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 *6a* as having two senses: (1) 'appropriate', 'suitable and (2) 'proper', 'correct'. On the other hand, the first sense of *6a* 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 *6a* 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, *ɓa* 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-ɓa tʰwi*
   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 *ɓa*. 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   ɓa tʰwi*
    1s-shoot hit dog
    V   V   N
    I shot the dog. [Con 19/8/11 (2)]

11) *jə-kwi   bla   dɔ   ɓa 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 *ɓa* 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 *ɓa* would be used. This gives broader domains for *ɓa* to occur. While 'hit in shooting' might have been the well used sense of *ɓa* 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-ɗɛ   ɓa   bwa   də   ɣa   ə.mɛʔ   lɔ
    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 ɓa, which is the domain of hitting somebody's face.

2.3 Touch

A second related sense of ɓa 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-lɛ   ɓa   pʰɔ   ə.wɛ.ne
    1s-go   touch   flower   that
    V   V   N   DEM

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

Now, however, that ɓa is not the only verb in this sentence. It occurs following another verb, in this case lɛ '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 (ɓa) 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 ɓa with the touch sense occurs as an independent verb.

14) ə-sʰe.ga   ɓa   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 *ɓa* 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 | **ɓa** | lɛ | **ɓa** | pʰɔ | ə.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-sʰe.ga | tə | **ɓa** | jə.ŋa | ɓa |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 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 *ɓa* can be negated, and so are predicates. In (16) *ɓa* 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 *ɓa* is omitted – the sentence has normal/typical syntactic order, but is semantically unusual.

17) | ʔtə | lɛ | pʰɔ | ə.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 *lɛ* 'go', we could use *ɓa* as a main verb as in the following sentence.

18) | tə | ɓa | ɓa | pʰɔ | ə.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 *ɓa* 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 *θaʔ* 'heart'; and second in elaborative expressions with the co-compound *θu θaʔ* 'liver heart'. The following examples show the two structures.

19) **ɓa**   jə-θaʔ   lə   na   lɔ
    touch 1s-heart with 2s   DECL
    V   N   P   PRO   Pf

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

20) **ə-ɓa**   ə-θaʔ   koʔ   ne   tə.pʰa
    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-ɓa-θu-ɓa-θaʔ   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) ɓa. Below are the available data with the sense 'arrive (come to be).

22) nwi-θɔ   mi   ɓa   ne   hɛ   hɛ   poʔ   jə-kʰi
    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) *dɯ.me nwi-θɔ   ɓa*
    until seven-day arrive
    SUB   QNT   V

    Until seven day arrive. [P&T 35]

24) *θɯ   tə-ɓa   lə da.yo.ə.kʰa tə-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) *dɯ   ə.sʰə.gə.dɔ ye   ə-mɯ.ni ɓa   lə zɔ.he.ɹoʔ o.pʰlɛ*
    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) *ə.sʰə.gə.dɔ ɓa*
    time   arrive
    N   V

    (When) the time arrived, [Mason_Mk 12:2]

27) *ɓa   tə-ni   ne   bwa.θə.mwi hɛ*
    arrive one-day   TOP visitor   come
    V   QNT   N   V

    One day, a visitor came. [Elephant5]

28) *pə-hiʔ   ne ɔ tə-blɔ   ɓa   tə-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.sʰo.ye*	*tə.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 *sʰo.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	*pʰo.kʰwa*	*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*	*pʰwi*	*ə.θaʔ*	*lə*	*hɔ.kʰo*	*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)
θɯ	*kə-ɓa*	*da*	*xɔ*	*ne*	*θɯ*
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*	*de.lɔ*	*na*	*sʰu*	*lə.ɹaʔ*	*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 *ɓa* '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) sɔ.ʃi.mo ə-mi.bwa.po.mu tə-ya **ɓa** 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 *ɓasʰuʔ.ɓa.sʰa* 'sick' is often used when the disease is not necessarily identified:

36) pə-ɓa.sʰuʔ.ɓa.sʰa tə.blɔ.tə.kʰɔ
    1pl-ill sometimes
    V ADV
    We are ill sometimes. [Con 3/10/10 (4)]

37) bwa ɓasʰuʔ.ɓa.sʰa tə.pʰa lə pʰja tə.pʰa 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 *ɓa* 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-ɓa   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-ɓa   da   tʰi   na   lɔ
    2s-PASS NLZR see   2s   Pf
    V   V   PRO Pf

    You are seen. [Con 19/5 (2)]

40) wa.wa   ɓa   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-ɓa   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 ɓa 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 ɓali occurs in the clause final position. The subject of the succeed/finish sense is restricted to only events never states. ɓa 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.

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[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?*   ***ɓa***   *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*   ***ɓa***   *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)   *sʰe.ga*   *i*   *ɓa*   *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 *ɓa* in the sense of 'fit' does not have a subject in clothing domain, it is obvious that *ɓa* 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 *ɓa* means something is appropriate and suitable. The following are examples that show the sense 'appropriate and suitable'.

45) na-o   pʰε.ne ɓa   θə. nə lε sʰu 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.sʰə.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.pʰo 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-tε   tə   ɓa   ɦo
    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 ба

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:
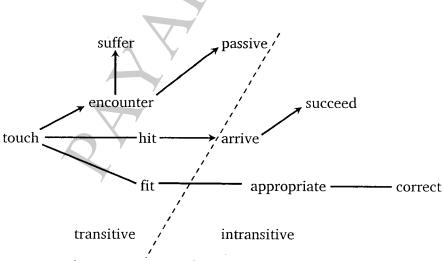

Figure 14: Semantic map of main verb meanings

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

According to my hypothesis the basic verb of ɓa is 'touch' or 'hit', which are quite close semantically and structurally. However, by choosing the sense 'touch', we can analyze the semantic map of ɓa 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.