Verbs and Tense in Shughni

‘to ask’ peşstoo
‘to cook’ paxtoo
‘to eat’ xidoo
‘to fall’ wextoo
‘to give’ daak
‘to help’ yordam
‘to laugh’ šintoo
‘to see’ čixtoo

‘to weave’ wiftoo
‘like(s)’ xoš
‘like(s), love(s)’ žiuğ
‘dislike(s)’ nažiuğ (= can be ‘does not like’) 
‘came home’(past) tarčid yat

We can categorize the Shughni verbs we have found into five types by the ways they mark tense. I use the terms ‘xidoo-type’, ‘daak-type’ and ‘xoš-type’ for convenience. The verbs in brackets are categorized tentatively since we do not have enough evidence to be sure. Additionally, categorization for the verbs žiuğ and nažiuğ cannot be determined yet due to lack of evidence.

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**Regular verbs**
The past tense of a regular verb is marked by its root (infinitive form minus ‘-oo’) preceded by its subject. In this case, the first person pronoun ‘oz’ must be suffixed with the first person marker ‘-om’ or ‘-um’. For first person singular, the past tense can also be marked by the root of the verb suffixed with the same first person marker.
From what we have found, the account for the present tense of a regular verb can only be made with regards to the first person. The general rule is to add the first person marker suffix ‘-om’ or ‘-um’ to the verb and to change the first vowel (latter optional). The final consonant of the root ‘t’ may or may not be maintained, depending on the verb.

Note however, that the present and the past forms for first person ‘šintoo’ are identical. Also, in some cases, there seems to be an insertion of an additional consonant. Despite this fact, I have categorized ‘paxttoo’ as a regular verb, because its past forms behave just as those of other regular verbs do.

The future tense of a regular verb is marked by adding the suffix ‘-ta’ to the subject. There is only one slot for additional morphemes after a subject, so when ‘-ta’ is used the first person marker ‘-om’ or ‘-um’ must move to the post-verbal position.

Xidoo (eat) -type verbs

The verb ‘xidoo’ (‘to eat’) behaves somewhat differently from regular verbs. The only past form of this verb is ‘xud’. Unlike regular verbs, the first person past cannot be marked with the suffix ‘-om’ or ‘-um’ attached to the verb root.

The present tense involves a change in the vowel and an insertion of an additional
consonant.

(6) ‘I eat’ - oz xarom
    ‘he eats’ - yo xirt

**Irregular verbs**

An irregular verb found in Shughni is ‘čixtoo’ (‘to see’). By ‘irregular’, I mean the types of verb whose conjugated forms look entirely different from their infinitive forms. Apart from this characteristic, the past tense for this verb is marked quite similarly to regular verbs.

Ex) ‘I saw you’ – oz to wint / wintom to

Although the first person present differs slightly from its past counterpart, the third person past and present forms look exactly the same. However, those forms follow different subject cases according to the tense.

(7) ‘I see him’ – oz wenom we

‘he sees me’ - yo wint mo

‘he saw her’ - yoye wam wint

**Daak (give) -type verbs**

I categorized the verbs ‘daak’ (give) and ‘yordam’ (help) because they seem to behave similarly, if not entirely in the same way. A typical way to mark the past tense for this type of verbs is to add the morpheme ‘čud’ after the infinitive form, which is used regardless of the person. It is remarkable that the morpheme appears as a separate word in the case of ‘yordam’, while it appears as a suffix in the case of ‘daak’. Additionally, the first person form for ‘daak’ is ‘dakčum’, not ‘daakčud’. Unlike regular verbs, the first person cannot be marked with the morpheme ‘-um’ suffixed to the subject; the morpheme ‘čum’ or ‘čud’ is required.

(8) ‘I gave’ – oz dakčum / *ozum daak

‘he gave’ - yoye daakčud
‘I helped myself’ – ozum ӊобә xo ӊord yordam ӊud

‘you helped yourself’ - tot ӊобә xo ӊord yordam ӊud

‘he helped himself’ – yөye ӊобә xo ӊord yordam ӊud

The first person present forms for these verbs are marked with the suffix ‘-om’ or ‘-om’ attached to their infinitive forms. The third person present on the other hand is marked with the morpheme ‘кишт’. Just like its past counterpart ‘цуд’, it appears as a suffix in the case of ‘даак’, while it does as a separate word in the case of ‘yordam’.

(9) ‘I give’ – oz daakum
    ‘he gives’ – yө daakiшт
    ‘I help’ – oz yordamom
    ‘he helps’ - yө yordam кишт

Similarly to any other types of verbs, the future tense for these verbs is marked with the tense marker ‘-та’ suffixed to the subject and the following verb in its present form. From the examples of the verb ‘даак’, one can conclude that the marker ‘-та’ is used regardless of the person. Although the second person present form of ‘даак’ is not yet known, it is most likely to be ‘дааке’ by analogy with the cases of the first and the third persons.

(10) ‘I will give’ – ozта daakum
    ‘he will give’ – yorta daakiшт
    ‘you will give’ - тота дааке

ӹош-type verbs

The verbs of this type do not change their forms in different tenses; instead, they combine with tense markers. Their infinitive forms are not known at this point.

The present form of the verb ‘to like’ is invariably ‘ӹош’. When the first person ‘оз’ takes the nominative case, the first person marker ‘-om’ is attached to the dative pronoun, not the verb as is the case with other types of verbs.
There are two kinds post-verbal past markers for these verbs: ‘yat’ and ‘vad’ or ‘vəd’.
These markers, although they both represent actions somehow related to the past, give
different meanings to the sentence.

The future tense of these verbs, like other types of verbs, is marked with the
morpheme ‘-ta’ attached to the subject and the following verb in its present form. In the
example below, there seems to be a reduction of a consonant, resulting in ‘werta’ instead of
‘*werdta’. Also, there seems to be an additional word that must be added after the verb. In the
example below, it is represented as ‘yadom’. The first person marker ‘-om’ moved from the
position after the dative pronoun ‘werd’. Hence it is likely that the underlying form of this
additional marker is ‘yad’.

There is evidence that at least one of these past markers, namely ‘vəd’, can be used
when there is no verb. Moreover, although the word ‘sud’ has not been used in combination
with verbs, it seems to mark the future in the same way as the ‘vəd’ marks the past in the
example below.
(14) ‘the apricot is white’ – noš safed
    ‘the apricot was white’ – safed noš vad
    ‘the apricot will be white’ – safed noš sud

Negation

In Shughni, the morpheme ‘na-’ is typically prefixed to the verb to mark negation. However, in the case of ñoš-type verbs, it is prefixed to the tense marker. Moreover, for marking the present tense with ñoš-type verbs, the negation marker ‘nast’ is added post-verbally instead of the ‘na-’.

(15) ‘I will not give’ – ozta nadaakum
    ‘I didn’t fall’ – ozum nawêxt / nawêxtom
    ‘he doesn’t like me’ - werdom oz ñoš nast
    ‘he didn’t like me’ - werdom oz ñoš nayat / werdom oz ñoš navad
    * werdom oz nañoš

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