

Chapter 2

Full verb uses

2.1 Introduction

This and the following chapters discuss the meanings and functions based on syntax. This chapter describes the meanings and functions associated with full verb status. The next chapter (Chapter 3) discusses pre-verbal uses, and chapter 4 discusses post-verbal uses. Then other uses not covered in the preceding three chapters are described.

The Drum (2011) dictionary lists *ba* as having two senses: (1) 'appropriate', 'suitable' and (2) 'proper', 'correct'. On the other hand, the first sense of *ba* in Wade (1847) is 'hit in shooting'. Since, Wade's Thesaurus is much older, since it was published 165 years ago, I suggest that 'hit' is quite concrete sense compared to others senses, which would be described later in this chapter.

The meaning of *ba* as a main verb will be presented through several subsections. The meanings related for this chapter include 'hit', 'touch', 'satisfy', 'arrive (come to be)', 'encounter', 'suffer', 'middle', 'succeed', 'fit', 'appropriate', and 'correct'. The last section of the chapter will discuss how these different meanings are related and suggest a semantic map that are the lexical sources for the extended meanings and functions described in the following chapters.

2.2 Hit

The concept of 'hitting' involves two aspects – having movement and having contact. As Levin (1993:150) says "these verbs describe moving on entity in order to bring it into contact with another entity". This contact is forceful. Let's see several examples including the sense 'hit'.

However, *ba* does not now occur as the only verb in a clause, although it did at the time of Wade's thesaurus. Consider the following example:

9) **jə-ba t^hwi*

1s-hit dog

V N

I hit dog. [Con 19/8/11 (1)]

This sentence is now rarely used or probably never used except in ungrammatical or stumble or quick speech. At least one extra verb should occur together with this sense *ba*. In other words, it now no longer occurs as a main verb but has to occur as a second verb of a serial verb construction. The following examples are more natural:

10) *jə-kwi ba t^hwi*

1s-shoot hit dog

V V N

I shot the dog. [Con 19/8/11 (2)]

11) *jə-kwi bla dɔ ba θə.mɔ lɔ*

1s-shot arrow and hit deer DECL

V N CONJ V N Pf

I shot the arrow and it hit the deer. [Con 23/8 (1)]

There is no implication that the entity 'hit' is affected. Rather the focus is on there being forceful contact.

Wade (1847), in his 'Thesaurus of Karen knowledge' defines this use of *ba* as being used in actions like shooting at an animal and the arrow hit the target as expected. Secondly, he says it doesn't matter whether we throw or thrust or shoot or cut or hold or kick and if the doer does not miss the intended target but hits it correctly, then *ba* would be used. This gives broader domains for *ba* to occur. While 'hit in shooting' might have been the well used sense of *ba* in the past, it has been generalized over time to express broader meanings rather than the domain of hunting.

He gives an example as follows.

- 12) *sə-dε ba bwa də ya ə.mε? lə*
 1s-slap hit person one CLF 3face DECL
 V V N NUM CLF N Pf

I slap hit a person's face. [Wade 1847:351]

Example (10) shows a broader domain of *ba*, which is the domain of hitting somebody's face.

2.3 Touch

A second related sense of *ba* is 'touch'. This sense involves no motion. It is weaker and almost static while hit is quite strong in hitting a certain surface. It often forms constructions with other verbs which describe the resulting state of being in contact. The arguments are restricted to referring to physical entities.

- 13) *jə-lε ba p^hə ə.wε.ne*
 1s-go touch flower that
 V V N DEM

I went and touched that flower. [Con 16/5/11 (11)]

Now, however, that *ba* is not the only verb in this sentence. It occurs following another verb, in this case *lε* 'go'. In this kind of instance, we could consider this to be a type of serial verb construction where the first verb is a verb of motion and the second verb (*ba*) identifying that contact has been made. This type of construction helps the hearer gain a clear direction in their mind and they could understand the agent-subject goes and touches the flower instead of coming and touching it.

There are also examples in which *ba* with the touch sense occurs as an independent verb.

- 14) *ə-s^he.ga ba jə.ŋa*
 3-dress touch 1.flesh
 N V N

Her dress touches my skin. [Con 4/4/11(11)]

Example (14) identifies and states that the dress and my flesh are in contact; no motion is implied.

Evidence that *ba* in examples (13) and (14) are verbs can be shown by the negation test. Consider the following negative versions of (13) and (14) respectively:

- 15) *tə ba le ba p^hɔ ɔ.wɛ.ne tə ye*
 NEG OBLG go touch flower that NEG Pf
 ADV vV V V N DEM ADV Pf
 Do not go and touch that flower. [Con 16/5/11 (11)]

- 16) *ə-s^he.ga tə ba jə.ŋa ba*
 3-dress NEG touch 1.flesh Pf
 N ADV V N Pf
 Her dress does not touch my skin. [Con 28/7/11(1)]

Examples (15) and (16) and prove that *ba* can be negated, and so are predicates. In (16) *ba* is the only predicate in the sentence and so the negative occurs immediately before it, while in (15) the negative occurs before the first verb in the serial verb construction. Consider (17) where *ba* is omitted – the sentence has normal/typical syntactic order, but is semantically unusual.

- 17) *?tə le p^hɔ ɔ.wɛ.ne tə ye*
 NEG go flower that NEG Pf
 ADV V N DEM ADV Pf
 *Do not go that flower.

Instead of the verb *le* ‘go’, we could use *ba* as a main verb as in the following sentence.

- 18) *tə ba ba p^hɔ ɔ.wɛ.ne tə ye*
 NEG OBLG touch flower that NEG Pf
 ADV vV V N DEM ADV Pf
 Do not touch that flower. [Con 6/9/11 (1)]

2.4 Satisfy

The next sense of *ba* is ‘satisfy’, a more abstract meaning where contact is made at the emotional level. There are two kinds of objects associated with this sense. First is a transitive clause with the object being *θa?* ‘heart’; and second in elaborative expressions with the co-compound *θu θa?* ‘liver heart’. The following examples show the two structures.

- 19) *ḡa jə-θa? lə na lə*
 touch 1s-heart with 2s DECL
 V N P PRO Pf

My heart is satisfied with you. [Mason_Mk 1:11]

- 20) *ə-ḡa ə-θa? ko? ne tə.p^ha*
 3-touch 3s-heart call get plural
 V N V V CLF

He calls people that satisfy his heart. [Mason_Mk 3:13]

- 21) *zɔ.ba ne ə-ḡa-θu-ḡa-θa? wɛ*
 King TOP 3s-touch-liver-touch-heart 3s
 N V PRO

The king was satisfied.

Lit: The king is touched-liver-touched-heart. [P&T 23]

There are two linkings of the semantic roles and grammatical relations. The first places the experiencer before the verb and the stimulus after the verb, as in examples (20) and (21); and the second places the experiencer after the verb and the stimulus is marked by the preposition *lə* (19).

The meaning ‘satisfy’ has moved from a concrete location in space to mental space. The literal meaning “touch (someone’s) heart” has been extended to affecting the mental/emotional state of the experiencer.

2.5 Arrive (come to be)

This sense has a meaning arriving/reaching a specific time, or that a specific time has arrived. Like the preceding meaning, it is an abstract sense. The subject of this sense is restricted to temporal nouns.

This sense ‘arrive’ involves direction or motion but only in the temporal realm. Syntactically, this meaning is encoded by an intransitive verb. The syntactic linear order of this sense is NP (time) *ḡa*. Below are the available data with the sense ‘arrive (come to be).

- 22) *nwi-θɔ mi ḡa ne hɛ hɛ po? jə-k^hi*
 seven-day if arrive TOP come come follow 1s-hip
 QNT SUB V V V V N

If the seventh day arrives come and follow me. [P&T 34]

- 23) *duu.me nwi-θɔ ɓa*
 until seven-day arrive
 SUB QNT V
 Until seven day arrive. [P&T 35]
- 24) *θuu tɔ-ɓa lɔ da.yo.ɔ.kʰa tɔ-ye*
 3 NEG-arrive at cold.season NEG-good
 PRO V P N ADJ
 It would not be good that it comes in the cold season. [Mason_Mk 13:18]
- 25) *duu ɔ.sʰə.gə.dɔ ye ɔ-muu.ni ɓa lɔ zɔ.he.ɔ? o.pʰɛ*
 until time good 3-day arrive Herod born
 SUB N ADJ N V P Name V
 Until the good time and right day for Herod's birth. [Mason_Mk 6:21]
- 26) *ɔ.sʰə.gə.dɔ ɓa*
 time arrive
 N V
 (When) the time arrived, [Mason_Mk 12:2]
- 27) *ɓa tɔ-ni ne bwa.θə.mwi hɛ*
 arrive one-day TOP visitor come
 V QNT N V
 One day, a visitor came. [Elephant5]
- 28) *pə-hi? ne ɔ tɔ-blɔ ɓa tɔ-blɔ*
 1pl-take get 3 one-CLF arrive one-CLF
 V V PRO QNT V QNT
 We take get that one time after one time. [Harvest.21]

As we can see from the above examples, the 'arrive' sense occurs with temporal nouns and noun phrases – days, seasons, and times.

2.6 Encounter

This section discusses the meaning 'encounter'. The subject must refer to an animate entity and the object is a nominalized verb or clause. This sense has the syntactic structure of a nominalized clause or verb as the object of the verb *ɓa*. Other meanings with the same structure include 'suffer' (2.7) and a passive (2.8) construction.

- 29) *mɔ ə-ɓa da.s^ho.ye tɔ.ge*
 may 3-encounter blessing HORT
 AUX V N Pf

People who came in his master's name may encounter by blessings.
 [Mason_Mk 11:9]

The independent word *s^ho.ye* is a verb which means 'bless'. When it combines with the nominalizer *da*, it becomes the abstract noun 'blessing'.

'Encounter' implies an active agent desiring to meet someone or something. It is a transitive clause. The following are four more examples showing this *ɓa da*-V structure.

- 30) *ɓwa.kə.ŋɔ p^ho.k^hwa i ɓa da he wɛ*
 people son this encounter NLZR give 3
 N N DEM V V PRO

This people's son is given to them. [Mason_Mk 9:31]

- 31) *ə-ɓa da p^hwi ə.θa? lə hɔ.k^ho ye*
 3-encounter NLZR sprinkle oneself LOC earth good
 V V RFLX P N V

People who are sprinkled on the good earth. [Mason_Mk 4:20]

- 32) *θu kə-ɓa da xɔ ne θu*
 3 IRR-encounter NLZR measure TOP PRO
 PRO V V 3

You will be measured with what you measure. [Mason_Mk 4:24]

- 33) *nə-ɓa da dɛ.lɔ na s^hu lə.ɪa? bu*
 2s-encounter NLZR drop 2s to hell inside
 V V PRO P N LCZR

[Your foot cut is better than] you are thrown into hell. [Mason_Mk 9:45]

- 34) *ɓa da.le.pə.sɔ lə mu.gɔ.le*
 encounter temptation by Satan
 V N P N

[Jesus was] tempted by Satan. [Mason_Mk 1:13]

Notice that the English translations are all passive constructions. The 'suffer' and middle functions of *ɓa* also have similar passive translations into English.

The ‘encounter’ sense has been extended to diseases and illness as shown in the following section.

2.7 Suffer (illness)

This subsection presents the next sense of *ba* ‘suffer’. This is an extension of the preceding meaning to the semantic domain of sickness and disease. The object in this case is restricted to illnesses.

- 35) *sɔ̌.fɪ.mo ə-mi.bwa.po.mu tə-ya ba da.ŋa.go*
 Simon 3s-mother.in.law one-person encounter malaria
 Name N QNT V N
 Simon’s mother-in-law got malaria. [Mason_Mk 1:30]

Example (35) describes Simon’s mother-in-law getting the disease malaria. The elaborate expression *bas^huʔ.ba.s^ha* ‘sick’ is often used when the disease is not necessarily identified:

- 36) *pə-ba.s^huʔ.ba.s^ha tə.blɔ̌.tə.k^hɔ̌*
 1pl-ill sometimes
 V ADV
 We are ill sometimes. [Con 3/10/10 (4)]

- 37) *bwa bas^huʔ.ba.s^ha tə.p^ha lə p^hja tə.p^ha ə.bu*
 people sick PL REL market PL inside
 N V CLF P N CLF LCLZR
 Sick people inside the markets [Mason_Mk 6:56]

Note that example (37) is an unmarked relative clause, literally ‘people who are sick in the markets’.

2.8 Passive

The next sense or in this case function is ‘passive’. Though the sense could be translated back into passive, the structure shows that *ba* functions as a verb. This construction has both transitive and intransitive features. It also shows features of both passive and anticausative constructions in that it focuses attention on the original Object and downgrades the importance of the original Agent. It also focuses

on the situation as stative rather than active. The verb is nominalized showing that it has lost its verb hood.⁷

- 38) *jə-ba da tʰi ja lɔ*
 1s-PASS NLZR see 1s Pf
 V V PRO Pf
 I am seen. [Con 19/5 (1)]

Note that the referent of both of the subject and object arguments are the same:

- 39) *nə-ba da tʰi na lɔ*
 2s-PASS NLZR see 2s Pf
 V V PRO Pf
 You are seen. [Con 19/5 (2)]

- 40) *wa.wa ba da tʰi ɔ lɔ*
 Wah.Wah PASS NLZR see 3 Pf
 Name V V PRO Pf
 Wah Wah is seen. [Con 19/5 (3)]

Another example not using the verb 'see' can be seen below.

- 41) *jə-ba da i.lɔ ja lɔ*
 1s-PASS NLZR scold 1s Pf
 V V PRO Pf
 I was scolded. [Con 7/9 (1)]

Usually, no Agent is stated or implied as if the speaker does not want to say who does the action. You could add an example with an expressed Agent.

2.9 Succeed/Finish

When *ba* combines with the completive aspectual marker *li*, another extension of its meaning occurs. The meaning involves the successful completion of the activity described. The construction *balɪ* occurs in the clause final position. The subject of the succeed/finish sense is restricted to only events never states. *ba* is not the main verb of the clause; but rather a tag comment on the previous clause, i.e. 'As for X, it is finished/it succeeded.

⁷ This construction and other related passive-like constructions, require much more study than this thesis can provide.

Examples related to this construction are below:

- 42) *jə-ma li? ba li*
1s-do book success COMPL
V N V TAM

I have memorized the lesson.

Lit: My study was successful. [Con 3/10/10 (2)]

- 43) *jə-ɔ me ba li*
1s-eat rice success COMPL
V N V TAM

I finished eating.

Lit: My eating was successful [Con 15/4/11 (1)]

Give an ungrammatical example with a state verb e.g. big/yellow/know

2.10 Fit

This next sense ‘fit’ is only used to discuss ‘clothing’. It is a transitive verb. It has probably derived from the ‘touch’ meaning. ‘Fit’ does not imply motion but it describes a state. Only one example was observed in the data corpus.

- 44) *s^he.ga i ba ja*
dress this fit me
N DET V PRO

This dress fit me. [Con 3/10 (1)]

It should also be noted that the sense ‘fit’ is restricted to the clothing domain. If *ba* in the sense of ‘fit’ does not have a subject in clothing domain, it is obvious that *ba* is not used as the sense ‘fit’.

2.11 Appropriate

This sense covers the meanings ‘appropriate’, ‘suitable’, and ‘reasonable’. It is an extension of the meaning ‘fit’. It only occurs in intransitive clauses. Wade (1847) stated that *ba* means something is appropriate and suitable. The following are examples that show the sense ‘appropriate and suitable’.

- 45) *nə-o p^hε.ne ɓa θə. nə lɛ s^hu we.bu ɓuʔ.tə.liʔ lɔ*
 2s-live there suitable Pf 2s go to city.inside near Pf
 V DEM V Pf PRO V P N LCLZR Pf

Your living there is suitable. You go to the town very near.

[Con 23/8 (3)]

- 46) *ə-siʔ.s^hə.da ɓa*
 3s-reply appropriate
 V V

His reply is appropriate. [Mason_Mk 12:28]

Example (47) shows that *ɓa* includes the meaning 'reasonable':

Similar to the above described senses, this sense is also used with only in a restricted domain, namely price. When we say something is reasonable in price, *ɓa* is used:

- 47) *θo.le ə.bwe tə ɓa ɓa*
 vehicle price NEG reasonable NEG
 N N ADV V Pf

The price of the vehicle is not reasonable. [Con 3/10 (3)]

2.12 Correct

This section is an extension of the previous sense 'appropriate'. It functions as an intransitive verb. It marks the speakers' attitude about the Subject argument and also marks a cognitive/mental state. The argument of this sense is unrestricted.

- 48) *bwa.lɔ.da.p^ho θu.wε.θe ə.ye.ə.glo ɓa maʔ lɔ*
 liar TOP about correct really Pf
 N N V ADV Pf

Isaiah prophesied correctly about you hypocrites

Lit: You liars, [Isaiah prophesied] about correctly. [Mason_Mk 7:6]

- 49) *pə-tɛ tə ɓa fio*
 1pl-say NEG correct Pf
 V ADV V Pf

We cannot say [where the elephant was released]. [Elephant6]

2.13 Summary

The eleven meanings identified can be organized in several ways. Syntactically they can be divided based on transitivity – whether they take one or two arguments.

Table 8: Transitive and intransitive functions of 6a

High Transitivity	Low Transitivity
hit	arrive
touch	passive
satisfy	succeed
encounter	appropriate
suffer	correct
fit	

A second way to group the meanings is by argument restrictions. For transitive meanings, what kind of objects/subjects are selected, and for intransitive meanings what kind of subjects are selected. Table 9 lists the restrictions.

Table 9: Restrictions on arguments

Sense	Argument restrictions
hit	Unrestricted
touch	Restricted to physical entities
satisfy	Object restricted to 'heart'
arrive	Subject restricted to temporal nouns
encounter	Subject must be animate, object is unrestricted
suffer	Object restricted to illnesses
passive	unrestricted
succeed	Subject restricted to events (and not states)
fit	Restricted to the clothing domain
appropriate	Object restricted to price
correct	unrestricted

Taking the information in Table 8 and Table 9 and the meanings I propose the following semantic map:

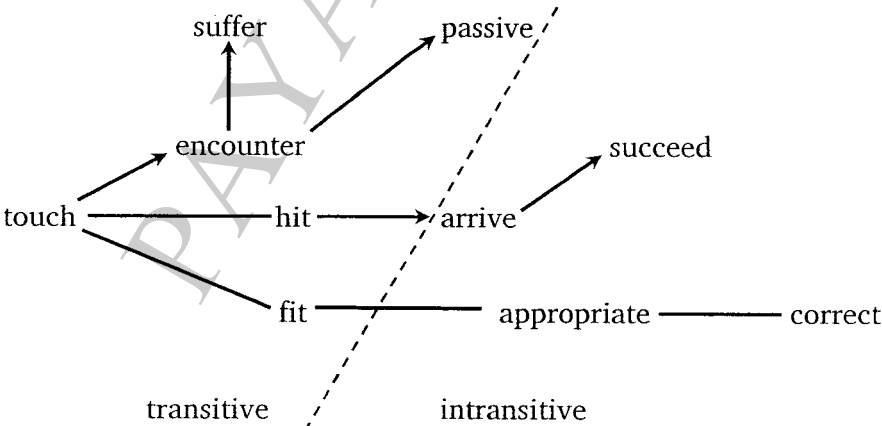


Figure 14: Semantic map of main verb meanings

The dotted line separates the transitive and the intransitive uses of *ba*.

According to my hypothesis the basic verb of *ba* is 'touch' or 'hit', which are quite close semantically and structurally. However, by choosing the sense 'touch', we can analyze the semantic map of *ba* as shown in Figure 14. 'Touch' sense can be extended into four directions. The first one is from physical touch to mental touch 'satisfy'. The second direction is an extension from touch to the passive like structure; encounter, suffer, passive. 'Encounter' and 'suffer' maintain the sense 'touch'. For example, encountering an event or encountering a disease. However, passive function goes beyond the lexical form to the grammatical form. The next two paths that the sense 'touch' further extends to are quite common in the grammaticalization pathway. The first pathway touch > hit > arrive > succeed occurs across languages. Similarly, the second pathway touch > fit > appropriate > correct is a pathway which is common across languages.