bi	follow	mabiyi / mabiyiyà / mabiyà a follower of s.o. (m./f./pl.)
ƙi	dislike	maƙiyi / maƙiyiyà / maƙiyà enemy (m./f./pl.)
shā	drink	mashàyi / mashàyiyà / mashàyà drinker, alcoholic (m./f./pl.)

In the above feminine forms, the sequence /iyiyà/ is usually pronounced without the /i/ between the two /y/'s. The floating L tone attaches to the preceding syllable to produce a fall, i.e., mabiyiyà → [mabiyyà], maƙiyiyà → [maƙiyyà].

1.2. Verb stems with -TA

The ma- forms are built on verb stems. Many of these verb stems are derived from noun roots by means of the verbalizing suffix -TA (chap. 79), e.g.,

mahàukàci	crazy, madman, idiot < haukàtā make s.o. crazy < hàukā madness
mahùkùnci	judge, administrator < hukùntā judge, administer < hukùmà governing body
maƙaryaci	liar < ƙaryàtā falsify < ƙaryā a lie
mashàwàrci	adviser, counselor < shàwàrtā advise < shàwarà advice
matsòràci	coward(ly) < tsòràtā be afraid < tsòrō fear

Agents are not built directly from the verbs jirā 'wait for' and ƙaura 'migrate'; rather they are built on coexisting longer stems containing the verbalizer -TA, e.g.,

majìràci (not **majìri)	watchman, overseer < jìràtà wait for
maƙauràci (not **maƙàuri)	emigrant/immigrant < ƙauràcē migrate from

°AN: The verb ƙaura 'migrate' is probably a backformation from the verbal noun ƙaurā 'migrating', from which ƙauràcē is derived. This explains the absence of an agent **maƙàuri. There is no reason, on the other hand, to assume that jirā, or its equivalent longer form jìrāyà, was ever anything but a verb, and thus the absence of **majìri or **majìràyi is inexplicable.

Many agentives are built on *fictitious* -TA verb stems, i.e., the postulated stem either does not occur independently as a verb or only rarely so, e.g.,

maɓàrnàci	destructive (psn) < *ɓàrnàta < ɓàrnā damage
magàbci	enemy < *gabta < gàbā enmity
magidànci	householder < *gidanta < gidā home
mahàjjàci	pilgrim intending to go to Mecca < *hajjata < hajjì hadj
maròwàci	tightwad < *ròwata < ròwà stinginess
mazinàci	adulterer < *zinàta < zinā adultery

A very few agentives are built directly on noun stems (some of which historically are probably verbal nouns of verb roots), e.g.,

magūdiyā	woman who ululates during festivities < gūdà ululation
matsàfi	fetish-worshipper, magician < tsàfi fetish
mawàƙi	singer, poet < wàƙà song, poem

1.3. Meaning

The basic meaning of an agent noun is someone who customarily does the action of the underlying verb,

commonly as a profession, e.g., maɗinki 'tailor' (< ɗinkà 'to sew'). The semantic connection between the agent nouns and their source words is generally evident, e.g., ma'àski barber < askè 'shave'. In some cases, however, these words have a lexicalized meaning that is more specialized and restricted than that of the related verb. Examples:

mabiyi	a follower (esp. religious); younger brother or sister < bi follow
maciyi	voracious < ci eat
mafàshi	(usu. ɗan fashi) robber < fasà break, shatter; commit robbery
makàɗàici	unique (referring to God) < kàɗaità sit apart; acknowledge the unity of God
maniyyaci	an intending pilgrim < *niyyata < niyyà intention, wish
mariƙi	guardian, foster parent < riƙè grasp, hold
matàshi	adolescent, youth < tàshi rise, grow up

In a couple of special cases, the agent does not denote the doer of the action but rather the one affected by the action. The word ma'àiki (< àikà 'send') is used in the designation ma'àikin Allàh 'the Prophet Muhammad, i.e., the one who was sent by God', cf. Allàh ma'àiki 'God (lit. God the sender)'. The dictionaries also give the feminine agent word makulliyà with the meaning 'slave-concubine' (i.e., one who is locked up) < kullè 'lock'.

1.4. Gender restrictions

Morphologically, all agentives have three forms: masculine, feminine, and plural. With adjectival usage (see below), masculine and feminine forms are equally common. For example, mahàukàci (m.) and mahàukaciyà (f.) 'mad, crazy' are both fully acceptable. With nouns, however, the agential tends to be restricted to one gender or the other. In many cases this restriction is determined by real-world culture and semantics, for example, ma'àski 'barber' (not **ma'askiyà) is masculine only because this traditionally has been a masculine profession. In other cases, however, the agent occurs only in the masculine form even though there is no cultural reason why the feminine agent shouldn't be allowed, e.g., mamàci 'the deceased' is normal but, for inexplicable reasons, **mamaciyà is not. Examples:

Masculine only
maɗinki tailor; maginì builder, potter, cf. maginà tukunyà pot makers (pl.) (m. and/or f.); cf. mài tukwànè potter (lit. owner of pots) (m. or f.); mahàrbi hunter; mahàuci butcher, meat-seller; majèmi tanner; mamàci the deceased; manòmi farmer; masàssàki carpenter, carver; masùnci (usu. ɗan sū) fisherman; matàshi youth, young man
Feminine only
magàjiyà a madam; older sister (cf. magàji a prince) both < gàdā inherit; magùdiyà woman who ululates; makìtsiyà women's hairdresser; makullìyà (slave) concubine; mashèƙiyà winnower (used primarily in the idiomatic phrase/epithet ƙàiƙàyi kòmà kàn mashèƙiyà (lit. chaff return on winnower) the hairy weed *Indigofera astragalina*, which causes a spell to recoil on a psn who sets it in action

1.5. Productivity and alternatives

Morphologically, the agent derivation is extremely regular. In principle, one could morphologically create an agent noun from almost any verb. In fact its occurrence is lexically quite restricted: some agentives are readily accepted and are commonly used, others are viewed as clumsy if not totally unacceptable. An alternative to the agentive is the MAI construction (see chap. 45) made up of mài (pl. màsu) 'one having properties of' + NP (including verbal noun). Examples (where the notation =? indicates that the variant to the left is preferred):