
FOLOPA EXISTENTIAL VERBS

Neil Anderson

0. Introduction
 1. *Beterapó*
 2. *Mulapó*
 3. *Daalapó*
 4. *Erapó*
 5. Conclusion
- Abbreviations

0. Introduction

The focus of this paper concerns four Folopa¹ existential verbs²: *beterapó* 'to be sitting' (used in its primary sense to refer to humans or animals), *mulapó* 'to be lying' (used in its primary sense for inanimate objects in

¹ The Folopa language is spoken by people in an area of 1500 square miles, mainly in the Gulf Province. It extends from the Woposale airstrip on the Erave river in the north to the village of Omo in the south. Omo is near the headwaters of the Sirebi River north of Kikori. Eastward the language extends from the slopes of Mt. Murray to Lake Tebera. There are approximately 17 Folopa speaking villages with a total of 2500 speakers. A description of the ergative system has been described by Anderson and Wade (in press).

² Existential verbs are a common typological feature in the Highland languages in particular (A. Lang 1975; K.J. Franklin 1986), but are also found in other areas as well (e.g., S. Litteral 1981; R. Brown 1981).

horizontal position), *daalapó* 'to be standing' (used in its primary sense for individuals standing on objects in vertical position), and *erapó* 'to be growing' (used in its primary sense to refer to plants). Although there are at least eight existential verbs, only these four prove productive in their semantic range and multiple senses. We will demonstrate that the four verbs are used to express more than merely 'to be' or 'to exist.'

1. *Beterapó*

The existential verb *beterapó* has three senses, all of which collocate with animals and humans.³

The first sense means 'to be alive' and contrasts with 'to be dead.'

- (1) *Kale hepo-né suk-óló mQ-le whi bete-r-e?*
 the sickness-erg die-ss lie-rel man sit-pres-int
d-epa, "Mei-pó suku-ni-pó bete-ra-pó."
 do/say-ds neg-ind die-neg-ind sit-pres-ind

'Someone asked, "Is the sick man alive?", and someone answered, "No, he has not died, he is alive."'

The second sense of *beterapó* is 'to be sitting.' (vs. 'to be standing'):

- (2) *Me daa-le whi-kó d-u-raalu, "Yq bete-r-e?"*
 a stand-rel man-erg say-dur-simult you sit-pres-int
d-epa, "E-pó, é bete-ra-pa yq daa-yae"
 do/say-ds yes-eq I sit-pres-ds you stand-imp

³ Folopa has 7 vowels, all of which may be nasalized, and 9 vowel glides. The orthographic representation in this paper is as follows: a, e, i, o, and u symbolize the common phonemic sounds; é and ó denote the low front unrounded and low back rounded vowels respectively. Nasalized vowels are indicated by: ȃ, ȅ, ȇ, ȉ, ȋ, ȏ, ȑ, ȓ, and ȕ.

The consonants are depicted with: b, d, f (voiceless bilabial fricative), h, k (aspirated initially), l (only intervocallically), m, n, p (only intervocallically), r (flapped), s, t (aspirated initially), w, and y.

There are also 5 complex consonants: wh, sy, hy, mw, and kw. When a + a occurs a glottal fricative is inserted.

d-a-pó.

do/say-pres-ind

'Someone standing there says, "Are you sitting?", and he says, "Yes, I am sitting, you stand." '

The third sense is 'to be present' or 'to stay', in contrast to being somewhere else. Notice the following two examples.

- (3) *Kale so-né ama whi-paae d-u-raalu, "Yá*
the woman-erg her man-loc do/say-dur-simult you

be-mó bete-r-e?" d-epa, "Ao, é dó
house-loc sit-pres-int say-ds yes I yesterday

kutó di-ale-né hō-tepa bete-ra-pa yá
garden work-past-erg dislike-ds sit-pres-ds you

f-ae" d-a-pó.
go-imp do/say-pres-ind

'The woman says to her husband, "Are you staying here in the village?", so he says, "Yes, as a result of working the garden so much yesterday I (am filled with) dislike so I am staying here and you go." '

- (4) *Whi me hasi f-i wo-u-raalu me whi-paae*
man another bush go-pf come-dur-sim another man-dir

wusu-t-u-raalu "Kale kiap bete-r-e-pé
listen-trans-dur-sim the kiap sit-pres-int-alt

f-ele-é?" d-epa d-u-raalu "Mei-pó
go-pst-int do/say-ds do/say-dur-sim neg-eq

bete-ra-pó" d-a-pó.
sit-pres-ind do/say-pres-ind

'A man returning from the bush asks another, "Is the kiap here or has he gone?", and he replies, "No, he is here." '

Beterapó also combines with other verb stems to form verb phrases that mark an aspectual distinction. In the following example the main verb stem plus *-u* is followed by *beterapó*, which expresses a durative or continuative action.

- (5) *Kale whi-né wɛi sɪt-u bete-pa, ya-ta mo*
 the man-erg water pull-dur sit-ds fish-top very
hale ɔla kaae w-ale-pó.
 nothing thing like come-pst-ind

'While the man was scooping water, the fish came in great numbers.'

Virtually any action can be expressed either as a simple point in time or as a continuous action.

- (6) *A fu-la-pó.*
 he go-pres-ind
 'He goes'
- (6a) *A fu bete-ra-pó.*
 he go sit-pres-ind
 'He is going.'

The second aspectual verb phrase that can be formed with *beterapó* is a main verb stem plus *ó*, which signals a state.

- (7) *Daa-le ni di-óló mu-ló bete-ra-pó.*
 stand-rel tree fell-ss lie-ss sit-pres-ind
 'I felled the tree that stood and it is lying (there).'

A further illustration can be found in the following context: A man has placed his axe somewhere, but forgotten it. He leaves and another man finds the axe and puts it away for him. The owner later returns and looks for the axe where he had left it. Not finding it, he asks his brothers if they have seen it. They reply, 'Here it is put (away) for you.'

- (8) *I s-óró mu-ló bete-r-e ape d-a-pó.*
 thisget-ss lie-ss sit-pres-int come do/say-pres-ind

A few other examples of this aspectual state in a verb phrase follow.

- (9) *Yalo buku-mó moni ó-paae mu-ló bete-ra-pó.*
 I book-loc money up-dir lie-ss sit-pres-ind

'My money is in the bank (= *mulo beterapó* of things).'

- (10) *"Naaq hae-mó he-kó e-ró bete-r-e?"*
 your land-loc trap-ind.ant is-ss sit-pres-int

d-epa "Ulu tẽ-mó betq e-ró
 do/say-ds pinnacle mountain.pass-loc only is-ss

bete-ra-pó.
 sit-pres-ind

'Someone asks, "Is there a trap set on your land?", and the reply is, "One is set at the pass of the pinnacle (= *ero beteropó* of a set trap)."

- (11) *"Naaq kale be denakene-mó-tóróti bete-r-e-pé?"*
 your the house run.down-loc-exactly sit-pres-int-alt

kae kisi tẽ-ló bete-r-e?" d-epa "Kae
 another new build-ss live-pres-int do/say-ds another

kisi tẽ-ló bete-ra-pó.
 new built-ss live-pres-ind

' "Are you still living at your old house, or is a new one built?", and he replies, "A new one is built (= *tẽno beteropó*, of something built)."

- (12) *I be ke-ta a-paae f-ale whĩ-mó*
 this house egg-top down-dir go-pst.rel man-loc

s-óró bete-r-e be-pó.
 get-ss sit-pres-rel house-ind

'This room of the house is already taken for the man who is gone down there (= *sóro beteropó* of something occupied).'

- (13) *Yalo bilipó dolo-mó bu-l-ale-tiki-mó kapo*
 I pants hole-loc inside-tr-pst-place-loc coin

beta sók-ó daa-ló bete-ra-pó.
 one go.out-ss stand-ss sit-pres-ind

'A coin is lost as a result of my putting it in my pants pocket (= *sókó daadó beteropó*).'

- (14) *"Ai noa be tẽ-n-ale-é?" d-epa, "I-ta*
 that what house build-trans-pst-int do/say-ds this-top

fidi m̃qle bete-ró bete-ra-pó.
 cassowary young sit-ss sit-pres-ind

‘ “What is that house for?” “A young cassowary is housed there
 (= *beteró beterapó*).” ’

2. *Mulapó*

The verb *mulapó* ‘to lie’ has at least 10 senses. It is used mostly of inanimate objects and generally means that something has been laid down or is positioned in some location:

- (15) *Dq hatepaa-ló nuk-u bete-r-óló nuk-u bete-ló*
 we fully-ss eat-dur sit-tr-ss eat-dur sit-ss

depe tópu-tepa me-tiki-paae dua n-aaí
 stomach distended-ds another-place-dir later eat-pur

mu-l-ale-pó.
 lie-tr-pst-ind

‘We ate a lot and since our stomachs were so full we put the rest aside to eat later.’

A second sense refers to the ownership of some object:

- (16) *"Naaq a-tei kaae sepake kwia-kó mu-l-e?"*
 you that-cl.ref like knife bit-ind lie-pres-int

d-epa é-pó. "A-tei kaae yqlo mu-la-pó."
 say-ds yes-eq down-cl.ref like I lie-pres-ind

‘ “Do you have a knife like that?” “Yes, I have one like that.” ’

A third sense refers to humans in prone position, such as the buried, sick, or sleeping, as well as snakes in their customary posture:

- (17) *Kale wh̃i wisi naale suku-tepa ai-mó*
 the man good son die-ds there-loc

mu-l-ale-pó.

lie-trans-pst-ind

'We buried that good man there.'

- (18) *No-ó* *ę-ta* *dą-mo ai* *kale* *kutó*
 brother-voc I-top we-dl that the garden

di-né-ni-pó. *Hepo-né* *suku-ta-pa,* *suk-óló*
 fell-abil-neg-ind sickness-erg die-pres-ds die-ss

mu-la-pó.

lie-pres-ind

'Brother, I am not able to do our work. I am wiped out by sickness.'

A fourth sense is to command or promise, when the verb occurs with *fo* 'talk':

- (19) *Ai* *wuti* *kaay-aqse* *take-ti* *tale-né*
 that bamboo break-neg.imp before-intense owner-erg

fo *mu-la-pó.*
 talk lie-pres-ind

'Don't break off that bamboo, the owner forbid it a long time ago.'

- (20) *Bele-ó* *naaq* *ę* *męl-ale* *diliki*
 cross.cousin-voc you me give-past.rel dark
- sóku-mó* *tuę* *me* *mw-aqse* *yalo* *y-ólói*
 leaf-loc think another lie-neg.imp I say-ss this
- mu-la-tere* *ape* *take* *kele-tepa* *tokó* *mel-aalo-pó.*
 lie-tr-pres come later see-ds pull.up give-fut-ind.

'Cousin, don't worry about that two kina note (dark leaf) you gave me. I now promise that when I see it later I'll give it back.'

A fifth sense refers to some space, location on the trail or in a hole, as well as to a space under a cliff:

- (21) *Hasi* *f-u-raalu* *kele-nei* *whı-né* *d-u-raalu* *"Kiti*
 bush go-dur-sim see-neg man-erg say-dur-sim cliff

mo-mó *mu-l-e?* *d-epa,* *“Ulu* *tɛ*
 where-loc lie-pres-int do/say-ds pinnacle pass

mu-la-pa *kel-ae* *d-a-pó.* *“Ai* *tɛ*
 lie-pres-ds look-imp do/say-pres-ind that pass

sók-ó *f-u-raalu* *kiti* *mo-le-mó* *sók-ó*
 go.out-ss go-dur-sim cliff lie-pres-loc go.out-ss

f-aalo-pó.”
 go-fut-ind

‘While (hunting) in the bush a man unfamiliar with the area says:
 “Where is the space under the cliff?” The reply: “As you are
 going through that pass of the pinnacle you will come out where
 the cliff is.”’

A sixth sense refers to an uncompleted task:

- (22) *Me* *whi* *hasi* *fu-pa* *ɛ-kélé* *f-uq-tei* *i*
 another man bush go-ds me-also go-ctf-adv this
- kutó* *mu-pa* *bete-ra-pa* *f-ae.*
 garden lie-ds stay-pres-ds go-imp

‘If someone is going hunting I would be going also but since I
 have work to do I am staying, so you go.’

A seventh sense refers to thoughts, emotions understanding:

- (23) *No-ó,* *yqlo* *hosaa* *mo-l-e* *kutó* *naaq*
 brother-voc my liver lie-pres-rel garden you
- ai* *di-la-pó.*
 that fell-pres-ind

‘Brother, you cut down (the tree at) my favourite garden.’

“Kale *Diensisi* *naaq* *dosaqy-óló* *tué* *mu-le?”*
 the Genises you read-ss understand lie-int

d-epa *yano* *d-u-raalu* *“Yano* *sawa* *dosaay-óló*
 say-ds I say-dur-sim I little have.read-ss

tué mu-la-pó.
understand lie-pres-ind

‘ “Do you understand what you read of Genesis?” so I said, “I understand a little.” ’

An eighth sense is a generic event which goes with *ala*, the event generic:

- (24) *I be tuq-mó i wisi ala y-aalo-pó*
this village mid-loc this good event do-fut-ind
- d-epa-tei aya-rape-né take y-ale ala*
say-ds-but father-pl-erg before do-past.rel event

hale mu-la-pó.
nothing lie-pres-ind

‘We were going to do good things here in this village but the forefathers are still unchanged.’

A ninth sense “is hidden” is represented by the idiomatic verb phrase *hyo mulapó*:

- (25) *Sepake mu-l-ale tiki-mó alu-pa kale*
knife put-tr-past.rel place-loc gone-ds the
- naale-paae “Naaq hyo mu-l-ale-pa se-r-ae.”*
son-dir you hidden lie-trans-past-ds get-ben-imp

‘When the knife is gone from where you put it you say to the child, “Go get the knife where you hid it.” ’

A tenth sense occurs with *óla* and is very generic in its sense:

- (26) *Kale bisinesi óla m-o-le fo-pó.*
the business thing lie-pres-rel talk-eq

‘This is the talk about business things.’

In addition to the various senses of *mulapó* ‘to be there’, *mulapó* also combines in a regular way with many other transitive and intransitive verbs to mark items that are in great abundance. The combination is always :

Main Verb + *-ó* + *mulapó* (or any inflected form of *mulapó*):

- (27) *bidi-ó mu-la-pó.*
 plant-ss lie-pres-ind (to be there)
 'There are many (plants) planted there.'
- (28) *bet-ó mu-la-pó.*
 sit-ss lie-pres-ind (to be there)
 'There are a lot of (people) there.'
- (29) *siri-siri mw-ó mu-la-pó.*
 marks lie-ss lie-pres-ind
 'There are many marks on the (animal).'
- (30) *Na-né mo ama nok-ole ni suku ó*
 animal-erg very his eat-pres.rel tree suku or
whalu ó me kale nisa kaq-t-ere-tiki-mó
 whalu or another the cuttings break-tr-pres-place-loc
y-ó m-o-le óla n-ó mul-emónó tiki-té
 do/say-ss lie-pres-rel thing eat-ss abundance cut-prog
ko-ta-pó. Na-né ama nok-ole q̄la.
 go.around-pres-ind animal-erg his eat-pres.rel food
 'We go around tracking the animal looking to see if he has been eating a lot of all the *suku* tree or *hwadu* tree that he always eats. This is the food he always eats.'

This existing-in-abundance verb phrase has other variations:

- | | |
|---------------------|-------------------------------------|
| <i>ol-e mulapó</i> | - a lot of (fruit) on the tree |
| <i>daa-e mulapó</i> | - a lot of people standing or trees |
| stand lie | |
| <i>tek-e mulapó</i> | - a lot of ripe fallen fruit |
| cut lie | |
| <i>bel-e mulapó</i> | - a lot of firewood piled up |
| shouldered lie | |

There are also several very close-knit verb phrases:

- | | |
|--------------------|--------------------------------------|
| <i>pi-ó mulapó</i> | - to be lying prone down or sleeping |
| sleep-ss lie | |

<i>d-ó</i>	<i>mul-óló</i>	- killed
hit-ss	lie-ss	
<i>d-ó</i>	<i>mul-ó bete-ra-pó</i>	- in the state of being killed (dead)
hit-ss	lie-ss sit-pres-ind	
<i>suku-ló</i>	<i>mu-pa</i>	- dying or sick
die-ss	lie-coord	

3. *Daalapó*

The next existential Verb under consideration, *daalapó* 'to be standing', has eight senses. The first of these refers to standing as an upright posture. This contrasts with an object sitting or lying down, or with objects that are longer than they are wide, such as a bow. In like manner people, animals, trees, or other objects that are taller than they are wide use the same form:

- (31) *Diki s-óró ti-mó du-ló daa-ló bit-u-daadu.*
bow get-ss close-loc lean-ss stand-ss sit-dur-sim

'He leaned the bow closeby while there.'

- (32) *Na-ta yálo sir-ene hor-aalo-tei a bete-mó*
animal-top I shoot-sub go.up-fut-cont down base-loc

de daa-pa hor-aalo-é?
who stand-ds go up-fut-int

'I will go up to shoot the animal but who will stand at the base of tree so I can go up?'

- (33) *Ama oma-ró mǎle-tamo kóne-tu-daadu*
her husband-and young-acc compassion-dur-sim

f-óló-tei tu ulu ao-mó ó me
go-ss-man.rel nearby pinnacle under-loc or another

hǎle tu daa-e mo-le ni-mó bit-u-raalu
nothing near stand-rel lie-pres.rel tree-loc sit-dur-sim

atima take bet-ale tiki kese an-óló bete-ra-pó.
 they before sit-pst place gaze give-ss sit-pres-ind

'Mourning for her husband and young she goes but while sitting in under a pinnacle or any tree standing close by she just stares at where they were.'

The second sense is to be personally affected by sickness, sore or wounds. Note the following examples:

(a) Sickness:

- (34) *Me ama fisini kisi daa-le hwɪ tiki-mó*
 other his rib sick stand-rel man body-loc

daa-t-u-raalu d-ere a-kélé
 stand-tr-dur-sim do/say-pres:rel down-also

i-téi d-a-pó.
 this-cl.ref do-pres-ind

'When malaria sickness comes to stand on a man's body it is always like this.'

(b) Sores:

- (35) *A-té-tu bete-ró kale momane-paae "Betɔ humu*
 that-cl.ref-dur sit-ss the kids-dir one sore

daa-pa doko-t-ere ɔla sóku bisɪ-pó."
 stand-ds bind-trans-pres.rel thing leaf.plant name-eq

'While he was in that condition he told the kids, "Go get the leaves used for binding up a sore that stands."'

(c) Wounds:

- (36) *Boe hwɪ-né kɔwei daa-yale-tei i*
 enemy man-erg axe stand-pst-contrast this

mu-la-pa doko-ti-mi-é?
lie-pres-ds bind-tr-neg-int

‘The place where enemy’s axe stood is here so why don’t you bandage it?’

A third sense refers to something which is equal in appearance or substance; with *kelepaa* ‘face’ or *tiki* ‘body’:

- (37) *Mo susu tiki daa-é f-i-pakale-pó.*
real soot body stand-vs go-fpst-appear-ind

‘They went looking like charcoal.’

- (38) *Betq kelepaa daa-ra-pó.*
one face standing-pres-ind

‘The same face stands (=He looks like him)’

A fourth sense refers to some particular place within a process which is going on, e.g., one might say, “How far along are you in your work on the fence?”, and the reply would be, “I’m standing right here”, i.e., it is completed up to this point.

- (39) *Be ó-té tẹ-té w-óló tuq-mó daa-la-pó.*
house up-cl.ref build-prog come-ss mid-loc stand-pres-ind

‘I have been building along on the house up there and I am (finished) up to the middle.’

- (40) *yqlo kutó daa-la-pó.*
my garden stand-pres-ind

‘I (still) have work to do in my garden.’

The verb *daalapó* also combines with other verbs to express the aspect of an action which applies only once, or for a short period:

- (41) *Qla sawa n-ó daa-l-óló i bete-re*
thing little eat-ss stand-trans-ss this sit-pres.rel

ape.
come

‘I’ve only eaten just a little and here I am.’

- (42) *Ta-ó daa-la-ra —pa kaa-yae.*
 hold-ss stand-tr-pres-ds wait-imp

‘I am just going to touch it, hold on!’

4. *Erapó*

The existential verb *erapó* has several senses: collocations with inanimate objects such as plants, as well as animals and humans. The verb occurs only in the present tense unless it is marked as transitive. Otherwise a medial verb construction occurs with *erapó* marked for different subject, followed by an inflected verb of perception. Note the following:

- (43) *Ai ola e-pa kel-ale-pó.*
 that thing is-ds see-pst-ind

‘I saw that thing there.’

The first sense is the most apparently existential and occurs with plants of various kinds:

- (44) *O e-ra-pó.*
 sago is-pres-ind

‘There is sago’

The second sense refers to something that has been in a particular state for some time and may refer to the “way things have always been. It is therefore common to have customs and personal characteristics referred to with this verb:

- (45) *I whi-né ama hōleke doalé e-re-tei*
 this man-erg he leg injure is-rel-nom
- e-r-e au-é?” “Ama e-r-e au*
 is-pres-rel deed-int He is-pres-rel dead
- ketei-mó-tei e-r-e au-pó.”*
 child-loc-emp is-pres-rel deed-eq

‘ “The condition of this man’s leg, has it been like this for a long time?” “(Yes), it has been like that since he was a child.” ’

- (46) “*I kawei kaaɛ f-ale-tei e-r-e ala-é?*”
 this axe break go-pst-nom is-pres-rel deed-inter

“*Mei-pó e-r-e au mei-pó. Mió-tóróti*
 No-eq is-pres-rel deed no-eq Now-specifically

kaaɛ fa-ló bete-ra-pó.
 break go-ss sit-pres-ind

‘Has this chip been in the axe for a long time? No, it was not like that before. It was chipped very recently.’

- (47) *Yalo be-mó e-r-e ala-pó.*
 my village-loc is-pres-rel deed-eq

‘That’s the way it is in my village.’

- (48) “*I naale melaq d-er-e ala-a*
 thisson play do-pres-rel deed-top.introducer

d-u bete-r-e au-é?” “Ẹ-pó ama
 do-dur sit-pres-rel deed-int yes-eq he

e-r-e au-pó.”
 is-pres-rel deed-eq

‘ “This habit of the boy playing, does he always do that?” “Yes, that is quite characteristic of him.” ’

The third sense refers to something/someone in a certain position or orientation:

- (49) *Ọla-mó kili e-ra-pó fu-ó fa-r-óló n-ae.*
 thing-loc ashes is-pres-ind blow-ss go-tr-ss eat-imp

‘There are ashes on the food, so blow them off and eat.’

- (50) “*Naaq so naale e-re?” “Ẹ-pó e-ra-pó”*
 your woman son is-int yes-eq is-pres-ind

‘ “Is your wife pregnant?” “Yes, she is pregnant.” ’

- (51) *U kale e-ró bete-re he-a, naaq*
 that the is-ss sit-rel trap-top.introducer your

e-r-ale-pé *né* *e-ró* *bete-r-e?*
 is-tr-pst-alt who is-ss sit-pres-int

'That trap that is set over there, did you set it, or who did?'

The fourth sense refers to something that can happen to a person, whether positive, negative, or neutral in nature. It is highly marked in respect to the focus on the patient and the transitivity of the verb. The three examples which now follow illustrate the positive, negative and neutral affect on the patient.

(52) *I* *whi-né* *ε-mó* *e-ró-tu* *bete-r-e* *ala*
 this man-erg me-loc is-tr-dur sit-pres-rel deed

kaae *naaq* *ε-mó* *e-ró-tu* *bet-aalo-é?*
 like your me-loc is-tr-dur sit-fut-int

'Will you do for me the kind of deeds that this man has done for me?'

(53) *Ε* *u* *be-paae* *f-ele-mó* *atima-né* *ε-paae* *dowi*
 me that village-loc go-pst-loc they-erg me-loc bad

ala *e-ró-tu* *bete-re-tei-né* *ε* *sawa* *seke-ra-pó.*
 deed is-tr-dur sit-pst-nom-erg I little hear-pres-ind

'I am a little sad because of the bad treatment I received when I went to that village.'

(54) *Ε* *mataki* *doro-f-óló* *bet-ale* *suka-mó* *ε-paae*
 I madang down-go-ss sit-past day-loc me-loc

i-tei *ala-rape* *e-r-ε-pó.*
 this-man deed-pl is-tr-fpst-ind

'This is what happened to me when I went down and was living in Madang.'

The fifth sense refers to an accomplishment or achievement, or in the successful carrying out orders or instructions:

(55) *A-ta* *mo* *fea* *kete-nei* *ala* *e-ró-tu*
 he-top very many sec-neg deed is-tr-dur

bete-ra-pó.
sit-pres-ind

‘He is accomplishing many previously unseen deeds’.

- (56) *Ama y-óló mul-ó bete-re fo e-ró-tu bete-ra-pó*
his say-ss lie-ss sit-pres talk is-tr-dur sit-pres-ind

‘I am carrying out his orders.’

The sixth sense of *erapó* is that of testifying (generally in a positive sense) on behalf of or in favour of another person. It can include the sense of slander as well. The verb always occurs as a relative clause modifying the verb *fo* ‘talk’.

If *erapó* occurs following *fo* ‘talk’ then the meaning shifts to show that a curse has been put on someone. The clues, however, come from the context.

- (57) *I whı́-ta whı́ wisi mei-pó. Ai fo-ta u*
this man-top man good no-eq that talk-top there
whı́ e-ra-tere fo kaae d-a-pó.
man is-tr-pres.rel talk like say-pres-ind

‘This man is not a good man. That talk is like slandering the man.’

- (58) *Ai fo-ta ya teke-ra-tere fo y-óló*
that talk-top you split-tr-pres.rel talk say-ss
i-ni ai ape. Ai-ta ama yq-paae mo
do/say-neg that come that-top he you-dir true
fo e-ra-pó.
talk is-pres-ind

‘That talk (he) is not saying abusive language to you. He is saying the truth about you.’

5. Conclusion

Of the existential verbs, *beterapó* has the most specific meaning and the most limited collocations, i.e., with animate beings. The verb *mulapó* is less specific and has a broader range of collocations, i.e. with animate, inanimate, and emotions or thoughts. The verb *daalapó* seems to be the least existential

of all and collocates freely with animate and inanimate objects, plants, cliffs, and heavenly bodies. Finally, *erapó* operates quite differently, occurring only in the present tense and glosses most consistently simply as “is”. It is used for abstract ideas as well.

The following chart will help to summarize the range of meanings of the four existential verbs described in this paper.

Chart of Existential Verbs

	POSTURE (primary)	OBJECTS (typical)	with <i>fo</i> (talk)
<i>beterapó</i>	sitting	humans, animals insects, spirits
<i>mulapó</i>	lying, sleeping	deceased, inanimate objects, messages, work, emotions	prohibition, promise
<i>daalapó</i>	standing	tall items, sickness, body parts, sores, geographical features, sun, moon, stars	
<i>erapó</i>	being	fetus plants	a curse or blessing

Abbreviations

abil	abilitative aspect marker
adv	adversative relationship
alt	alternative marker
ben	benefactive marker
coord	coordination marker
ctf	contrary to fact marker
ds	different subject, i.e., different referents in sequence
dur	duration, i.e., the action of the event is seen as taking some time rather than as a point
eq	equational
erg	ergative; there are two separate markers
fut	future tense marker
imp	imperative marker
ind	indicative marker
int	interrogative marker
loc	locational or directional marker
man	manner marker
neg	negative marker
nom	nominalization marker
pf	perfect tense/aspect marker
pl	plural
pres	present tense; several allomorphs occur
prog	progressive marker
pst	past tense
pur	purpose marker

rel	relative marker; the marker is closely fused when it occurs with the present and past tense markers
rpst	remote past tense
sim	same subject simultaneous marker
sim	simultaneous, i.e., the relationship between two events
ss	same subject, i.e. the same referent in sequence. (Several allomorphs occur, depending on how closely knit the two verbs are semantically.)
sub	subsequential, (same subject) marker occurs only before the verbs of motion
top	topic marker
tr	transitivity marker
voc	vocative marker
vs	close-knit verb serialization