP	Number	Gender	Present Perfect
ap 'give'	roņno 'rice cake'	Singular	Masculine	ap-tj-o has-e
	roņna 'rice cakes'	Plural	Masculine	ap-tj-a-t / has-at
kud 'jump'	1 st Person	Singular	Masculine	kud-d3-o-m / has-am
	1 st Person	Plural	Masculine	kud-d3-a-m / has-am
	1 st Person	Singular	Feminine	kud-d3-i-m / has-am
	1 st Person	Plural	Feminine	kud-d3-ije-m / has-am
	non-1 st	Singular	Neuter	kud-d3-ə has-e
	non-1 st	plural	Neuter	kud-d3-e-t / has-at

Table 24. Present perfect tense forms

The object of a transitive clause in present perfect tense does not distinguish person. It is always third person. The subject person of an intransitive clause in present perfect tense is distinguished only as 1st and non-1st. When the subject refers to 1st person, suffix *-m* or the auxiliary *hasam* can occur following the gender-number suffix in the main verb and when the subject refers to plural non-1st person, suffix *-t* or the auxiliary *hasat* can occur following the gender-number suffix in the main verb. When the subject refers to non-1st person, the auxiliary which follows the main verb is *hase* 'is' for singular and *hasat* 'are' for plural.

Present perfect tense is used to express two kinds of actions: 1) to express an action that has been just completed and 2) to express an incident which happened in the past. Examples 153 and 154 illustrate how present perfect is used to indicate an action that has just been completed.

(153) "Story of a magical ring" (S 071)

baba *apre* *radzvara* *mã* *te* *av-i* *rã-j-e-m*
 brother we kingdom in ptl come-cp stay-pt-pn-1,pre

'Brother, of course we have come to this kingdom.'

(154) “Story of a pretender” (S 038)

kuva mā t^hə ame ĩ p^hunə nav-e has-am
 well in from we this flower bring-pt, pn be(pre) -1

‘We have brought this flower from the well.’

In examples 153 and 154, the verb phrases in present perfect tense are boldfaced and they express the actions that have just been completed. In example 153, *-m* the reduced form of the present tense auxiliary *hasam* is attached to the past tense and gender-number suffixes on the vector verb *rə* ‘stay’. In example 154, the present tense auxiliary occurs following the main verb *nav* ‘bring’, an irregular verb in past tense.

Example 155 below illustrates how present perfect is used to express an incident which happened in the past.

(155) “Story of a pretender” (S 076)

nav-i-n tume-hě koṭ^ha mā p^həj-r-e-t
 bring-cp-cnj you-ERG barn in fill-pt-pn-non1, pre

‘Having brought (the mangoes) you have filled in the barn.’

In example 155, in the “Story of a pretender”, the lady who was deceived by the pretender narrates what happened in the past after she was found out. The action of filling the barn with mangoes happened in the past and is expressed by the use of present perfect tense. The auxiliary *hasat* (non-1st plural) is contracted and suffixed (*-t*) onto the past form of the verb *p^hər* ‘fill’. The final sound of the verb root *p^hər* is transposed with the past tense morpheme *-j* as is common in this phonological environment.

5.2.3 Present progressive

Progressive tenses indicate that at a given time an action or event is in progress. Present progressive tense is primarily used to refer to an event or action happening at

the moment of speaking. It may also point to something done regularly or habitually, or something about to happen in the immediate future. Furthermore, it may be used as a historic present in narratives to denote background activities which happened in the past more vividly similarly to the simple present tense.

The verb always agrees in gender-number and person of the subject in present progressive tense as expected in nominative system. The progressiveness is indicated by the suffix *-t* that immediately follows a verb root or stem. However, when the subject of the clause is feminine plural and the verb root ends in a consonant the suffix *-tʃ* occurs. The verbal suffix that follows the progressive marker indicates the gender-number of the subject. The present tense copula is used as an auxiliary as in present perfect. The auxiliary may occur as a separate word following the main verb or may be reduced and suffixed on the verb as in present perfect. The subject is only distinguished as 1st and non-1st person which is also indicated by the reduced form of it attached to the verb.

With an exception of verb marked for non-1st singular, the verb in present progressive tense can either be indicated by present tense auxiliary that follows the verb or by the reduced form of it suffixed on the verb. Both are illustrated in Table 25. In the table the verb root *rəm* 'play' is used to illustrate this.

Person	Ge	Singular		Plural	
		No Auxiliary	with Auxiliary	No Auxiliary	with Auxiliary
1 st	m	rəm-t-o-m	rəm-t-o hasam	rəm-t-a-m	rəm-t-a hasam
	f	rəm-t-i-m	rəm-t-i hasam	rəm-tʃe-m	rəm-tʃe hasam
	n			rəm-t-e-m	rəm-t-e hasam
non-1 st	m	-----	rəm-t-o a / hase	rəm-t-a-t	rəm-t-a hasat
	f	-----	rəm-t-i a / hase	rəm-tʃe-t	rəm-tʃe hasat
	n	rəm-t-ə-hō	rəm-t-ə a / hase	rəm-t-e-t	rəm-t-e hasat

Table 25. Present progressive forms of the verb *rəm*

'play'

As shown in the table above, the non-1st neuter singular person may be indicated by the suffix *-hã* on the verb or by the present tense copula *a* following verb marked for progressive and gender-number. This is not predictable.

Present progressive tense in Chodri is used on four different occasions:

1) It is used to express an action or event happening at the moment of speaking and examples 156 and 157 illustrate this.

(156) “Story of a Brahmin” (S 018)

eva-ŋe evə duk^h a eŋle tãpna
 such-of such pain be(pre, non1, s,) so meditation

kãr-t-o-m
 do-prog-sm-1, pre

‘I have such and such pain so I am meditating.’

(157) “Story of a rabbit and a fox” (S 009)

puŋ^hi gaqla-valo vitfar kãr-t-o has-e
 then cart-owner thought do-prog-sm be(pre)-non1, s

‘And then the cart owner is thinking.’

In example 156, the Brahmin in the “Story of a Brahmin” answering the tigers says, “I am meditating.” He is meditating at the moment of speaking. In example 157, the cart owner in the “Story of a rabbit and a fox” is thinking that the rabbit is dead. The cart owner is thinking at the moment of speaking.

2) It is used to express a customary action and it is illustrated in example 158.

(158) “Elicited Data” (S 026)

hãj nihalj-e dza-t-o-m ne mare p^haha nokri
 I school-to go-prog-sm-1, pre and my brother work

kər-t-o *has-e*
do-prog-sm be (pre) -non1, s

‘I go to the school and my brother is working.’

In example 158, at the moment of speaking, the referent was not going to school. The present progressive tense is used here to denote the customary action of the two brothers.

3) It is also used in conversation and narratives to express the action that is going to take place in the immediate future.

(159) “Story of a single sister” (S 017)

hāj tʃər-t-i-m *upar ne tumahaj paṛ-i*
I climb-prog-sf-1,pre up and to you pluck-cp

ap-t-i-m
give-prog-sf-1,pre

‘I will climb up, pluck and give it to you.’

(160) “Story of a single sister” (S 070)

hāj tune tū mag-e *tətrə pajha*
I to-you you ask-non1, s,pre that much money

ap-t-o-m
give-prog-sm-1,pre

‘I will give you as much money as you ask.’

In example 159, the single sister in the “Story of a single sister” was not yet actually climbing the tree nor giving the flowers at the moment of speaking. In example 160, the speaker was yet not giving any money to the astrologer as he was speaking. On both these occasions the speaker is already saying what he or she will do in the immediate future and this is indicated by the use of present progressive tense.

4) Present progressive tense is used as historic present to denote past actions more vividly.

(161) "Story of a crocodile" (S 004)

to paṇi tagara mā nak^h-t-o a
 he water bowl in drop-prog-sm be (pre, non1, s)

'He pours water in a bowl.'

(162) "Story of a lost sister" (S 031)

to t^hobno ne-i-n gam mā dza-t-o
 he bowl take-cp-cnj village in go-prog-sm

a
 be (pre, non1, s)

'Having taken that bowl he is going into the village.'

In examples 161 and 162, the narrator has used the present progressive tense to bring the actions which happened in the past to the hearers' minds more vividly. Schiffrin (1981) in her discussion on tense variation says that using present tense in narratives is a stylistic device. It is used to increase the dramatic impact of the story. It makes the audience feel as if the action or event were actually happening at the time of hearing.

5.2.5 Past progressive

Past progressive tense indicates that at a given time in the past an action or event was in progress. In everyday speech it refers to an action or event going on over a period in the past time. It is used to indicate background activities in Chodri folk stories. Past progressive tense may also be used to express a habitual action in the past.

The suffix *-t* following a verb root or stem marks the progressiveness as in present progressive. The suffix *-n* following the progressive marker indicates the past tense. Another suffix following the past tense marker shows the gender-number of the

subject. The verb always agrees with the gender-number of the subject since this is a case where the nominative marking system holds.

When a verb root or stem ends in a consonant, a vowel is inserted between these two suffixes. This vowel harmonizes with the vowel of the gender-number suffix as in simple future. Verb forms of *vaɾ* ‘cut’, a verb stem ending in a consonant, and *pi* ‘drink’, a verb root ending in a vowel with past progressive tense are used to illustrate this in Table 26 below.

Environment	Gender	Singular	Plural
Verb stems ending in a consonant	m	vaɾ-t-on-o	vaɾ-t-an-a
	f	vaɾ-t-in-i	vaɾ-t-in-je
	n	vaɾ-t-ən-ə	vaɾ-t-en-e
Verb stems ending in a vowel	m	pi-t-n-o	pi-t-n-a
	f	pi-t-n-i	pi-t-in-je
	n	pi-t-n-ə	pi-t-n-e

Table 26. Past progressive tense suffixes

Past progressive tense in Chodri is used to express two kinds of action.

1) Past progressive tense is used to refer to an event in progress in the past time.

(163) “Story of a king’s son” (S 061)

ek dzəbro gəqahaqo tʃaɾ-t-on-o
 one mighty snake climb-prog-pt-sm

‘One mighty snake was climbing.’

(164) “Story of a single sister” (S 011)

te bəddʒe puʃ^hi k^hər av-t-in-je
 they all then house come-prog-pt-pf

‘Then they all were coming home.’

In examples 163 and 164, the verbs in the past progressive tense indicate that the actions were in progress in the past.

2) Past progressive tense is also used to express a habitual action in the past.

(165) "Elicited Data" (S 027)

agal to darva pi-t-n-o bak^hu əmi
 before he liquor **drink-prog-pt-sm** but now

ni pi-j
 not drink-non1,s,pre

'Formerly he was drinking liquor but now he doesn't.'

In example 165, 'was drinking' refers to a habitual action of drinking liquor over a period of time.

5.3 Summary

Tense, a grammatical category specifying the time of action, is grouped into two classes: simple and complex tenses. The simple tenses do not have different categories to express nearness or remoteness based on relative temporal proximity. Verbs in simple tenses indicate gender-number and/or person of the subject or the object by fused morphemes. Simple present, simple past and simple future are grouped as simple tenses. Complex tenses indicate past or present time but not future and the 'completed' versus 'not completed' meaning of an action or event. Past perfect, present perfect, past progressive and present progressive are grouped as complex tenses. Transitive verbs in past and perfect tenses agree with the gender-number of the object while transitive verbs in other tenses agree with the subject accordingly to the split ergative system of Chodri as discussed in chapter 4. Verbs in future tense always indicate only the person and the number of the subject.