Perfect constructions with existential verbs in nDrapa

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ABSTRACT
This paper aims to provide a full analysis of perfect constructions with existential verbs in nDrapa. Semantically, such construction conveys either a resulting state or a persistent situation, in accordance with the aspectual type of the situation. Syntactically, the existential verb in the perfect construction is not thoroughly grammaticalized as an aspect marker, but retains some element of its core meaning such as denoting that an entity exists. Moreover, they show distinct features from the serial verb constructions in terms of the affixation. Regarding a possible historical origin of the perfect constructions with existential verbs, I conclude that it is the functional borrowing from the neighboring languages.

KEYWORDS
existential verb, resultative, perfect, aspect, language contact
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1 Introduction

In the Mätro dialect of nDrapa (Qiangic, Tibeto-Burman: Sichuan, China), the combination of a verb and an existential verb is used as an aspectual device that can have implications such as resulting state and persistent situation. For example, in (1) below, the combination is used to describe a resulting state or persisting result of the previous event; that is, a man has come to the speaker’s place and is there until the time of the utterance.

(1)  yoro1 a-te-a3 tʉʉ-e2.
3SG DIR:DOWN-come-[a] exists-B.IPF
‘He has arrived here.’ (He has come and is still here.)

The basic construction of such combinations has the suffix -a affixed to the head of the predicate (such as a-te3 ‘come’ in (1)), followed by an existential verb (such as tʉʉ-e2 in (1)). In this paper, this combination in nDrapa is called the “-a + EXIST” construction. The -a in an “-a + EXIST” construction is simply labeled as “[a]” in the morpheme gloss.

The formation of “-a + EXIST” constructions is distinct from both the auxiliary construction and the typical serial verb constructions in nDrapa, in which left-hand verbs cannot be affixed with

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1 The nDrapa (Zhaba) language is spoken by around 8,000 people in Daofu County and Yajiang County of Kanze Prefecture, Sichuan, China. The Mätro dialect is spoken in the Mazhong village of Zhongni District, Zhaba Area, Daofu County. The following are the phonemes of Mätro nDrapa: consonants /p/ p’, /t/ t’, /k/, /h/ ʃ, /j/, /b/ b, /d/ d, /g/, /z/, /ʒ/, /ʒ/, tr /ts/, tr /tʃ/, ts /s/, dz /dz/, m, n, u, y, hm [mn], hm [ŋ], hm [n], hm [ŋ]; th /θ/, th /ʃ/, ch /tʃ/; f, s, ʂ, s, z, z, y, w, j, l, r [ɬ], [ɭ], [ɬ], [ɭ]; vowels /i, u, u, e [j], o, ə, a, ə; and tones: 1 (High-level), 2 (High-falling), 3 (Low-rising) and 4 (Low-rising-falling).

2 The identity of this suffix is one of the topics of this paper. It has the same form as one of the “Pattern B” suffixes that is used in the point-of-view system (See sections 3.1.2, 3.2.3 and 4.3). The Pattern B suffix -a implies the objective (non-egophoric) attitude of a statement in the perfective aspect. Please refer to Shirai (2006a, 2007) for the details of the point-of-view system.
-α. On the other hand, the “-α + EXIST” constructions appear to be parallel to constructions in the neighboring major languages such as Sichuan Chinese and Khams Tibetan,³ where the combination of a perfect verb and an existential verb convey a resulting state.

In this paper, I will provide a full analysis of the combination of a verb with -α and an existential verb in the Mätro dialect of nDrapa. Such phenomena have not been discussed in the previous descriptive studies on nDrapa dialects, such as Huang (1991) and Gong (2007).

The paper is organized as follows: Section 2 analyzes the semantics of the two aspects that are expressed with the “-α + EXIST” construction. Section 3 describes the morphosyntactic structure of such constructions. Section 4 discusses the origin of the “-α + EXIST” construction in nDrapa in light of similar constructions found in neighboring languages. The conclusions of the paper are summarized in Section 5.

2 Semantic implications of the “-α + Exist” construction

2.1 Tense/aspect values: perfect aspect

The “-α + EXIST” construction in nDrapa can have one of the following two tense/aspect values: the “perfect of result” (Comrie 1976: 56) or “perfect stative” (Smith 1997: 106), such as John has arrived in English; and the “perfect of persistent situation” (Comrie 1976: 60) or “present perfect” with an “open interpretation” (Smith 1997: 188), such as English I’ve been waiting for hours. An example of each pattern is shown in (1) (repeated below) and (2), respectively.

(1) yoro1  α-te-a3  t¢h-e2.
   3SG  DIR:DOWN-come-[a]  exist,−B.PF
   ‘He has arrived here.’ (He has come and is still here.)

(2)  µa1  t¢u2  co3  ko-hdo1  hce-a3  t¢u2.
   1SG  now  friend  DIR:UP-sit  PST-[a]  exist,;
   ‘I have been waiting for a friend (and continue to do so now).’

Moreover, in a few examples, the construction seems to have an iterative or habitual implication, as seen in (3). However, this implication can be viewed as a variation of the perfect of persistent situation, as in the roughly comparable English example I’ve shopped there for years (Comrie 1976: 60).

(3) rendzo3  kα-hveis=hce-a1  t¢a=re3.
   often  DIR:IN-overcloud=PST-[a]  exist,=COP
   ‘It often becomes cloudy.’

³ In the areas where nDrapa is spoken, Tibetan is the traditional lingua franca, and more recently, Chinese has become the dominant language. Many loanwords from Tibetan and Chinese are found in nDrapa, and loanwords from Tibetan are found even in rather basic vocabularies such as lomα3 ‘leaf’ and nemo3 ‘flower.’ They are so familiar to nDrapa speakers that the consultants of my fieldwork recognize them as native nDrapa words (Shirai 2006a: 5-6, 2008: 3).
Other meanings that are often associated with the perfect in other languages, such as experience and the recent past, are not necessary entailments of the “-a + EXIST” construction in nDrapa.

My semantic analysis of this construction is based on the two-component theory of Smith (1997). The two-component theory assumes that “sentences present information about aspectual situation type and viewpoint. The two types of information are independent.” (Smith 1997: 2). There are three main viewpoint types: perfective, imperfective, and neutral. Moreover, aspectual situations are classified into five types as listed below:

- **States**: static, durative
- **Activity**: dynamic, durative, atelic
- **Accomplishment**: dynamic, durative, telic, consisting of process and outcome
- **Semelfactives**: dynamic, atelic, instantaneous
- **Achievement**: dynamic, telic, instantaneous  
  (Smith 1997: 3)

It is natural to consider the difference between the two values of the “-a + EXIST” construction mentioned above as being derived from the aspectual viewpoints: the perfect of result has the perfective viewpoint and the perfect of persistent situation has the progressive viewpoint. Moreover, such viewpoints appear to be restricted by the situation type of the event expressed in the sentence, a point I pursue in the subsequent sections.

### 2.1.1 The perfect of result

If the event expressed in an “-a + EXIST” sentence is telic (i.e., there is a natural final endpoint of the event), the construction has a strong tendency to have the reading of resulting state. In other words, if the situation type of the event expressed in the sentence is Accomplishment or Achievement, the “-a + EXIST” construction implies that the event is viewed as a whole from the perfective viewpoint and that a result of the event exists at the time of reference. For example, Accomplishment situations, such as “put on certain clothes” and “open a certain window,” as seen in (4) and (5) respectively, show this pattern. Moreover, Achievement situations, such as “crack a certain cup” and “break a certain cup,” as seen in (6) and (7), also have the reading of resulting state.

(4)  
\[ \eta r o 1 \  \text{potche3} \ a-\text{?ci-a1} \ \text{tse-\text{\text{-}}c2}. \]  
3SG  Tibetan.clothes  DIR:UP-put.on-[a]  exist\textsuperscript{t}-B.IPF  
‘He is wearing the Tibetan clothes.’ (He has put on the Tibetan clothes and is still wearing them.)

(5)  
\[ \eta r o 1 \  \text{ngesi3} \ o-\text{\text{-}chu1} \ \text{hce-a3} \ t\text{\text{-}}c\text{\text{-}}c3. \]  
DEM  window  DIR:UP-open  PST-[a]  exist\textsuperscript{t}=COP  
‘That window is open.’ (Someone has opened that window and it is still open)
In the “-a + EXIST” construction with the resultative implication, the perfective viewpoint is located between the time when the action is finished and the time when the resulting state changes. The latter temporal point is referred to as “F + 1” by Smith (1997: 71–72) and as “the reset time” by Igarashi and Gunji (1998: 82–3). For example, in (4), the situation “he put on the clothes” is the Accomplishment type. The viewpoint is the perfective type, which includes the initial endpoint (I) and the final endpoint (F) of the action, and the result of the action is his wearing of the clothes. Moreover, the viewpoint is located in the period when he is wearing the clothes, that is, the period between the time when he finishes putting on the clothes (F) and the time when he takes them off (F + 1: a change of state from F).

In nDrapa, the perfect of result interpretation of the “-a + EXIST” construction is only acceptable if the result of a telic situation is visible. In addition to the examples above, situations such as ηa=rx3 tianxua4 xaoma3 ko-rc3 [1SG=GEN telephone number DIR:IN-write] ‘(I) write my telephone number,’ ṭyara-ka3 meto-rc3 ηo-hbo3 [garden-inside flower-PL DIR:OUT-bloom] ‘the flowers in the garden open up,’ and ts3 a-hc-al [water DIR:UP-boil] ‘the water comes to a boil’ are found to express the perfect of result when placed in the “-a + EXIST” construction. However, if the result is invisible, the “-a + EXIST” construction is judged to be odd or unacceptable by native speakers. I will return to this problem in section 2.2.

2.1.2 The perfect of persistent situation
Example (2), repeated below, expresses a persistent situation: the speaker began waiting for a friend in the past and continues to wait until the reference time. In this pattern, the reference time is identical with the time of utterance.

(2) ηa1 tceu2 co3 ko-hdo1 hce-α3 tceu2.
1SG now friend DIR:UP-sit PST-[a] exist,
‘I have been waiting for a friend (and continue to do so now).’

If the situation expressed in the sentence is the Activity type, the “-a + EXIST” construction conveys a persistent situation. If the final endpoint of the situation is not well-defined, that is, out of the aspectual view, and if the situation has time duration, that is, the initial endpoint is not identical with the final endpoint, then the aspectual viewpoint is easily located in the interval between the two endpoints. Examples with the activity situations “live with someone” and “help someone do something” are provided in (8) and (9), respectively.
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(8)  
\[ \text{tn}^1 \text{r} \text{l} \text{a} = \text{nt} \text{sh} \text{a} \text{3} \quad \text{h} \text{d} \text{o} = \text{wu} \text{4} \quad \text{m} \text{e} = \text{hce} \text{a} \text{3} \quad \text{t} \text{c} \text{u} = \text{e} \text{2}. \]  
\text{PN} \quad \text{PN} \text{=COM} \quad \text{same.place=} \text{ACC} \quad \text{live=} \text{PST}[a] \quad \text{exist}_t \text{-B.IPF}  
‘Tseri has been living with Loza (since marriage).’

(9)  
\[ \text{yp} \text{r} \text{o} \text{1} \quad \text{t} \text{c} \text{u} \text{u} \text{2} \quad \text{h} \text{g} \text{e} \text{b} \text{e} = \text{wu} \text{1} \quad \text{k} \text{a} = \text{ji} \text{1} \quad \text{hce} \text{a} \text{3} \quad \text{t} \text{c} \text{u} = \text{e} \text{2}. \]  
\text{3SG} \quad \text{now} \quad \text{teacher=} \text{ACC} \quad \text{DIR:IN-help} \quad \text{PST}[a] \quad \text{exist}_t \text{-B.IPF}  
‘He has been helping the teacher (and continues to do so now).’

In nDrapa, the progressive aspect is usually indicated by the imperfective auxiliary \[ t \text{a}, \] which follows the main verb stem, as shown in (10a). The semantic interpretations of (10a) with the imperfective auxiliary and (10b) with the “-a + EXIST” construction are so similar that native speakers have difficulty describing any difference.

(10) a. \[ \text{ny} \text{a} \text{l} \quad \text{t} \text{c} \text{t} \text{i} - \text{ta} \text{l} \quad \text{n} \text{t} \text{c} \text{hi} = \text{ta} \text{l}. \]  
\text{1SG} \quad \text{book-upside} \quad \text{look=} \text{IPF}  
‘I am reading.’

b. \[ \text{ny} \text{a} \text{l} \quad \text{t} \text{c} \text{t} \text{i} - \text{ta} \text{l} \quad \text{k} \text{a} - \text{n} \text{t} \text{c} \text{hi} - \text{a} \text{l} \quad \text{t} \text{c} \text{u} \text{2}. \]  
\text{1SG} \quad \text{book-upside} \quad \text{DIR:IN-look-[a]} \quad \text{exist}_t \text{B.IPF}  
‘I have been reading.’

Example (3), which is repeated below, has an iterative implication: the sky becomes cloudy again and again. Moreover, the situation is regarded as continuing until the time of reference.

(3) \[ \text{re} \text{nd} \text{z} \text{o} \text{3} \quad \text{k} \text{a} - \text{h} \text{t} \text{e} \text{i} \text{re} = \text{hce} \text{a} \text{1} \quad \text{t} \text{c} \text{a} = \text{re} \text{3}. \]  
\text{often} \quad \text{DIR:IN-overcloud=} \text{PST}[a] \quad \text{exist}_t \text{=COP}  
‘It often becomes cloudy.’

A parallel pattern is found in (11) and (12). In (11), the subject wears Tibetan clothes one day, again the next day, and keeps putting them on in the morning and taking them off in the evening all the way up until the day of utterance. Similarly (12) implies that the subject repeats the cycle of reading books up to the day of utterance.

(11) \[ \text{yp} \text{r} \text{o} \text{1} \quad \text{nare} \text{a} \text{3} \quad \text{po} \text{t} \text{che} \text{3} \quad \text{a-} \text{ni} - \text{ci} - \text{a} \text{1} \quad \text{t} \text{c} \text{u} = \text{e} \text{2}. \]  
\text{3SG} \quad \text{every.day} \quad \text{Tibetan.clothes} \quad \text{DIR:UP-put.on-[a]} \quad \text{exist}_t \text{-B.IPF}  
‘He wears Tibetan clothes every day.’

(12) \[ \text{yp} \text{r} \text{o} \text{1} \quad \text{nare} \text{a} \text{3} \quad \text{t} \text{c} \text{t} \text{i} - \text{ta} \text{l} \quad \text{k} \text{a} - \text{n} \text{t} \text{c} \text{hi} - \text{a} \text{1} \quad \text{t} \text{c} \text{u} = \text{e} \text{2}. \]  
\text{3SG} \quad \text{every.day} \quad \text{book-upside} \quad \text{DIR:IN-look-[a]} \quad \text{exist}_t \text{-B.IPF}  
‘He reads every day.’

The form of sentence (11) is almost the same as that of (4), repeated below, except that (11) has the adverbial \[ \text{nare} \text{a} \text{3} \] ‘every day.’ Sentence (12) is also similar to (10b) with the exception of the adverbial.
4.1 \( \text{yoro1} \text{ potše3} \text{ a-}\text{cī-a1} \text{ tgu-e2.} \)  
\( 3SG \text{ Tibetan.clothes} \text{ DIR:UP-put.on-[a] exist,-B.IPF} \)  
"He is wearing the Tibetan clothes." (He has put on the Tibetan clothes and is still wearing them.)

10. b. \( \text{yəl} \text{ təšt-ta1} \text{ kə-ntši-a1} \text{ tgu2.} \)  
\( 1SG \text{ book-upside} \text{ DIR:IN-look-[a] exist,} \)  
"I have been reading."

The important point here is that the situation types depend on the whole sentence, including the adverbial. Therefore, the situations "He wears Tibetan clothes" and "He wears Tibetan clothes every day" belong to different types: The former is the Accomplishment type, and the latter, the Semelfactive type. On the other hand, since both situations of (12) and (10b) belong to the Activity type, the inference of iterativity is due to the presence of the adverbials such as \( \text{rendzə3} \text{ 'often'} \) and \( \text{nareŋə3} \text{ 'every day.'} \)

To conclude, if the situation is atelic, that is, the Active type or the Semelfactive type, the "-a + EXIST" construction tends to convey a persistent situation. Moreover, it can also have an iterative-like implication in accordance with the context expressed by adverbials.

2.2 Situations unacceptable in the "-a + EXIST" construction

Interestingly, some situations are incompatible with the "-a + EXIST" construction.

Situations of the State type are not found with the "-a + EXIST" construction in nDrapa. For example, in (13), even though the stem of the main verb (\( \text{ra3} \)) may seem stative ('resemble'), the situation expressed with the affixed verb (\( \text{a-ra3} \)) is the Achievement type ('come to resemble'). In nDrapa, the verbal stems that have stative meanings, such as \( \text{təi1} \) 'big' and \( \text{ʔhe1} \) 'white,' generally form change-of-state verbs such as \( \text{a-təi-a1} \) 'grow up' and \( \text{a-ʔhe-a1} \) 'turn white' once they are affixed with a directional prefix and -a. \(^5\)

\(^4\) The situation type does not depend on the inherent features of the verb. Although both the examples below involve the verb \( \text{ŋi-ŋw1} \) "listen/hear," the situation in (i) "I hear the message" is the Accomplishment type, but the situation in (ii) "the mother listens to the child's talk" is the Active type.

(i) \( \text{anθa1} \text{ no1 a-}\text{cje-norx3} \text{ yəl ŋi-ŋw11 nce-a3 tgu2.} \)  
\( \text{just 2SG DIR:DOWN-say-NMLZ 1SG DIR:OUT-listen PST-[a] exist,} \)  
'I have heard what you have just said (and I remember the message).'

(ii) \( \text{tən2} \text{ ruw3} \text{ tʃi-}\text{pe4} \text{ cje=t-e1. me3 ŋi-}\text{ŋw11 a1 tgu2.} \)  
\( \text{now child something-a.little say=IPF-B.IPF mother DIR:OUT-listen-[a] exist,} \)  
'The child is saying something (obscure). His mother has been listening to it.'

\(^5\) In this respect, the function of the suffix -a is identical to that of the Pattern B suffix of the perfective aspect. This suggests that suffix -a is the same, or at least has the same origin, as the Pattern B suffix of the perfective aspect. See sections 3.2.3 and 4.3.
Another type of incompatibility is found with events denoting death. Even though the final endpoints of the events are significant, the “-a + EXIST” construction is not accepted if the event implies extinction, as in “a man died many years ago.” Again we see that the “-a + EXIST” pattern cannot be used if the subject of the resulting state is not visible. This phenomenon indicates that the existential verb in the “-a + EXIST” construction is not thoroughly grammaticalized as an aspect marker but retains some element of its core meaning of denoting that an entity exists.

For example, example (14a) is unacceptable using the “-a + EXIST” construction, even though the situation is one where the father had died in the past and hence is dead at the time of the utterance. This type of situation is expressed by a simple perfect sentence that does not contain an existential verb, as shown in (14b).

(14) a.  *koro3 pyla = ri3 phe3 ta-ε-a1 təu22.
   DEM child=GEN father DIR:NEUT-die-[a] exist=-B.IPF
   Intended meaning: ‘The father of this child has died.’

b.  koro3 pyla = ri3 phe3 ta-ε-a1.
   DEM child=GEN father DIR:NEUT-die-B.PFV
   ‘The father of this child has died.’

It is worth noting that the acceptability of the “-a + EXIST” construction is slightly improved in (15), though the implication also becomes slightly different. (14a) uses an animate existential verb təu2 in the “-a + EXIST” construction, but (15) uses an inanimate existential verb təa3. Consequently, (15) may imply that an inanimate subject, a dead body, exists in the sight of the speaker.

(15)  ?koro3 pyla = ri3 phe3 ta-ε-a1 təa = ri3.
   DEM child=GEN father DIR:NEUT-die-[a] exist,COP
   ‘The father of this child has died (and his dead body is laying there).’

The intended meaning of (16a) is that the ice in a lake has melted and the resultant water still remains in the lake. The situation cannot be expressed with the “-a + EXIST” construction, as shown in (16a), but can be expressed with a perfect form of a sentence without an existential verb, as shown in (16b). This is because the subject of the resulting state is intangible; it no longer exists. If the situation is opposite, that is, if the water has turned to ice, the “-a + EXIST” construction can be used, as seen in (17). This is appropriate as the ice has come into existence.

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6 For details on the distinction of existential verbs, please refer to section 3.1.1.
(16) a.  *ctx-ta = rə1 nphei1 a-j-a3  təa = rə3.
    lake-upside=GEN ice  DIR:DOWN-melt-[a]  exist= COP
    Intended meaning: ‘The ice in the lake has melted.’

b.  ça-ta = rə1 nphei1 a-j-a3.
    lake-upside=GEN ice  DIR:DOWN-melt-B.PFV
    ‘The ice in the lake has melted.’

(17)  ça-ta1 nphei1 kə-təa-a3  təa = rə3.
    lake-upside  ice  DIR:IN-exist-[a]  exist= COP
    ‘The lake has been frozen over.’ (The ice in the lake has come to exist.)

Other situations with invisible results are also incompatible with this construction. These include mental situations expressed by such verbs as hto3 ‘be afraid of’ or hma1 ‘forget’. Situations expressing changes in temperature that have no visible verifiability, such as “become cold,” are not acceptable with this construction, but those denoting changes in temperature that can be visibly verified are acceptable, as shown in (18) and (19), respectively. In (18), the change in temperature is invisible; on the other hand, in (19), the bright sunshine is visible.

(18)  *ə-ve-a1  təa = rə3.
    DIR:UP-cold-[a]  exist= COP
    Intended meaning: ‘It has become cold.’

(19)  ŋəni1 ko-zo-a1  təa = rə3.  ŋəni1
    sun  DIR:IN-hot-[a]  exist= COP sun
    ‘The sun shines brightly and it has become warm.’

Moreover, Activity situations that produce sound, such as “a child is saying something” with the verb a-eje3 ‘speak’ and “A monk beats a drum” with the verb ŋo-hyo1 ‘beat (a drum),’ cannot be expressed with the “-a + EXIST” construction.

Other situations that are incompatible with the “-a + EXIST” construction seem arbitrary. For example, most of the situations consisting of a compound verb with the verb stem mo1 ‘make,’ such as hteimu3 a-mo3 ‘marry’ and khwiṇi1 ŋoṇi1 a-mo3 ‘walk around,’ cannot be expressed with the “-a + EXIST” construction, as shown in (20). However, htsoma1 joma3 a-mo3 ‘arrange (things in order)’ is acceptable, as shown in (21).

(20)  *ŋoṇi1 hteimu3 a-mo-a3  təu-cə2.
    3DL  wedding  DIR:DOWN-make-[a]  exist=-B.IPF
    Intended meaning: ‘They have been married.’

(21)  jə-kə1 htsoma1 joma3 a-mo-a3  təa = rə3.
    house-inside clean/ordered  DIR:DOWN-make-[a]  exist= COP
    ‘The house has been arranged.’ [FT]
2.3 Serial verb construction with the verb 'put'

In nDrapa, there is another type of construction that conveys either the meaning of a resulting state or a persistent situation: the serialization of a general verb and the verb le3 ‘put.’ For example, the meanings of (22a, b) are almost the same as those of (1), which is repeated below; both denote the resulting state of a man's arrival.

(22) a. ǫora1 a-te3  le = hce-a3.
SG DIR:DOWN—come put—PST-B.PFV
‘He has arrived here.’ (He has come and is still here.)

b. ǫora1 a-te3  le = t-e3.
SG DIR:DOWN—come put—IPF-B.IPF
‘He has arrived here.’ (He has come and is still here.)

(1) ǫora1 a-te-a3  tceu2.
SG DIR:DOWN—come—[a] exist—B.IPF
‘He has arrived here.’ (He has come and is still here.)

Similarly, the meanings of (23a, b) are also very similar to that of sentence (2): the persistent situation of waiting for a friend.

(23) a. ńa1 tceu2 co3 ko-hdo1  le = hye3.
1SG now friend DIR:UP—sit put—PST:1
‘I have been waiting for a friend (and continue to do so now).’

b. ńa1 tceu2 co3 ko-hdo1  le = t-e3.
1SG now friend DIR:UP—sit put—PST:1
‘I have been waiting for a friend (and continue to do so now).’

(2) ńa1 tceu2 co3 ko-hdo1  hce-a3 tceu2. ńa1
1SG now friend DIR:UP—sit PST—[a] exist, 1SG
‘I have been waiting for a friend (and continue to do so now).’

In nDrapa serial verb and auxiliary constructions, no suffix can be added to the left-hand verb stem, as shown in (24) and (25), as well as in the verb plus le3 serial construction just exemplified.

(24) thu3  tnx—the = ji1  euu-e3.
LOG DIR:NEUT—egest=go need—B.IPF
‘(The boy said,) “I must go potty.”’ [FT]
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(25) ya1 ta3 le3 a-j3 wu-a2.
   1SG   water   draw   DIR:DOWN-go/come   PFT-B.PFV
   ‘I have already gone to draw water.’

By contrast, the “-a + EXIST” construction, as shown in (1) and (2), is morphologically distinct from typical serial verb/auxiliary constructions in that the left-hand verb is obligatory suffixed with -a.

It should be noticed that nDrapa has both the “-a + EXIST” construction and the serial verb construction with le3 ‘put’ to express a resulting state or a persistent situation; moreover, the former has an atypical form in the nDrapa system of verb serializations. Further discussion on the structural differences between “-a + EXIST” and serial verb constructions is given in section 3.2.

3 The formation of the “-a + EXIST” construction

3.1 Existential verbs

In nDrapa, existential verbs constitute a subcategory of verbs. Thus, similar to all nDrapa verb stems, existential verb stems can become heads of predicates and take affixes such as directional prefixes and Pattern B suffixes, as shown in (26).

(26) tap3 hduisepe3 to-tau-a1 re3.
   riverside  fish.killer   DIR:NEUT-exist-B.PFV   COP
   ‘There was a fisherman at the riverside.’ [FT]

3.1.1 The choice of an existential verb

There are as many as six existential verb stems in nDrapa, as shown in Table 1.7 In existential sentences, existential verb stems are chosen in accordance with the animacy of the subject and its manner of existence (Shirai 2006b, 2008).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STEM</th>
<th>ANIMACY</th>
<th>TEMPORALITY</th>
<th>MANNER</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>po3</td>
<td>animate/inanimate</td>
<td>constant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>ma1</td>
<td>animate</td>
<td>constant/temporary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>a2</td>
<td>inanimate</td>
<td>temporary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>tc2</td>
<td>inanimate</td>
<td>constant/temporary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>tc3</td>
<td>inanimate</td>
<td>temporary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>tc2</td>
<td>animate</td>
<td>temporary</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1. Existential verb stems

7 In the glosses of the examples in this paper, the existential verbs have subscripts that indicate their corresponding stem in Table 1.
Only the last three existential verb stems are found in “-a + EXIST” constructions: tēu2 (exist₃) is used if the subject of the resulting state/persistent situation is animate, as shown in (27) and (28). On the other hand, if the subject of the resulting state/persistent situation is inanimate, tēa3 (exist₄) is usually chosen, as shown in (29) and (30); however, tēa3 (exist₅) is also found if such a subject is contained within an object, such as a bag or clothes, as shown in (31) and (32).

(27) ṇa₁ ko3 l-a-hdzi-a1 tēu2.
1SG here DIR:UP-sit-[a] exist₅
‘I have been sitting here.’ (I sat down here, and I am still sitting here.)

(28) woko₁ thapi3 rapha = tēu3 l-tēhw-a3 tēw-e2.
smoked.pork upside mouse=NCL DIR:UP-go-[a] exist₅-B.IPF
‘A mouse is on the big smoked pork.’ [Proverb]⁸ (A mouse has climbed to the top of the smoked pork and is still there)

(29) ṇa₁ nkho3 tōsī-ta3 ko-hii-a1 tēa3.
1SG key table-upside DIR:IN-put-[a] exist₅
‘I have kept the key on the table (and the key is still there).’

(30) ṇa₁ meto-ta3 tā3 ko-tu-a1 tēa3.
1SG flower-upside water DIR:IN-pour-[a] exist₅
‘I have watered the flowers (and they are still wet; so you don’t need to water them).’

---

⁸ It is difficult to determine why the other three stems po3, na₁ and ɐ₂ are not used in the “-a + EXIST” construction, but the implications of these stems appears to be less suitable to the construction: neither the resulting state nor the persistent situation are recognized as constant or immobile.

Moreover, the existential verb na₁ appears to be related to the experiential auxiliary na₂. Examples are shown in (i) auxiliary and (ii) existential verb. However, the word na₂ in (i) is completely grammaticalized as an auxiliary, even if it is assumed to originate from an existential verb. Since the verb to the left of na₁ cannot be affixed by -a, the structure is different from the “-a + EXIST” construction. Therefore, I will not discuss the issue further in this paper.

(i) ṇa₁ pošhe3 l-a-ʔi1 na₂.
1SG Tibetan.cloths DIR:UP-wear EXP
‘I have worn Tibetan cloths.’

(ii) ndankher3 n3 pepe3 na₁ the3.
formerly dhole a.lot exist₂ PST:HBT
‘There used to be many dholes.’

---

⁹ This proverb refers to a position above oneself. A woko1 (wholly-smoked and fermented pork) — which is known as Chou-Zhu-Rou (臘猪肉; smelly pork) in Chinese — hung above a fireplace, is a traditional food in nDrapa. It has a very important place in the nDrapa way of life, while a mouse is much smaller and less important.
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(31) \( n_o = r_3 \quad n_kh_o = r_3 \quad y_a = r_3 \quad m\_k\_a = r_3 \quad a\_x_a = r_3 \quad t\_@ = r_3. \)
\( 2S_G = \text{GEN} \quad \text{key} \quad 1S_G = \text{GEN} \quad \text{bosom-inside} \quad \text{DIR:DOWN-stow-[a]} \quad \text{exist}_1. \)

‘I have stowed your key away in my bosom\(^{10}\) (and the key is still in my bosom).’

(32) \( k_o = k_o \quad r = r_3 \quad a\_h_k = r_3 \quad t\_@ = r_3. \)
\( \text{teapot-inside} \quad \text{tea} \quad \text{DIR:DOWN-pour-[a]} \quad \text{exist}_1. \)

‘I have poured tea into the teapot (and the teapot is still full with the tea).’

If more than one argument is possible as the subject of the resulting state/persistent situation, the choice of an existential verb stem is dependent on what the speaker focuses on. For example, different existential verbs are found in (33a) and (33b), even though the meanings of the two sentences are similar—the resulting state of a third person shutting his mouth. Since the human subject (\( \eta_o \) ‘he’) is considered to be the subject of the resulting state in (33a), the existential verb stem used here is \( t\_a = r_3 \) (exist\(_1\)), which indicates that the subject of existence is animate. On the other hand, since the inanimate object (\( n\_m = r_3 \) ‘mouth’) is considered to be the subject of the resulting state in (33b), the inanimate existential verb stem \( t\_a = r_3 \) (exist\(_1\)) is used here.

(33) a. \( \eta_o \quad n\_m = r_3 \quad t\_a = r_3 \quad t\_u = r_3. \)
\( 3S_G \quad \text{mouth} \quad \text{DIR:NEUT-be.silent} \quad \text{exist}_1 \quad \text{B.IPF} \)

‘He keeps his mouth shut.’

b. \( \eta_o \quad n\_m = r_3 \quad t\_a = r_3 \quad t\_a = r_3. \)
\( 3S_G/\text{DEM} \quad \text{mouth} \quad \text{DIR:NEUT-be.silent} \quad \text{exist}_1 \quad \text{COP} \)

‘His mouth is kept shut.’

3.1.2 The point-of-view system

The existential verb in the “\(-a + \text{EXIST}\)” construction alters its form according to the point-of-view system (Shirai 2007), which is comparable to the so-called conjunct/disjunct system described for Newari (Hale 1980, Hargreaves 2005), Tibetan (DeLancey 1990, 2001), and other neighboring languages.\(^{11}\) In the point-of-view system, sentences can be divided into two patterns: Pattern A and Pattern B.\(^{12}\) Pattern A implies that the locutor is familiar with the content of the sentence. In other words, the sentence is produced from the locutor’s point of view. On the other hand, Pattern B implies that the sentence is uttered objectively, that is, without considering the locutor’s point of view.

\(^{10}\) \( m\_a \) is the space between a jumper and a blouse.

\(^{11}\) I avoid using the term “conjunct/disjunct” in this paper, although I have used it in my previous papers. There have been criticisms against the use of this term (Tournadre 2008).

\(^{12}\) Pattern A corresponds to “egophoric” forms (Tournadre 2008: 295) or a conjunct pattern, and Pattern B to “factual and sensory” forms (Tournadre 2008: 302) or a disjunct pattern.
view. nDrapa has two verbal suffixes to mark Pattern B: -a (B perfective) and -e (B imperfective). Pattern A lacks an overt suffix.

Let us compare (34) with (27), which is repeated below. (34) is a Pattern B sentence in which the existential verb tca2 is affixed with -e. On the other hand, (27) is a Pattern A sentence in which the existential verb tca2 lacks the suffix.

(34) ðóhúí3 tce=î-kæ2 hye=sjä1 λ-hdïè-a3 tçu-e2.
    car one=NCL-inside eight=NCL DIR:UP-sit-[a] exist,-B.IPF
    ‘Eight people are in one car.’ (Eight people have sat down in the seats of a car, and they are still there.)

(27) ñä1 ko3 λ-hdïè-a1 tçu2.
    1SG here DIR:UP-sit-[a] exist,
    ‘I have been sitting here.’ (I sat down here and I am still sitting here.)

The Pattern B forms of the stems tca2 and tca3 are formed with -e, and the forms are tçu-e2 and tçje-c3 respectively. On the other hand, the Pattern B form of the stem tca3 is formed with the copula re3 to make tca=re3 (Shirai 2006b: 158–169).

3.2 Contrast with serial verb constructions

The structure of the “-a + EXIST” construction contrasts with that of serial verb and auxiliary constructions. I will briefly outline the distinct patterns of affixation found with these constructions below. For more detailed discussion, see Shirai (2009).

3.2.1 Serial verb constructions

In serial verb constructions,13 we find two major patterns of affixation: First, the major verb is not affixed by suffixes (i.e., is just a stem), while the rightmost minor verb, that is, the rightmost verb of serialization, carries a directional prefix and may take a Pattern B suffix. The minor verb of this pattern is necessarily a motion verb, as seen in (35). In this pattern, only a directional prefix is found between the serialized verb stems.

(35) ãtçì3 tshüí3 hdu3 to-tçho-a1 re3.
    sister after search DIR:NEUT-go-B.PFV COP
    ‘He went to look for his sister.’ [FT]

---

13 The serial verb constructions in nDrapa are “asymmetrical” (Aikhenvald 2006: 21), and the major verb(s) precedes the minor verb(s). That is, only the leftmost verb is from an unrestricted class, and the following verb(s) is/are from a rather restricted class. Verbs ãt3 ‘need,’ hdu3 ‘can do,’ le3 ‘put,’ wu3 ‘finish,’ and motional verbs (come/go) are commonly found as the minor verbs.
The second pattern of affixation in serial verb constructions has the major verb affixed by a directional prefix; it may not take a Pattern B suffix. The rightmost minor verb is affixed by a Pattern B suffix, as shown in (24), repeated below. In this pattern, the verb stems are serialized without any interruption by suffixes.

(24) thu3 tka-the=ji1 cu-e3.  
LOG DIR:NEUT-egest=go need-B.IPF  
‘(The boy said,) “I must go potty.”’ [FT]

Thus, the typical serial verb construction of nDrapa is summarized as follows:
- A directional prefix and a Pattern B suffix occur just once in a sequence.
- The major verb cannot be affixed by any suffix.

3.2.2 Auxiliary constructions

The nDrapa auxiliaries follow the major verb to mark the tense/aspect of the sentence, as shown in (36): ji1 ‘go’ is the major verb and tka3 is the auxiliary. The auxiliary tka3 cannot become the main verb of a sentence.

(36) eta1 hka-ta1 ji=tka1.  
1SG mountain-upside go=IPF  
‘I am going up the mountain.’

In the auxiliary construction, the major verb may be affixed with a directional prefix but may not carry a Pattern B suffix. On the other hand, the auxiliary stem may not be affixed with a directional prefix, but may be affixed with a Pattern B suffix and a negative prefix, if necessary. This pattern is the same as that found in the second type of verb serialization. In example (37) below, a directional prefix kai- is attached to the verb stem kasi, and both the negative prefix ma- and Pattern B suffix -a are attached to the auxiliary stem wu2 (w-).

(37) yoro1 citsi3 kai-ktsi1 ma-w-a2.  
3SG supper DIR:IN-eat NEG.PFV-PFT-B.PFV  
‘He has not had supper yet.’

3.2.3 Number of predicates

In my previous fieldwork, I found one example of an “-a + EXIST” construction, wherein the existential verb was affixed with both a directional prefix and a Pattern B suffix. In this case, the main verb preceding the existential verb had both a directional prefix and -a, as shown in (38). The form of the Pattern B perfective suffix and that of -a in the “-a + EXIST” construction was exactly the same.
Shirai: Perfect constructions with existential verbs in nDrapa

(38) o-sho3 wu-a=ne2 ka-ntchi=ta=ne3, zipo=su=ne3
DIR-dawn finish-B.PFV=then DIR-look=WHEN=TOP son/boy=TOP

‘When morning broke, the boy found himself on a golden bed.’ (The boy had gotten onto a golden bed, and he was on it when he opened his eyes in the morning.) [FT]

Such affixation of the main verb by -a or by the Pattern B suffix is impossible in the typical serial verb and auxiliary constructions mentioned above. In such constructions, a Pattern B suffix occurs just once in a sequence, and it can be attached only to the rightmost verb, as shown in (35). This fact supports the idea that a verb serialization forms one predicate.

(35) aqisi3 tshapi3 hdi3 to-tcho-a1 re3.
sister after search DIR:NEUT-go-B.PFV COP
‘He went to look for his sister.’ [FT]

Therefore, if we find a sequence of verbs where both the verbs involve Pattern B suffixes, as shown in (39) and (40), we should not regard it as verb serialization, but as a sequence of two predicates.

(39) nevo1 chepi=n1 yo-hdo-ʔhu1, to-mo-hku-a1, o-tcho-a1 re3.
sister elder=NMLZ DIR-wait-CAUS DIR:NEUT-NEG-obey-B.PFV DIR:UP-go-B.PFV COP
‘(Although he) tried to keep his elder sister waiting, she ignored him and went upstairs.’ [FT]

(40) ya=ra3 ja-ta1 menna3 ko-zw-a1, ko-hlu-a1.
1SG=GEN hand-upside oil DIR:IN-splash-B.PFV DIR:IN-get.burned-B.PFV
‘(When I was cooking,) oil splashed onto my hand, (and I) got burned.’

In fact, the semantic relationship between the two verbs in (39) is different from the one in (35), although the rightmost verb stem is the same (tcho). In (35), the actions of searching and going take place simultaneously. On the other hand, in (39), the sister first ignores him, and then she goes upstairs. That is, two separate events occur in sequence. Similarly, in (40), first the hot oil splashes, and then the subject gets burned.

However, the “-a + EXIST” construction does not show this contrast. Example (38) does not imply that the boy began to exist after he climbed into the gold bed. Rather, the existential verb indicates the continuance of his situation after he climbed into the bed. Thus, we can conclude that the “-a + EXIST” construction indicates a single event, although its form seems to have two Pattern B suffixes and involve two predicates.

Moreover, only a few sentence-final particles can occur on the right-hand side of the Pattern B suffix, for example, the hearsay evidential particle te3 shown in (41); however, no content
words, barring existential verbs, can occur. Thus, in this regard, the “-a + EXIST” construction is once again exceptional.

(41) ahya3 éje=rz1, ngu?chi-rz2 hka?cha1 a-éje3 wu-a2 te3.
    father say=COP leader-PL speech DIR:DOWN-say PFT-B.PFV HS

‘Father says the leaders have finished giving their speeches.’

4 Discussion on the origin of “-a + EXIST” constructions

As noted above, the “-a + EXIST” construction in nDrapa cannot be analyzed as a serial verb construction. Moreover, nDrapa has other constructions that convey similar meanings, as mentioned in section 2.2. This poses the following question: What is the state of the “-a + EXIST” construction in nDrapa? To answer this, we will consider its possible origins.

4.1 Similar structures in major languages

The two dominant languages in the nDrapa-speaking region—Khams Tibetan and Sichuan Chinese—both possess constructions that consist of a verb in the perfect form followed by an existential verb (henceforth referred to as a “perfect-existential” construction). As with the nDrapa “-a + EXIST” construction, the constructions in Khams and Sichuan express a resulting state or a persistent situation.

In Khams Tibetan (the sDe-dGe dialect), when the existential verb follows a main verb in perfect form, the construction indicates that the result of the action still remains (Gesang-Jumian and Gesang-Yangjing 2002: 141), as shown in (42) and (43).

Khams Tibetan (sDe-dGe)

(42) ηε/ jε ke/? tεi?/ tεi/ jε/.
    1SG.ERG letter one write.PFT exist:CONJ

‘I have written the letter.’ (Gesang-Jumian and Gesang-Yangjing 2002: 141 [49])

(43) khθ/ t§a? pa? te/ ηger/.
    3SG.ERG newspaper look.PFT exist:DISJ

‘He has read the newspaper.’ (Gesang-Jumian and Gesang-Yangjing 2002: 141 [51])

In the Sichuan dialect of Chinese,\(^{14}\) tsa4 (在) is an existential verb, and the main verb with tao4 (到)/te3 (起) plus te2 (得)/tsa1 (在) conveys the persistent result of a previous event (Zhang et

\(^{14}\) In this paper, on the basis of Zhang et al. (2001), the tones of the Sichuan dialect are indicated phonemically: if the syllable is pronounced independently, number 1 indicates the high-level tone [55]; number 2, a low-falling tone [21]; number 3, a high-falling tone [53]; and number 4, a low-falling-rising tone [213]. Note that the dialect is characterized by complicated tone sandhi.
Shirai: Perfect constructions with existential verbs in nDrapa

as shown in (44) and (45). This construction is not found in Standard Chinese (Putonghua; 普通话).

Sichuan Chinese (Zhang et al. 2001)

(44) 他 在 屋-头 坐-到 在。

3SG LOC house-inside sit-RESULT exist

‘He is sitting inside the house.’

(45) 花-园 里 前-几-天 还 开-起 花 在 ...  

flower-garden inside former-a.few-day still open-RESULT flower exist

‘In the garden, until recently, flowers were still blooming...’ (Zhang et al. 2001: 70)

As shown in (46) and (47), -te³⁸ (起) itself implies the resultative:

(46) 罐-头 装-起 水。

jar-inside put.in-RESULT water

‘There is water in the jar (because someone has put water in the jar).’ (Zhang et al. 2001: 70)

(47) 戴-起 眼镜儿 找 眼镜儿。

put.on-RESULT eyeglasses look.for eyeglasses

‘(He) has put glasses on, and (while wearing it,) is looking for the glasses.’ (Zhang et al. 2001: 71)

We can conclude that in this region, the perfect-existential construction is commonly used to express the persisting result of a previous event.

4.2 Strategies in the Qiangic languages

The “-a + EXIST” construction in nDrapa is similar to this commonly found structure, because the suffix -a that is affixed to the main verb has the same form as the Pattern B suffix of the perfective aspect. This suffix is found in many perfect sentences with the perfective viewpoint, as shown in (48).
However, it should be noted that -ə in nDrapa is not a proper marker of the perfective aspect or the perfect tense, but is rather a marker of modality (Shirai 2007: 134–147). For example, -ə is not added to perfect sentences in Pattern A, as shown in (49).

(49) \(\text{ŋje1 a-npho3.}\)

1PL DIR:DOWN-be.defeated

'We were defeated.'

Therefore, we cannot claim that the “-ə + EXIST” pattern in nDrapa is parallel to the perfect-existential constructions in the neighboring languages in a straightforward way.\(^{15}\)

There is another problem that we encounter when we conduct an overview of the languages that are genetically closer to nDrapa, the Qiangic group of languages, which are spoken in the neighboring area. To the best of my knowledge, neither the perfect-existential construction nor the “-ə + EXIST” construction is mentioned in the descriptions of the Qiangic languages.\(^{16}\)

For example, Qiang—one of the most thoroughly described languages in the group—utilizes a copula, not an existential verb, to express a resulting state: “An ongoing state resulting from a change of state or action can be expressed using the prefixed (achievement or accomplishment) form of the verb, the change of state marker, plus the copula.” (LaPolla 2003: 171). An example is shown in (50).

\(^{15}\) In Newar, the left-hand verb of a serial verb construction may be affixed with a conjunct marker. “The first verb in the concatenation subcategorizes the core arguments in the clause and occurs in the invariant /-ə/ form, which is identical to the past conjunct form.” (Hargreaves 2005: 20) In the example cited below, the main verb \(\text{wan}~\)’go’ is marked with the concatenation marker -ə which is identical in form to the past conjunct suffix.

Newar:

\(\text{jī yala-e wēn-ā cwan-ā.}\)

1.ABS PN-LOC go-CM stay-PST.CONJ

'I was/am going to Yala (Patan).’ (Hargreaves 2005: 20 [80])

Such a construction in Newar is similar to the “-ə + EXIST” construction in nDrapa, in the sense that a marker of the so-called conjunct/disjunct pattern is found in the middle of the verb serialization. This suggests that it is a possible construction in the Tibeto-Burman languages, although we can hardly imagine a direct relation between the two languages either by way of close genetic relationship or the language contact situation.

\(^{16}\) I found one comparable example in rGyalrong from Jacques (2008: 267), which involves an existential verb and conveys a similar implication to the “perfect of result.” However, the existential verb in this example takes a nominal argument (‘tale’); therefore this is not structurally identical to the perfect-existential construction.

\(\text{weri zla-w Responses kau thos pu-a-mi-zgu-b u-prof-tu tu}\)

however PN ERG Buddhism PST-PROG-practice DEM-tale exist

‘However, it has been said that Zla-ba-shes-rabs was practicing asceticism of Buddhism.’
Qiang (LaPolla 2003)

(50) dehy-le:  de-zgø-jì 愉悦.
       door-DEF:CL DIR-open-CSM COP
   ‘The door is open.’ (‘The door remains open.’) (LaPolla 2003: 171 [4.120])

According to Lin (2003: 276), in rGyalrong, a persistent situation is expressed by the past imperfective, which is formed by the affixation of na-, as shown in (51).

rGyalrong (Lin 2003)

(51)  waqø  tø-saksøñkû  na-nøža-s.  wødøs  ma-tø-nøzø-n  tø-tsø-n.
       3SG  one(whole)-afternoon  IPF:PST-dine-S  no more  IMPR:2-dine:2SG  IMPR-say:2SG
   ‘He has been eating the whole afternoon. Tell him not to eat any more.’ (Lin 2003: 276 [56])

Given similar characteristics in other Qiangic languages, it is doubtful that the “-a + EXIST” construction can be reconstructed to the level of Proto-Qiangic; it does not appear to be an inherited feature in nDrapa.

4.3 Conclusion on the origin of the “-a + EXIST” construction in nDrapa

I tentatively conclude that the “-a + EXIST” construction in nDrapa originates from the functional borrowing of the perfect-existential construction from the neighboring languages, and that the Pattern B suffix of the perfective aspect, -a, is used as an alternative to the perfect marker.

The most important argument in support of this conclusion is that the major languages in the nDrapa-speaking region have a structurally and functionally parallel construction—the perfect-existential construction—while the related Qiangic languages do not appear to. Moreover, since the structure of the “-a + EXIST” construction is distinct from those found with verb serialization—a structure commonly found throughout Qiangic—the “-a + EXIST” construction is typologically unusual for the family, hence unlikely to be native to nDrapa. Finally, the fact that nDrapa has another construction which expresses a similar meaning (the serial verb construction with the verb ke³ ‘put’) also argues that the “-a + EXIST” construction is a late development in nDrapa triggered by a contact with the region’s dominant languages.

5 Conclusion

The “-a + EXIST” construction in nDrapa has interesting semantic, syntactic, and historical features.

Semantically, a sentence with the “-a + EXIST” construction conveys either a resulting state or a persistent situation. If the situation is of the Accomplishment or Achievement type, and if the result of the event is visible, the “-a + EXIST” construction tends to convey a resulting state. In this pattern, the aspectual viewpoint can be located between the final endpoint of the action and the point when the resulting state changes. If the situation is of the Activity or Semelfactive type, the “-a + EXIST” construction tends to convey a persistent situation. In this pattern, the aspectual viewpoint is located between the initial and final endpoints of the situation.
Syntactically, the existential verb in the “–α + EXIST” construction is not thoroughly grammaticalized, but it retains its state as a verb: the existential verb stem is chosen in accordance with the animacy and the manner of existence of the subject of the resulting state or persistent situation. In consideration of this point, the structure of the “–α + EXIST” construction is found to be exceptional: although it appears to be one of the serial verb constructions in nDrapa, it is atypical in that the left-hand verb is affixed by a suffix. Moreover, it is also exceptional among the predicate structures in nDrapa because a content word follows a verb with –α.

This problem can be resolved if we assume that the “–α + EXIST” construction originates from a functional borrowing, and that the suffix –α that is attached to the left-hand verb is an alternative to a perfect marker of the source language. There is a high probability that this was a contact-induced change, given that major languages of the nDrapa-speaking region—Khams Tibetan and Sichuan Chinese—have parallel constructions.

**ABBREVIATIONS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1</th>
<th>first person</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>second person</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>third person</th>
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<tr>
<td>ABS*</td>
<td>absolutive</td>
<td>ACC</td>
<td>accusative–dative</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>Pattern B suffix</td>
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<td>IPF</td>
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<td>locative</td>
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<td>NCL</td>
<td>noun classifier</td>
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<td>NMLZ</td>
<td>nominalizer</td>
<td>PCL*</td>
<td>particle</td>
</tr>
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<td>perfect</td>
<td>PFV</td>
<td>perfective</td>
<td>PL</td>
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<td>proper name</td>
<td>PROG*</td>
<td>progressive</td>
<td>PST</td>
<td>past</td>
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<tr>
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<td>singular</td>
<td>TOP</td>
<td>topic marker</td>
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</table>

= formation of a phonological word

* The abbreviations marked with an asterisk are used only in the cited examples.

**REFERENCES**


Shirai: Perfect constructions with existential verbs in nDrapa


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