The combinatorial patterns of *twá* 'to cut' in Asante-Twi (Akan): Multiple senses or contextual modulations?[1]

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Cross-linguistically, verbs have combinatorial patterns. When the semantics of a verb combines with the semantics of its internal arguments, different interpretations are derived. These interpretations can be literal or non-literal (Ameka 2019; Spalek 2015; Rappaport Hovav 2014; Bobuafor 2013, 2018; Levin and Rappaport Hovav 2013; Ameka and Essegbey 2007; Levin 1993). Using data collected from written texts, video-stimuli descriptions, spontaneous utterances and native-speaker intuitions, this paper explores the potential combinatorial patterns of *twá* 'to cut' in Asante-Twi (Akan, Kwa-Niger Congo). I show that the verb combines with different types of internal arguments, in different argument structure constructions to derive multiple interpretations. Taking into consideration the fact that "natural language tries to minimize polysemy" (Levin and Rappaport Hovav 2013: 2), I propose a univocal lexical semantics for *twá* 'to cut' and show that its basic semantics is kept constant even in non-prototypical contexts. I argue that the use of *twá* 'to cut' in non-prototypical contexts represent contextual modulations of the verb's single meaning. Following Spalek (2015) and Ameka (2019), I suggest that such contextual interpretations should be analysed compositionally, paying attention to the verb's internal arguments as well as the argument structure constructions in which it occurs.

Keywords: combinatorial patterns, separation verbs, contextual interpretations, argument structure constructions, Asante-Twi.

1. Introduction

CUT and BREAK verbs (henceforth C&B verbs) describe actions and events that bring about a separation or disintegration in the material integrity of an object (Guerssel et al. 1985; Hale and Keyser 1987; Levin 1993, 1995). According to Fillmore (1970: 125), an object that undergoes separation is understood as "essentially different after the event symbolized by the verb has happened to it." Examples of such events in English include *cutting*, *breaking*, *slicing*, *chopping*, *hacking*, *tearing*, *ripping*, *smashing*, and *snapping*, (Majid et al. 2007).

Studies such as Agyepong (2017), Spalek (2015), Bobuafor (2013; 2018), Rappaport Hovav (2011; 2014) have shown that generally, change of state verbs (henceforth COS verbs), which include C&B verbs, combine with a wide range of internal arguments to derive distinct (contextual) interpretations. These internal arguments range from physical to abstract objects, events and

processes, etc. Consider the following Spanish examples from Spalek (2015):

(1)   a.   El   sastre   corto   la   tela
               The   tailor   cut   the   cloth
               'The tailor cut the cloth.' (Spalek 2015: 41)

        b.   El   Joventut   corto   su   racha   de   derrotas
               the   Joventut   cut   his   series   of   defeat
               'The Joventut basketball team ended its losing streak.' (Spalek 2015: 40)

        c.   Se   corto   el   teléfono
               REFL   cut   the   phone
               'The phone got cut off.' (Spalek 2015: 42)

        d.   Francia   corta   la   entrega de   etarras
               France   cuts   the   delivery of   ETA members
               'France stops the extradition of ETA members.' (Spalek 2015: 43)

Examples (1a-d) show some of the types of arguments that the Spanish verb *cortar* 'to cut' takes as objects. For instance, in (1a and c), the verb takes the physical objects *tela* 'cloth' and *telefono* 'telephone', respectively. Note that, even though a physical object *telefono* is predicated of the verb in (1c), the interpretation is not the same as (1a). The verb argument combination in (1c) describes an abstract event—to disconnect or interrupt the flow of a conversation. Again, in (1c), the reflexive *se* which occurs with the verb also plays a role in generating the overall interpretation. It presents *telefono* (undergoer) as performing the cutting event by itself. In (1b and d) however, *cortar* 'to cut' is predicated of the abstract nouns, *racha de derrotas* 'series of defeat' and *entrega* 'delivery' to describe the termination of a series of lost basketball games and the extradition of ETA members, respectively. The above examples illustrate the important role played by the verb's internal arguments in generating sentence interpretations.

Explaining the combinatorial capacity of *cortar*, Spalek (2015: 43) notes that, apart from describing the separation or division of physical objects, the verb describes event cessation when it collocates with eventuality-denoting themes. *Cortar* 'to cut' describes entities and eventualities that can be characterised as being connected in their normal state or development and whose disconnection is often brought about in a more controlled manner.

Similarly, Bobuafor (2018: 15), in discussing the separation verb *bhui* 'cut' in Tafi (Ghana-Togo-Mountain language spoken in the South-eastern part of Ghana), shows that the verb has a range of interpretations depending on the nouns with which it collocates. Consider examples (2a-b) from Bobuafor (2018):

(2)   a.   Yíkɔ kípɔtí obhui búvuním.
               Yíkɔ   kí-pɔtí   o-bhui   bú-vu   ní   kímí
               take   CM-cloth   2SG-cut   CM-house   DEF   inside
               'Use a piece of cloth to cross/divide the room.' (Bobuafor 2018: 16 ex.22a)

        b.   Bebhui 'ibúím kɔ 'álí
               be-bhui   ki-búí   kímí   kɔ   bálí
               3PL-cut   CM-matter   inside   DAT   3PL
               'The matter has been judged for them.' (Bobuafor 2018: 16 ex.23a)

According to Bobuafor (2018), in example (2a) a 'cross/divide' interpretation is derived when the Tafi verb *bhui* 'cut' combines with the internal argument *búvu* 'house'. In (2b), when *bhui* 'cut' is predicated of nominals translated into English as 'word/matter/case', the derived interpretation is to 'decide/judge a case'.

In this paper, I investigate the various interpretations associated with the Asante-Twi verb *twá* 'to cut'. I explore the ways in which the internal arguments with which *twá* 'to cut' occurs influence the verb's overall interpretation. I show that just like *cortar* (Spanish) and *bhui* (Tafi), *twá* 'to cut' combines with physical objects that possess material integrity such as wood, food items, cloth, body parts, and so on, as well as abstract objects such as events and processes to derive an array of interpretations. Taking the position that "senses are not to be multiplied beyond necessity" (Grice 1989: 47), I show that *twá* 'to cut' has a univocal lexical semantics with diverse contextual interpretations arising as a result of an interaction between (i) the semantics of the verb, (ii) the semantics of argument structure constructions, (iii) the semantics of the verb's internal arguments and (iv) culturally derived information.

The paper is structured as follows: Section 2 presents a brief account of studies that have been conducted within the C&B domain. In sections 3 and 4, I discuss the data collection processes and the theoretical assumptions adopted in this paper, respectively. Section 5 discusses *twá* 'to cut' and its internal arguments in various types of syntactic constructions. The section also accounts for the multiple interpretations of *twá* 'to cut' in its range of combinations. Section 6 summarizes and concludes the paper.

2.   Previous C&B studies

Hale and Keyser (1987) characterize separation verbs as those verbs that describe events resulting in a separation in the material integrity of an object. Separation verbs as a semantic category have received a lot of attention. Much of the research in this domain focuses on how semantics influence the syntactic behaviour of the verbs (Guerssel et al. 1985; Hale and Keyser 1987; Levin 1993; Rappaport Hovav and Levin 1995; Ameka and Essegbey 2007; Essegbey 2007; Majid et al. 2007; Bohnemeyer 2007; Bobuafor 2013, 2018; Agyepong 2017). For instance, after studying separation verbs in English, Berber, Walpiri and Hocak, Guerssel et al. (1985) propose a bifurcation— CUT and BREAK verbs. They define CUT verbs as those verbs that describe separation events carried out primarily with an instrument. The presence of the instrument implies that CUT verbs are inherently causal in nature. BREAK verbs on the other hand do not lexicalize an instrument thus lack causal semantics. This has implications for the verbs' syntactic behaviour. CUT verbs fail to participate in the causative/inchoative alternation due to their inherent causal nature. BREAK verbs on the contrary, participate fully in this type of alternation.

Studies such as Ameka and Essegbey (2007), Essegbey (2019), Bobuafor (2013; 2018), Spalek (2015), Agyepong (2020) have challenged this hypothesis by providing instances wherein CUT verbs participate in the causative/inchoative alternation as well as contexts where typical BREAK verbs fail to alternate. Their findings show that argument structure alternation possibilities are not solely dependent on the semantics of the verbs, but also, on the semantics of the internal arguments with which the verbs combine. In consonance with these studies, I show how the types of arguments selected by *twá* 'to cut' influence the verb's over-all interpretation. I argue that similar to what happens with the Spanish verb *cortar* and *bhui* (Tafi), *twá* 'to cut' in Asante-Twi also exhibits interpretations which result from the combination of the semantics of the verb and its arguments occurring in specific constructions.

3.   Methods

This section provides information on the various types of data and data collection techniques employed in this study.

3.1   Participants. In all, eight consultants (three females and five males), above the age of forty, were interviewed. Five of the participants took part in the video-stimuli elicitation while the other three provided the procedural narratives. Out of this number, only one was monolingual (a 90 plus year old woman). The remaining seven had Asante-Twi as their L1. In addition to Asante-Twi, all seven consultants spoke and understood some amount of Ghanaian English. There was also a consultant who spoke Ga (the language of the people of Accra) in addition to English. It is important to mention that, the data collected from these consultants did not show any evidence of interference from the other languages they spoke.

3.2   Materials. The verbs for this study were elicited using two sets of video stimuli— "Cut and Break Videos" put together by Bohnemeyer et al. (2001), and another set created by Agyepong (2015). Both elicitation sets contained 61 and 71 short video clips, respectively. They all portrayed scenes that depicted various forms of material disintegration. Some of the clips showed agents effecting the separation while others depicted spontaneous separations. The objects that underwent the separation were varied (e.g., stick, rope, cloth, plate, pot, watermelon, hair, fish). Different types of instruments were also used in the separation (e.g., hammer, cutlass, axe, scissors, knife). The material disintegration was also carried out in different manners (e.g., once or repeatedly, calmly or furiously), Majid et al. (2007: 137). These videos were supplemented with a second set created by Agyepong (2015). The additional videos showed the separation of objects that were culturally relevant to the Ghanaian context (e.g., yam, cassava, plantain, palm fruit).

3.3   Procedure. For the elicitation, all five participants were shown the videos 2-3 times. After each set of videos, they were asked the following questions in Asante-Twi: i) What happened in the video? ii) What did the man/woman do to the thing? iii) What happened to the thing? Apart from eliciting the set of verbs for describing separation events in Asante-Twi, the video-stimuli interviews also elicited illustrative sentences involving the verbs. The second data set consisted of procedural narratives provided by the consultants. In all, four procedural narratives were compiled. These narratives described the killing and cutting up of a chicken (for food), the preparation of palm wine from a felled palm tree, the distillation of gin from harvested palm wine and the harvesting of crops such as plantain and cocoa.

The overall goal of the video-stimuli elicitation was to compile a list of the different types of separation verbs in Asante-Twi. Secondly, the videos were used to explore the basic/core semantics of the verbs (Semantics 1), while focusing on details such as whether the verbs included as part of their semantics manner of separation, object of separation, instrument involvement, end state of object (disintegrated, line created on object).

The verbs and illustrative sentences elicited from the video-stimuli interviews did not provide the extended uses of the verbs. For this reason, a third set of data was compiled from written texts. These included two Asante-Twi novels; *Wó súm bòrɔdéɛ́ á sùm̀ kwàdú bì* (Gyekye-Aboagye 1967) and *Bediako* (Amarteifio 2010). Additional data was also gathered from an Akan book of proverbs, *Bù mè bé* (Appiah et al. 2007) as well as Christaller's (1933) Akan dictionary. These written sources provided a range of contextualised uses of the verbs (Semantics 2).

Lastly, I rely on my intuition as a native speaker of the Asante-Twi dialect of Akan to generate some of the examples.[1]

4.   Theoretical Assumptions

The treatment of *twá* 'to cut' in this paper follows two approaches relevant for the interpretation of linguistic signs. First, I adopt a monosemic-bias (Ruhl 1987) and propose an invariant semantics for *twá* 'to cut' — to use a lined-edge instrument to move or pass across an object, resulting in a line. This semantics is kept constant in the various contextual uses of the verb. Second, I posit a two-level semantics (Wilkins and Hill 1995) to explain how the single meaning of the verb interacts with the meanings of its internal arguments in specific constructions to derive interpretations.

According to Wilkins and Hill (1995), linguistic signs can be interpreted following two-levels of meaning. The first level, which is known as Semantics 1, "is concerned with the stored (in the mind) communicable information associated with conventional signs", (213). Level 1 consists of lexical items, grammatical constructions, prosodic patterns, gestures etc. They are the stable, context independent meanings of linguistic signs. This level derives the literal meaning of linguistic signs. Level 1 subsequently feeds into level 2, which is more of a fill-in box (Ameka 2019). It is at this level that the literal meaning (Semantics 1) interacts with contextual information such as neo-Gricean Generalised Conversational Implicatures of Quantity, Informativeness and Manner (Levinson 2000), Cultural scripts (Goddard and Wierzbicka (2004); Goddard (2006)) and world/encyclopaedic knowledge about linguistic forms. Wilkins and Hill (1995) further explain that, these processes of enrichment and filtering derive the online or contextual interpretations of utterances for both the speaker and hearer. The contextualized meaning of linguistics signs is Semantics 2. According to Ameka (2017: 230) "these contextual interpretations are not stored senses of signs; they are an output of interpretation processes. They are contextual modulations of the stored meaning values of linguistic signs. These contextual interpretations may be cycled back into Semantics 1 level where they become more stable meaning values of signs. This is the dynamic way in which semantic change takes place."

To account for how the various contextual interpretations are derived from the invariant semantics of *twá*, I acknowledge the role of grammatical constructions in generating the on-line interpretations. My use of the term "constructions" follows Goldberg (1995) who defines constructions as stored pairings of form and function which could be morphemes, words, idioms, fully or partially filled linguistic patterns. This implies that technically, any linguistic pattern can be treated as an individual construction, "as long as some aspect of its form or function is not strictly predictable from its component parts…" (Goldberg 2003: 219). Consider the following examples from Goldberg (2003: 221) illustrating the various argument-structure constructions in which the English C&B verb *slice* occurs.

(3)   a.   He sliced the bread. (transitive)

         b.   Pat sliced the carrots into the salad. (Caused motion)

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[1] All examples labelled [C&B number] are responses from the video-stimuli elicitation. The number is the reference for the particular video-stimuli. Those referenced as Agyepong (2017) are taken directly from the author's unpublished doctoral dissertation. The examples without references are those constructed based on my knowledge as a native speaker of Asante-Twi.

    c.   Pat sliced Chris a piece of pie. (ditransitive)

    d.   Emeril sliced and diced his way to stardom. (Way construction)

    e.   Pat sliced the box open. (resultative)

Goldberg (2003) explains that in all five examples, the verb *slice* has the meaning 'to cut with a sharp instrument'. This surface meaning interacts with the meanings of the argument-structure constructions to generate interpretations such as an agent acting on a theme (3a), an agent causing a theme to move (3b), an agent transferring a theme to a beneficiary (3c), an agent moving somewhere (3d) and an agent causing a theme to change state (3e).

    In section (5), I demonstrate how the invariant semantics of *twá* 'to cut' interacts with the semantics of different types of internal arguments in specific argument structure constructions to generate diverse interpretations.

5.   *twá* 'to cut': its core meaning and combinatorial patterns

Twá 'to cut' and its reduplicated variant *twìtwà*, typically describe all forms of cutting events in which an agent manipulates a (sharp) line-edged instrument to make contact with a theme, eventually, creating a line. A knife or any bladed object is considered the prototypical instrument for carrying out cutting events. In certain contexts, the verb can be used to describe events which may not necessarily be carried out with bladed instruments but rather, any object which has the ability to create or draw a line on another object. For instance the C&B video (32), in which an agent cuts a carrot with a karate-shaped hand is described with *twá* 'to cut'. Similarly, when flexible objects such as a cloth or rope is used to create a division *twá* 'to cut' is used in that context. The critical thing is that objects like the hand, rope or cloth do not qualify as prototypical instruments for carrying out cutting events, however, their ability to draw or create a line is what warrants the use of *twá* 'to cut'. The reduplicated form, *twìtwà*, describes the event as a multiple/repetitive action (i.e. object(s) ends up in multiple parts) or that it involves multiple participants.

    According to Goldberg (2003: 220), verbs in general occur in a wide array of complement configurations. Prototypically, *twá* 'to cut' is a two-place/transitive verb. That is to say that, it occurs with a subject (semantic agent) and an object (semantic theme/patient).

    The goal of this section is to show how *twá* 'to cut' occurs with various types of complements, in specific argument-structure constructions to generate an array of interpretations. I demonstrate that apart from denoting physical object separation, *twá* 'to cut' also describes abstract changes and eventualities when predicated of nouns that represent events, states, processes, trajectory, units of measurement etc. In combination with NPs of such categories, *twá* 'to cut' is often interpreted as an interruption, a termination or cessation, a reduction in length or a movement across or along a path.

    Following (Goldberg 1995, 2003), I discuss the various combinatorial activities of *twá* 'to cut' and the ways in which its diverse interpretations are derived. Generally, *twá* 'to cut' takes two types of phrases—NPs and PostPs as complement i.e., [V NP] and [V PostP]. Depending on the nature of the complement, the combination can derive a default (Semantics 1) or contextualised (Semantics 2) interpretation.

5.1   **[V NP(concrete nouns)] - Default interpretation (Semantics 1).** When the verb combines with NP complements that are characterised as concrete, a default interpretation or Semantics 1 is generated. This interpretation is consistent with the basic semantics associated with *twá* 'to cut' i.e.,

someone does something to another thing (using an instrument). This action results in the creation of a line or in some cases a separation. This default interpretation is stable and context independent. In what follows, I demonstrate how *twá* 'to cut' combines with different NPs (concrete) in the two-place construction to derive a default interpretation.

The complement slot in this combination is filled by NPs denoting concrete objects such as food items, body parts, trees and other objects that typically possess material integrity.

(4) Ǹtɛ̀m   árá   wò-twì-twá-á   bòrɔ̀dé dè   tùá-tùà-à
     hurriedly EMPH   3PL-RED-cut-COMPL   plantain use   RED-seal-COMPL
     àbóá   ǹ-tókúró   nyìnáá
     animal PL-hole   all
     'Immediately, they cut plantain (leaves) and used it to seal all the holes of the
     animal.' (Gyekye-Aboagye 1967: 20)

In example (4) *twá* 'to cut' describes the process of harvesting plantain. Generally, when *twá* 'to cut' or its reduplicated variant *twìtwà* takes crops as complements, the combination is interpreted as 'to harvest the specific crop'. For instance, the reduplicated variant, *twìtwà*, in combination with *bòrɔ̀dé* 'plantain' has the specific interpretation 'to harvest plantain'. Note that, this combination cannot be interpreted as 'cut up plantain' for cooking. This is mainly because Asante-Twi has a specific verb, *dwá*, which describes the process of peeling and cutting plantain specifically for cooking. *Dwá*, therefore automatically pre-empts the 'cut up plantain for cooking' interpretation of the combination *twìtwà bòrɔ̀dé*. Example (4) describes a scene in the story where the leaves of plantain rather than the stem or fruit was cut specifically to seal holes that had been created by rodents. In this example however, *bòrɔ̀dé* is metonymically used to represent plantain leaves. As a cultural practise, in the tropics, plantain leaves are sometimes used as building materials i.e., roofs are often made with dry plantain or banana leaves. It is instructive to mention that *twá* 'to cut' only describes harvesting that require bladed instruments. For this reason, the verb cannot describe forms of harvesting that does not involve cutting, for example, harvesting maize (breaking), uprooting yam, plucking or picking fruits (mangoes, tomatoes, pepper). The language uses the verbs *bú* 'to break', *tú* 'to pull out', *té* 'to tear', respectively, to describe the harvesting of each of these crops.

Twá 'to cut' also takes body parts as internal objects to describe incision-like cuts often carried out with sharp bladed objects. Example (5) below was used by a consultant to describe the C&B video (18) in which a woman accidentally cut her finger in the process of cutting an orange:

(5) Màːmé nó   á-twà   nè   ǹsá
     woman DEF   PERF-cut   3SG:POSS hand
     'The woman has cut her finger.' [C&B 18]

The interesting thing about this example is that, generally, this single utterance could have an array of interpretations depending on the result of the cutting event. For instance, it could describe a slight cut, a gush or even a severance depending on the intensity of the cut.

5.2   [V PostP] - Default interpretation (Semantics 1). The second type of internal argument *twá* 'to cut', takes as complement is the postpositional phrase (PostP). The Postpositional phrases are headed by postpositions such as *mú* 'inside/ containing region', *só* 'top', *ànó* 'edge', *àséɛ́* 'under', *ɛ̀tóɔ́* 'bottom', *àkyí* 'back' and *hó* 'body (outer surface of an object)'. These postpositions play a critical role in sentence interpretation by specifying the active zone (part) of the object that

undergoes the separation. The unique semantics associated with each of the postpositions interacts with the semantics of the verb, the semantics of the argument structure construction as well as the NP complement of postposition.

In the sub-sections that follow, I posit sub-constructions in which *twá* 'to cut' and its postpositional phrase complements occur and show the interpretations associated with the various construction types. Here also, the combinations generate the default interpretation (SEMANTICS 1) associated with *twá* 'to cut'. The constructions are subcategorized based on the postposition that heads the postpositional phrase.

5.2.1 [V PostP (mú 'inside/ containing region')]. The role of the postposition *mú* 'inside/containing region' is to specify the internal part /inner space of the object that is affected by the event described by the verb. In combination with the semantics of the verb, a 'cut into object' interpretation is derived. Example (6) illustrates this:

(6)   Ò-à-twá   bàyérɛ́   nó   mú
         3SG-PERF-cut   yam   DEF   inside
         'S/he has cut into the yam.'

In this example, the PostP *bàyéré nó mú* 'inside the yam' is headed by the postposition *mú* 'inside/containing region' which specifies the active zone (i.e., inner region) that is affected by the cutting. Generally, separations of this nature give access to the internal region of the object. So, in this example, the yam ends up in a state where one is able to see that which is hidden behind the outer part (skin) of the yam, in this case, the food.

5.2.2 [V PostP (só 'top')]. In this construction, the head of the PostP is the postposition *só* 'top' which specifies the upper part of an object as the part that undergoes the cutting event. It combines with the semantics of the verb and its NP complement to derive the interpretation 'reduce the length or height' of an object. Generally, when the top part of an object is removed, the effect is that the object ends up shortened. Consider examples (7a-c).

(7)   a.   Ò-twà-à   dùá   nó   só
             3SG.SUB-cut-COMPL   tree   DEF   top
             'S/he reduced the height of the tree.' (Literal: S/he cut the tree top)

       b.   Ò-twà-à   né   nhwíǹ   nó   só
             3SG.SUB-cut-COMPL   3SG:POSS   hair   DEF   top
             'S/he reduced the length of her/his hair.' (Literal: S/he cut her/his hair top)

       c.   Ò-à-twá   àtààdéɛ́ nó   só
             3SG-PERF-cut   dress   DEF   top
             'S/he has shortened the dress.' (Literal: S/he has cut the dress top)

In both (7a and b), *twá* 'to cut' in combination with *só* 'top' describes the process of using a bladed instrument to remove the upper part of a tree and hair, respectively. The effect of this action is that the length or height of the entities are reduced.

Example (7c) is interesting because, unlike (7a) and (7b) where in actual fact the top part of the objects is removed (i.e., top part of the tree is cut, top part of the hair is cut), it is actually the lower

/bottom part of the dress that is cut. That which cuts across all three examples is that the cutting events results in a reduction of length or height. The case of (7c) demonstrates the fact that language is not necessarily about the real-world event (for example, one does not always have to cut the top of an object in order to reduce its length or height), but rather, it is about how people think about the activity. One can consider this as the underlying logic which joins the shortening of a tree/hair to the shortening of a dress.

5.2.3 [V PostP (hó 'outer region')]. The postposition *hó* 'outer region' heads the Postp. It specifies the outer/external region of an object as the active zone. By combining with the semantics of the verb and the NP it takes as complement, the interpretation 'cut the outer/external regions of an object' is generated. Consider examples (8 a and b):

(8)   a.   Ɔ̀-twì-twà-à   páànòó   nó   hó
              3SG.REDP-cut-COMPL bread   DEF   body
              'S/he cut (repeatedly) the outer part (body) of the bread.'

    b.   Ɔ̀-twà-à   dùá   nó   hó   kàkrá   wè-ɛ̀ɛ̀
              3SG.SUBJ-cut-COMPL tree   DEF body small   chew-COMPL
              'S/he cut a small part (of the body) of the tree and chewed it.'

In (8a), the complement of the postposition *hó* is *páànòó* 'bread'. In combination with *twá* 'to cut', the sentence is interpreted as an agent uses an instrument (knife) to repeatedly cut the outer covering of the bread. Similarly, in (8b), the agent cuts a portion of a tree for consumption. *Dùá hó* 'body or outer part of a tree' in this context represents the bark of the tree. Culturally, the bark of some trees serve medicinal purposes. The agent in (8b) cuts and chews the bark of the tree as a form of medication.

5.2.4 [V PostP (tó 'bottom')]. In this construction, the postpositional phrase headed by *tó* 'bottom' takes as complement concrete NPs that have a lengthwise configuration i.e., objects that have top and bottom parts. Examples of such NPs include *bàyéré* 'yam', *àbòrɔ̀bé* 'pineapple', *àbàá* 'stick'. The Postpositional phrase in combination with *twá* 'to cut' is interpreted as 'cut the bottom of NP', as exemplified by (9):

(9)   Wó-á-twà   àbòrɔ̀bɛ́   nó   tó
       2SG-PERF-cut pineapple   DEF   bottom
       'You have cut the bottom part of the pineapple.'

The postposition *tó* 'bottom' in (9), indicates the part of the pineapple (the bottom) that is affected by the cutting.

    To sum up, in this section, I have demonstrated ways in which *twá* 'to cut' combines with both NP and PostP complements to derive diverse interpretations. Crucially, I have shown that in the [V PostP] combinations, the PostP is headed by a postposition which specifies the active zone that is affected by the event described by the verb. All the examples discussed under this section illustrate the default meaning (Semantics 1) associated with the verb *twá* 'to cut'. That is to say that, in all the examples the verb occurs in a transitive construction and describes the process where by an effector uses an instrument to create a line or cause a separation in an object.

5.3   [V NP] - Contextualised Interpretations (Semantics 2). In this section, I discuss specific collocations of the verb which derive contextualized (Semantics 2) rather than the default interpretation. The interpretations generated has more to do with the semantics of the NP complements than the verb semantics. Recall that it was argued that the literal /default meaning (Semantics 1) of the verb interacts with contextual information such as neo-Gricean Generalised Conversational Implicatures of Quantity, Informativeness and Manner (Levinson 2000), Cultural scripts (Goddard and Wierzbicka (2004); Goddard (2006)) and world/encyclopaedic knowledge about the linguistic form. These processes of enrichment and filtering derive the online or contextual interpretations or Semantics 2, (Wilkins and Hill 1995).

In what follows, I show that some of the interpretations are actually a specialization of the default interpretation where the verb semantics interacts with cultural scripts to describe a specific cultural activity/practice. In those contexts, in addition to the default interpretation, there is also a contextualised interpretation which relies on the cultural knowledge associated with the event under description. Two of such cases are presented in examples (10) and (11):

(10)   Ó-twá   àbɛ́   tɔ́ǹ
         3SG-cut-HAB   oil.palm sell.HAB
         'He taps palm-wine and sells.' (Literal: He cuts oil-palm and sells)

In (10), *twá* 'to cut' takes *àbɛ́* 'oil-palm' as internal object. The NP *àbɛ́* 'oil-palm' has a general semantics. It can be used to describe the entire palm tree or the palm-fruit. It is the particular context in which it is used that determines whether one is referring to the palm-fruit, palm-tree or palm wine. When *àbɛ́* 'oil-palm' combines with the semantics of *twá* 'to cut', a specific contextualized interpretation 'harvest palm-wine' is generated. The palm-wine is the product of the felled palm-tree. This process involves using a sharp, bladed instrument to carve out a pit on the stem of the palm. This is then followed by using again a bladed instrument to cut the surface of the succulent part of the pit, as shown in Figure 1. It is through this succulent surface that the palm wine seeps into a guard inserted underneath the pit.

Figure 1: cutting the succulent part of a felled palm-tree

In essence, the cultural activity of tapping palm-wine is described by the manner in which the process takes place i.e., by cutting the surface of the dug pit on the palm tree stem. As with *dwá* 'cut or peel plantain for cooking' (see example 4), the language has a specific verb *nú*, which describes the separation of palm-fruit bunch from the palm tree, as in *nú àbɛ́* 'separate oil-palm fruit from tree'. *Nú*, therefore pre-empts this interpretation from being associated with example (10) even though *twá* 'to cut' directly takes *àbɛ́* 'oil-palm' as direct object.

Another instance where *twá* 'to cut' interacts with cultural script to derive a contextualised interpretation is when *twá* takes the NP *ǹtòmá* 'fabric'. The default interpretation associated with this combination is 'to cut (up) a fabric'. This process typically involves an agent using a pair of scissors to cut a piece of textile into parts. As explained by Essegbey (2019: 94), such textiles usually come in 12 yards, known in Akan a *ɛ̀póɔ́* and six yards being *ɛ̀pófá* (literally, half of a whole). Consider example (11):

(11)   Mɛ́-twá   ǹtòmá   à-mà   wò
         1SG:FUT-cut   cloth   CONS-give   2SG
         'I will cut cloth for you.' (Essegbey 2019:94, example 28)

In this example, *twá* 'to cut' simply describes the process whereby an agent cuts a piece of a cloth using a pair scissors (Semantics 1). The reduplicated variant *twìtwà* used in collocation with *kábá* 'traditional blouse' describes the process of cutting out patterns from a piece of cloth for the purposes of sewing as exemplified in (12) below.

(12)   Èntì   dèdààdà   yí   wó-ń-twí-twà-à   mè   kábá   nó
         so   already   TOP   2SG-NEG-RED-cut-COMPL   1SG:POSS   blouse DEF
         'So, all this while you have not cut out my blouse.' (Agyepong 2017: 111)

Recall that the reduplicated form of the verb presents the cutting event as repeated, which is what is done when patterns are being cut out from a whole fabric.

There is also another use of the *twá* 'to cut' + NP *ǹtòmá* 'cloth' collocation in Akan which refers to a very popular cultural practice in Ghana and across Africa, where a group of people (usually family members and friends) designate a specific type of textile to be purchased and sewn to commemorate occasions like naming ceremonies, funerals, weddings, and other social gatherings.

(13)   Ɔ̀òmó   á-twà   ǹtòmá
         3PL   PERF-cut   cloth
         'They have cut a (piece of) cloth.' (Essegbey 2019: 95, example 29)

The aim of this cultural practice is to identify a particular group of people as being linked to a specific occasion. This cultural information is actually what leads to the online interpretation 'select a specific cloth for an occasion', which is Semantics 2.

In the subsequent section, I discuss specific collocations where the nature of NP complement interacts with the verb semantics to derive specific contextualised interpretations.

5.3.1   *[V NP (àwóɔ́ 'childbirth')]*. In this construction, *twá* 'to cut' is predicated of eventive nouns characterized by prolonged duration and which also have a clearly predictable trajectory. This combination describes the cessation of events and processes. For example, when the event nominal *àwóɔ́* 'childbirth' is predicated of *twá* 'to cut', the interpretation 'to stop bearing children' or 'to end a woman's period of fertility' is generated. Consider example (14):

(14)   Màámé nó   á-twà   àwóɔ́
         woman DEF   PERF-cut   child.birth
         'The woman has stopped bearing children (her fertility period has ended).'
          (Agyepong 2017: 201)

In this example, a woman's child bearing period which goes through a time flow (i.e., beginning, medial, and end) is combined with *twá* 'to cut' to describe the cessation of a natural process. That is to say that, the woman has reached menopause. Culturally, this expression is used when a woman has naturally stopped giving birth. Thus, even though in (14), *Mààmé nó* 'the woman' is the subject of the sentence, the termination of the child bearing event is not externally caused by the woman since a woman's fertility period can be brought to an end due to certain inherent causes, for instance, age or certain medical conditions.

5.3.2 [V NP (body parts as events)]. In this construction, the verb combines with body part nouns that metonymically represent events. Examples of such body part nouns include *ànó* 'mouth' and *nófóɔ́* 'breast'. When these body parts collocate with *twá* 'to cut', they do not describe physical forms of cutting. Rather, their combination derives the contextualised interpretation (Semantics 2) 'to interrupt or bring an end to an ongoing event'.

5.3.2.1 [V NP (ànó 'mouth')]. In Akan, *ànó* 'mouth' is metonymically used to represent speech. *Ànó* 'mouth' therefore becomes polysemous, in that one sense refers to the actual body part while the second sense refers to the product of the mouth (what comes out of the mouth), in this case speech. Examples (15) and (16) illustrate the body part *ànó* 'mouth' metonymically representing speech:

(15)   Brà,   bɛ́-yí   w'-ànó
        come   FUT-remove   2SG:POSS-mouth
        'Come and respond (to a question or query).' (Literal: Come and remove your mouth)

In this example, *ànó* 'mouth' is not used literally but rather, it metonymically stands in for a response to a question or query. The response is a product of the mouth. In the same vein, when *ànó* 'mouth' is in combination with *twá* 'to cut', the interaction of the second sense of *ànó* 'mouth' and that of *twá* 'to cut' derives the interpretation 'to cut a speech short or interrupt a speech'. Consider example (16):

(16)   Awo,   mé   ǹ-twá   w'-ànó
        Awo   1SG.SUBJ   NEG-cut   2SG:POSS-mouth
        'Awo, I do not intend to interrupt your speech/cut your speech short.' (Amarteifio 2010: 31) (Literal: Awo, I will not cut your mouth).

In example (16), *twá* 'to cut' in collocation with *ànó* 'mouth' does not imply a physical cutting of that body part. Rather, it describes the process of cutting a speech short or interrupting the continuous flow of speech.

5.3.2.2 [V + NP (nófóɔ́ 'breast')]. Another instance where a body part is metonymically used to represent its product or content is illustrated in example (17) below:

(17)   Mà   àbòfrá   nó   nófóɔ́
        give   child   DEF   breast
        'Give the child (some) breast milk.' (Literal: Give the child breast)

In (17), the body part *nófóɔ́* 'breast' is metonymically used to represent breast milk, which is its contents.

(18) Mààmé nó   á-twà   àbòfrá nó   nófóɔ́
      woman DEF   PERF-cut   child   DEF   breast
      'The woman has weaned the child off the breast.'
      (Literal: The woman has cut the child (off) breast).

Twá 'to cut' combines with *nófóɔ́* 'breast' in example (18) to describe the process of weaning a child off the breast. In other words, by 'cutting' the breast, a prolonged activity is brought to an end.

5.3.3 [V NP (trajectory of movement)]. Another context where *twá* 'to cut' in combination with physical objects derives a contextualized interpretation (Semantics 2), is when the verb takes objects that have trajectory, for example waterbodies, path ways/roads. The combination [*twá* 'to cut' + waterbody/path/road] is interpreted as 'to cross' the waterbody/path/road as exemplified in (19a-b).

(19) a. M̀-m̀òfrá   nó   twá   ǹsúó   dáá   kɔ́   sùkúú
          PL-child   DEF   cut.HAB   river   always   go.HAB   school
          'The children always cross a river to school'. (Agyepong 2017: 202)
          (Literal: The children cut water always and go to school).

      b. Mè-twà-à   kwáǹ   kɔ̀-ɔ̀   hɔ̀
          1SG.SUBJ-cut-COMPL   road   go-COMPL   here

          nànsó   m'à-n-kɔ̀-tó   nò
          but   SG.SUBJ-PERF-NEG-go-meet   3SG.OBJ
          'I made a journey there, but did not meet him/her.' (Agyepong 2017: 202)
          (Literal: I cut the road and went there but I did not go and meet him).

According to Christaller (1933: 544), *twá* 'to cut' can also mean, 'pass (move or cause to move) in a line, especially in an effective movement through (on, over, across, along, by the side of) anything'. In examples (19a-b) the agents are not physically cutting the path or waterbodies into two. In (19a) the verb describes the process of crossing a waterbody. In (19b), the agent is described as making a journey to an unspecified location (by following a road completely). This journey may or may not involve crossing a road (see example 23 for the expression of road crossing). For both (19a-b), it is possible to conceptualise the movement along the trajectories as involving the creation of imaginary lines by the feet. Actually, in some cases it is possible to see these lines. For instance, if the movement is done on an untarred road/path. The line created (by the feet) is comparable to the line that is created when objects undergo physical forms of cutting. Recall that the basic semantics associated with *twá* 'to cut' is — to use a lined-edge instrument to move or pass across an object, resulting in a line. It is this meaning that is implied when the verb is used in (19a-b).

5.3.4 [V NP (units of measurements referring to a concrete object)]. When *twá* 'to cut' takes NPs that denote units of measurements with respect to physical objects, the combination derives the interpretation 'measure an amount or portion from a mass', as exemplified in (20) and (21).

(20)   Ɔ̀-twà-à   ɔ̀kwàǹ-sìn bɛ́yɛ́   bààkó kyɛ̀-ɛ̀   mè
       3SG.SUBJ-cut-COMPL   mile   almost one   give-COMPL 1SG.OBJ
       'He demarcated approximately the equivalent of a mile (of land) and gave it to me as a
       gift.' (Amarteifio 2010: 172) (Literal: He cut one mile and gave it to me')

Example (20) describes a context in a story where an individual demarcated a portion of a piece of
land (equivalent to the distance covered in a mile) for his friend (beneficiary). Note that in this
example ɔ̀kwàǹsìn, the unit of measurement is metonymically used to represent a piece of land. In
practice, land demarcation is often carried out by using a bladed instrument such as a cutlass to
create a path through or around a bush. In (21) the process of measuring a portion of alcohol from
a mass (of alcohol in a container) is often done with a measuring instrument, for example a tot glass
is used to measure a portion of gin from one container into another. Note that the explicit mention
of the mass, in this case *nsá* 'alcohol' does not affect the grammaticality of the sentence.

(21)   Mè-è-kɔ̀   twá   kɔ́tà!
       1SG-PROG-go   cut   quarter
       'I am going to get a measure of alcohol.' (Literal: I am going to cut a quarter!)

When physical objects are cut, one of the results is severance or complete separation. The verb *twá*
'to cut' as used in (20 and 21) describes the separation of the measured portion from the mass of
alcohol.

    To summarize, the discussion in this section has mainly focused on the derivation of
contextualized interpretations (Semantics 2). I have shown that some of the interpretations are
specializations of the default interpretation of *twá* 'to cut' (Semantics 1), which involve an
interaction between the verb's semantics and cultural scripts/knowledge for the description of
specific cultural practices, some of which include designating a specific cloth for an event and
harvesting palm-wine from a felled oil-palm tree. The section has provided further illustrations of
the contextualized interpretations (Semantic 2) of *twá* 'to cut'. For instance, it has been shown that
in some contexts the NP complement is metonymically used to represent its products or contents.
The critical thing about all the examples discussed under this section is that they do not describe
physical forms of cutting.

5.4   [V PostP] - Contextualised Interpretations (Semantics 2). In addition to taking NPs as
internal object *twá* 'to cut' in certain contexts combines with postpositional phrases to derive further
contextualized interpretations (Semantics 2). As explained in section (5.2), the PPs play a crucial
role in utterance interpretations by specifying the part affected by the event described by the verb.
The PostPs are headed by postpositions such as *mú* 'inside/containing region', *só* 'top' *anó* 'edge',
àsɛ́ɛ́ 'under', *ɛ̀tɔ́ɔ́* 'bottom', *àkyí* 'back' and *hó* 'body (outer surface of an object)'.

5.4.1 [V PostP (NP (current flowing entities) PP (mú 'inside/containing region))]. In this construction, *twá* 'to cut'
takes a *mú*-headed postpositional phrase. The postposition selects an NP which sub-categorizes
current flowing nouns such as *ǹsúó* 'water' or *ǹkànéá* 'lights' to derive the interpretation 'to
disconnect the flow of water or electricity'. As explained by Spalek (2015: 43), these eventuality-
denoting themes "can be characterized as being connected in their normal state or development and
whose disconnection is often brought about in a more controlled manner". Consider examples (22a-
b).

(22)   a.   ECG-fóɔ́   à-twà   ǹ-kànéá nó   mú

             ECG-PL   PERF-cut   PL-light DEF   inside

             'The workers of the Electricity Cooperation of Ghana have cut off (= disconnected) the lights.' (Literal: The ECG workers have cut into the lights)

   b.   Àdwùmàyɛ̀-fóɔ́ nó   à-twá   ǹsúó   nó   mú

             worker-PL   DEF   PERF-cut   water   DEF   inside

             'The workers have cut off (= disconnected) the water.'

             Literal: The workers have cut into the water)

When physical objects are cut, it can result in severance depending on the manner in which the cutting is done. Similarly, when the source of power or water supply is cut (as exemplified in 22), there is an interruption or a break in the continuous flow of either current or water. *Twá* 'to cut' in combination with the PostP headed by *mú* 'inside' therefore, describes the bringing to an end of the flow of current or the flow of water. Note that in (22a), *ǹkànéá* 'lights' is used metonymically to represent electricity and not necessarily light (which is a product of electricity). For this reason, the act of turning off other sources of light such as a lantern or a candle cannot be described as *twà ǹkànéá mú*, the verb *dúḿ* 'to turn off' is rather used in this context.

5.4.2 [V PostP (NP (Road or Pathway) PP (mú 'inside/containing region'))]

(23)   Ɔ̀-twà-à   kwáń   nò   mú

      3SG.SUB-cut-COMPL   road   DEF   inside

      'S/he crossed the road.' (Literal: S/he cut the road inside)

Recall that in sub-section (5.3.5), it was explained that Christaller (1993: 544) provides one of the senses of *twá* 'to cut' as "pass (move or cause to move) in a line, especially in an effective movement through (on, over, across, along, by the side of) anything". It is this interpretation that is implied in (23), that is to cross the road (perpendicular to traffic). Note that, without *mú* 'inside/containing region' (23) cannot describe the crossing of road. Rather, it is simply interpreted as making a movement from one location to another or making a journey (see 19b).

5.4.3 [V PostP (NP (eventives) PP (mú 'inside/containing region'))]. The complement of *mú* 'inside/containing region) can be eventives such as *ǹsɔ́hwɛ́* 'examination', *ǹtwèrɛ̀é* 'writings', *school feeding program*. When such NP complements of the PP are predicated of *twá* 'to cut' the combination is interpreted as 'to cancel or cross out the NP', literally 'to cut into the inside/containing region of the NP'. When physical objects are cut, an incision (line) is made on the objects. In the same way, prototypically, something written is cancelled or crossed out by drawing a line through it. This idea is also extended to abstract forms of cancellations such as annulling of programs. Consider examples (24a-c).

(24)   a.   Baah   twì-twá-à   ǹsèmfùá   nó   mú

             Baah   RED-cut-COMPL   sentences   DEF   inside

             'Baah crossed out/ cancelled all the sentences.' (Agyepong 2017: 207)

             (Literal: Baah cut into the sentences).

b.   WAEC[2] twà-à   ǹsɔ́hwɛ́   nó   mú
      WAEC   cut-COMPL   examination   DEF   inside
      'The West African Examinations Council cancelled the examinations.' (Literal:
      WAEC cut into the examination). (Agyepong 2017: 207)

c.   Àbáń   à-twá   school feeding program nó   mú
      government   PERF-cut   school feeding program DEF   inside
      'The government has cancelled the school feeding program.'

There are two types of cancellations illustrated in examples (24a-c). Example (24a) involves a physical cancellation where the agent *Baah* uses a writing instrument to draw a line across or through something that has previously been written. In (24b and c) however, there is an abstract form of cancellation. Cancellation of the exams by the examination body WAEC does not imply that a writing instrument was used to individually cross out all that had been written by the students. In the same way, there is no physical cancellation when an established program is cancelled. Rather, the events under description in (24b and c) are considered invalid, non-existent or null, comparable to what actually happens when one crosses out something that is written down on a paper. That which cuts across all three examples is that they all describe the entities affected by *twá* 'to cut' as being no more or non-existent.

5.4.4 [V PostP (NP (speech) PP (só 'top'))]. In this combination, NPs that occur as complements of *só* 'top' relate to speech for example *àsém̀* 'matter', *ǹkɔ̀mmɔ́* 'conversation', *kásá* 'speech'. This combination derives the interpretation 'to cut a speech event short or to bring a speech event to an end', as exemplified in (25):

(25)   Wò   kásá   wà   dódó   nà   twà   só
        2SG:POSS   speech be.long too.much   so   cut   top
        'You talk too much, cut it (your speech) short.' (Literal: Your speech is long so cut
        its top).

Example (25) illustrates a context where for instance, an agent (who is not overtly mentioned in this discourse) is advised to cut an ongoing speech short. The postposition *só* 'top' which occurs in the second clause and is introduced by the *ná* conjunction takes the NP *kásá* 'speech' as complement. It is this NP that is described with the adjective *wà* 'long' and which also undergoes the abstract cutting. The NP *kásá* 'speech' in this case is compared to a physical object with a lengthwise dimension and whose upper part is cut in order to make it short.

    In this section, I have shown how contextualized interpretations are generated when the verb combines with PostPs headed by PPs such as *mú* 'inside/containing region and *só* 'top'. I have argued that the PP-*mú* 'inside/containing region' selects as complements current flowing nouns such as *ǹsúó* 'water' or *ǹkànéá* 'lights'. The semantics of the verb and the semantics of PostPs combine to generate the contextual interpretation 'to disconnect'. Similarly, the PP- *só* 'top' selects speech

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[2] WAEC- West African Examination Council is the body responsible for conducting examinations in the Junior High and Senior School level in West African Countries.

related NPs and in collocation with *twá* 'to cut', derives the interpretation 'bring a speech to an end'. The examples discussed under this section illustrate the Semantics 2 interpretation of *twá* 'to cut'.

5.5   Theme-Locative Constructions. What I refer to as Theme-Locative Constructions are the construction-types which have no agents. Rather, the affected argument (theme) occurs in the subject slot. The affected argument can be in the form of a Noun Phrase (NP) or a Postpositional phrase (PostP). Three types of such constructions are identified and discussed in the subsequent sub-sections:

5.5.1 [NP(CONDIMENT) V PostP-mú 'containing region']. In this type of construction, an NP which subcategorises condiments or spices such as *àsíkyìré* 'sugar', *ǹkyéné* 'salt', *màkó* 'pepper', combines with *twá* 'to cut' and a postpositional phrase headed by *mú* 'inside/containing region' to derive the interpretation "the condiment is in excess". The complement of the postposition *mú* 'inside' is often elided because it is recoverable from the context. The PP is then realized as a suffix on the verb. Consider (26 a-b):

(26)   a.   Àsíkyìré   à-twá-m̀
             sugar   PERF-cut-inside
             'There is excessive sugar in the food / the sugar has exceeded its limit in the food.'
             (Literal: Sugar has cut inside).

        b.   Ǹkyéné   à-twá-m̀
             salt   PERF-cut-inside
             'There is excessive salt in the food/ the salt has exceeded its limit in the food.'
             (Literal: Salt has cut into the food).

In examples (26a and 26b), the nouns *àsíkyìré* 'sugar' and *ǹkyéné* 'salt', which act as the subjects of the construction, are described as cutting into an unspecified object. The sweetness and saltiness properties associated with both nouns, respectively, are presented as crossing or going beyond a certain boundary, almost as if there is a line to demarcate the boundary. Though not overtly specified, in this context, the boundary/location that is perceived to be crossed is the taste of the food, since it is the case that these condiments act as external food enhancers. Note that it is also possible to explicitly express the complement of the PP-*mú* as in (27a) and (27b):

(27)   a.   Àsíkyìré   à-twá   àdùàné   nó   mú
             sugar   PERF-cut   food   DEF   inside
             'There is excessive sugar in the food/the sugar has exceeded its limit in the food.'
             (Literal: Sugar has cut into the food)

        b.   Ǹkyéné   à-twá   ǹkwán   nó   mú
             salt   PERF-cut   soup   DEF   inside
             'There is excessive salt in the soup/ the salt has exceeded its limit in the soup.'
             (Literal: Salt has cut into the soup)

In examples (27a) and (27b), the nouns *àdùàné* 'food' and *ǹkwán* 'soup' represent the location/boundary that is crossed.

5.5.2 [NP (temporal periods (with parts) V PostP-mú]. This construction also derives the interpretation 'to cross boundary'. Similar to the examples under (5.5.1), the themes that occupy the subject position of this construction are described as going beyond a certain boundary. These nouns have temporal parts. Examples of such nouns include *(ɛ̀)mméré* 'time/era', *ǹná* 'days', *m̀fíé* 'years', *bòsómé* 'month'.

In this type of combination, the temporal measure NPs are described as going beyond an expected duration or exceeding a certain expected limit. Consider examples (28a-b):

(28)   a.   Ǹ-ná   mmìènú   twà-á-m̀   ánsà   ɔ̀-ɔ́-kɔ́   hɔ́
              PL-day two   cut-COMPL-inside before 3SG.SUBJ-PROG-go there
              'Two days went by before s/he went there/Two days elapsed before s/he went there.' (Literal: S/he made two days cut into it before s/he went there).

    b.   Né   m̀-méré   á-twà-m̀
              3SG:POSS   PL-time/era   PERF-cut-inside
              'His/her/its time has elapsed (S/he is no longer trending/It is out of vogue).'
              (Literal: His/her time has cut into it).

In examples (28a and b), the abstract temporal measure NPs *ǹná* 'days' and *(ɛ̀)mméré* 'time/era' occur as subjects. *Twá* 'to cut' takes the Postposition *mú* 'inside' as its object to describe an event as going beyond an expected duration. In (28a), two days elapses before an individual moves to a location. In (28b), the era or reign of something (dress, music, dance) or someone is described as going across a certain boundary i.e., out of vogue in example (28b).

5.5.3 [NP (EVENTS, EMOTIONS,STATES) PostP-tó V]. The single argument (i.e., subject) of this construction is a Postpositional phrase headed by *tó* 'bottom'. This postposition selects emotion-related NPs as internal object. The emotion-related NPs are characterized as having a predictable trajectory i.e., beginning, medial and end. It is perceived to last for a certain duration. Examples of such NPs include *àmáné* 'trials', *àwèrèhóɔ́* 'sorrow', *yáw* 'pain'. The semantics of the complement of PP and that of *twá* combine to derive the interpretation 'to cut short, terminate, cease, bring to an end' the event or state.

Consider examples (29a-b):

(29)   a.   N'-àmánéɛ̀   tó   bé-twá
              3SG:POSS-trials bottom   FUT-cut
              'His trials will (soon) come to an end.' (Christaller 1933: 545)
              (Literal: The bottom of his/her trials will be cut).

    b.   N' àwèrèhóɔ́   tó   à-twá
              3SG:POSS-sorrow   bottom PERF-cut
              'His/Her sorrow has come to an end.'
              (Literal: The bottom of her sorrow has been cut).

We notice that in both examples (29a and b), the Postpositional Phrases *àmánéɛ̀ tó* 'bottom of trials' and *àwèrèhóɔ́ tó* 'bottom of sorrow', occur as subjects of the sentences. In combination with *twá* 'to cut', the sentences are interpreted as 'bring a state of emotion to an end'. Where literally, the bottom

part of the trial and sorrow are cut off, respectively.

The foregoing discussion makes one thing evident—the diverse contextual interpretations of *twá* 'to cut' are the result of the combination of the verb's basic semantics, the semantics of the arguments that fill the constructional slots e.g. PostPs and NPs, and the semantics of the syntactic constructions in which the verb *twá* 'to cut' occurs. Its univocal lexical semantics— to use a lined-edge instrument to move across an object, is kept constant in all the verb-object combinations.

6. Concluding Remarks

This paper has explored the verb *twá* 'to cut' and its multiple interpretations in collocation with different types of arguments. Adopting a monosemic-bias (Ruhl 1989), I have argued that *twá* 'to cut' has a univocal lexical semantics— to use a lined-edge instrument to move across an object, resulting in a line. This is the literal sense of the verb (Semantics 1). This basic semantics is enriched compositionally through interactions with the semantics of the verb's internal arguments and constructional semantics. By default, the verb occurs in the two-place/transitive construction to describe the process where someone uses a bladed instrument to create an incision or a separation in an object. The verb also occurs in the theme-locative construction where the theme argument occurs as the subject of the sentence. The arguments of *twá* 'to cut' can be realized as Noun Phrases (NPs) or as Postpositional Phrases (PostPs). The specific PPs, which indicate the active region that is affected by the cutting, play a crucial role in the derivation of interpretations. Following Goldberg (1995), I have posited specific constructions in which the verb occurs and demonstrated how the semantics of the construction contributes to the interpretation of the utterance. Depending on the nature of the complement, a default or contextualized interpretation of the verb is generated. To derive contextualized interpretations (Semantics 2), the verb's default interpretation (Semantics 1) interacts with the semantics of certain types of arguments occurring in specific constructions as well as cultural scripts (in some contexts). In agreement with Ameka (2017: 230), I have demonstrated that "these contextual interpretations are not stored senses of signs; they are an output of interpretation processes. They are contextual modulations on the stored meaning values of linguistic signs", in this case, *twá* 'to cut'.

Abbreviations

1/2/3 = first/second/third person
COMPL = completive
CM = clause marker
COS = change of state
DEF = definite
INA = inanimate
IND = independent
OBJ = object
NEG = negation
NP = noun phrase
PASS = passive
PERF = perfect
PL = plural
POSS = possessive
POSTP = postpositional phrase

PP = postposition
TOP = topicalizer
REL = relativizer
RED = reduplicant
SUBJ = subject
SG = singular
SM = subject marker

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