

Syntactic Realisations Of Adverbials In English And Lithuanian

Jolita Horbacauskiene, PhD
Ramunė Kasperaviciene, PhD
Eivydas Kocinas

Kaunas University of Technology, Lithuania

Abstract

Adverbials may be easily confused with similar elements not considered adverbials, as they are variable in their syntactic realisations and semantic flexibility. This highly variable nature of adverbials poses some difficulty in their analysis when translating, learning or using overall. The sample of texts analysed in this paper was taken from online telecommunications pages. The data of analysis consisted of 500 instances of adverbials in the English and Lithuanian languages. The focus in this paper is on circumstance adverbials as this class of adverbials is the biggest in both languages under inspection. Although languages under comparison have different structures, the frequency of adverbials and semantic distribution across the texts analysed were found to be similar. Major differences are in the syntactic realisations, due to the case system present in Lithuanian and absent in English. English adverbials in technical texts are mostly realised by prepositional phrases due to the lack of the case system in English. On the other hand, Lithuanian adverbials are mostly syntactically realised by nouns of different grammatical cases, although other realisations are also possible.

Keywords: adverbials, syntactic realisations, prepositional phrases, noun phrases, finite clauses, non-finite clauses, case system.

Introduction

Adverbials are quite a common sentence element. They play an important role in any kind of discourse as they perform different functions affecting 'the ways meaning is organised and conveyed by speakers and interpreted by listeners' (Zareva, 2009, p. 56). Even though mostly being optional elements, adverbials often add information that is key to the overall message and, thus, they are common throughout all registers. According to Biber et al. (2002), adverbials occur approximately up to 100,000 times per 1,000,000 words in conversations, almost 120,000 times in fictional writing

and literature, approximately 90,000 times in news and publicist discourse and approximately 90,000 times per 1,000,000 words in academic discourse and writing.

The aim of this research was, within the corpus collected, to investigate and compare the frequency of circumstance adverbials used and their possible syntactic realisations in Lithuanian and English texts. The focus in this paper is on circumstance adverbials as this class of adverbials is the most commonly used in both languages under inspection. Linking and stance adverbials are being researched relatively extensively (Ahmad & Mehrjooseresht, 2012; Charles, 2011; Lei, 2012; Peacock, 2010; Zareva, 2011; Yin, 2015). However, circumstance adverbials and/or their syntactic issues have recently received less scrutiny (Cinque, 1999, 2004; Haegeman, 2010). The contrastive approach comparing English and other languages has only been employed in a few studies (Balasubramanian, 2009; Dontcheva-Navratilova, 2009; Mirzahoseini et al., 2015; Wang & Liu, 2016).

1. Theoretical background

Adverbials, also sometimes called adjuncts, are elements occurring in a language that modify the verb or provide additional information referring to it. However, some researchers argue that the notion of adverbials is one of the most controversial in grammatical theory (Kiss, 2009). There are multiple definitions of varying complexity as to what exactly an adverbial is. In the most basic sense, adverbials are elements which provide answers to questions such as *where*, *when*, *why* and *how* (Crystal, 2008). They function at sentence level. According to Hasselgard (2010), *when*, *where*, *why* and *how* adverbials appear to be prototypical and are often provided as examples in brief definitions of adverbials. As argued by Biber, Conrad & Leech (2002), adverbials are clause elements that serve three major functions: indicate the circumstances relating to the clause; express speaker's feelings, evaluation, or comments on what the clause is about; and link the clause, or a part of it, to another clause.

A number of scholars see adverbials as a complicated category and their identification and classification 'a complex undertaking' (Scheibman, 2002, p. 56). Being a part of the clause, which is, as stated by Kroeger (2005), the smallest grammatical unit that can express a complete proposition, adverbials are easy to confuse with other items. As maintained by Biber et al. (2002), adverbials can be easily confused with elements that are structurally similar to adverbials, but unlike adverbials are a part of the phrase and not an element of the clause (p. 354). Hasselgard (2010) notes that adverbials are elusive, i.e. difficult to recognise and identify.

Biber et al. (2002) argues that adverbials which are clause elements may be confused with similar phrase elements which are not considered to be

adverbials. Another notable quality of adverbials is variability in their syntactic realisations and semantic flexibility. This highly variable nature of adverbials poses some difficulty in their analysis when translating, learning or using overall.

2. Main semantic classes of adverbials in English

Austin, Engelberg & Rauh (2004) claim that adverbials do not form a coherent syntactic class in that they all share syntactic distribution, which means that the classification of adverbials has been somewhat of a challenge. Adverbials are classified into circumstance, linking and stance (Biber et al., 1999), although other terms are also used, like adjuncts, conjuncts and disjuncts (Quirk et al., 1985). As far as stance adverbials and linking adverbials are concerned, they constitute approximately only 10 percent of overall adverbials used (Biber et al., 2002). Moreover, they are most likely to occur in conversations (*ibid*). Additionally, linking adverbials by their nature are fixed phrases and the study of their realisation in a limited scope would have little purpose. The focus in this paper is on circumstance adverbials, which will be referred to hereunder by the general term adverbials.

Since adverbials perform a multitude of roles in a sentence, it is only natural that they are classified according to semantic functions they perform. Their main property is referential (Sarda et al., 2014). Each semantic category might have particular syntactic realisations as particular syntactic units will only carry the required meaning. According to Biber et al. (2002), adverbials in English are divided into the following semantic categories: place, time, process, contingency, degree, addition/restriction and recipient.

Like in English, adverbials perform a similar function in Lithuanian, although there are some differences. In Lithuanian, adverbials are sentence elements that expand the contents or the subject matter of the sentence, as stated by Valeckienė (1998). This definition, although quite concise, is similar to definitions of Biber et al. who state that in English adverbials give circumstance to the clause, express speakers feelings and emotions and perform a linking function between units of discourse. Similarly to adverbials in English, adverbials in Lithuanian are easy to confuse with other parts of the sentence, especially the complement. In Lithuanian, adverbials may be differentiated from complements by analysing their respective syntactic connections with the predicate (Holvoet, 2005).

According to Ambrasas et al. (2005), there are five types of adverbials, which are classified by questions raised by the adverbial to the predicate: adverbials of location or local adverbials; adverbials of time or temporal adverbials; adverbials of manner; adverbials of reason; adverbial of purpose.

Adverbials in English and Lithuanian are comparable to a certain degree. Some adverbials are equivalents. Adverbials of time and place are equivalent in both languages as they carry the same meaning. English process adverbials are equivalent to Lithuanian manner adverbials as they both usually answer the question *how*. English contingency adverbials may be considered equivalent to both Lithuanian adverbials of reason and adverbials of purpose because these groups usually answer the question *for what purpose* and perform a limited connecting function between two clauses. English degree adverbials match Lithuanian quantity adverbials as they both usually indicate an amount of something or answer the question *how much*. Amplifiers and diminishers, which are subclasses of degree adverbials, correspond to Lithuanian manner adverbials as they usually perform their function by answering the question *how*.

Addition and restriction adverbials even though distinguished as a separate category in English may be directly compared with Lithuanian manner adverbials. Overall, the category of manner adverbials in Lithuanian is more general, while in English the same adverbials may have slight variations in their semantic meaning and are subdivided into smaller subcategories. Major categories of adverbials coincide in the two languages under analysis.

3. Syntactic forms of adverbials in English and Lithuanian

Adverbials may be realised in a variety of syntactic forms. The class of adverbials includes prepositional phrases, noun phrases, adverbs and clauses. Adverbial clauses, like all adverbials, are optional elements whose function is derived from their semantic value (Quintero, 2002). As detailed by Biber et al. (2002), English adverbials are realised as *single adverbs and adverb phrases; single nouns and noun phrases; prepositional phrases; finite clauses; non-finite clauses (ing-clauses, ed-clauses, to-infinitive clauses, and verbless clauses)*.

The scope of realising adverbials in Lithuanian is different compared with English. According to Ambrazas et al. (2005), adverbials in Lithuanian are realised as adverbs and word forms and constructions that act as adverbs. Mathiassen (1996) further adds to this definition saying that an adverbial in Lithuanian may be expressed as an adverb or, similarly to an object, it may be realised by a noun phrase or a prepositional phrase.

An adverbial in Lithuanian is subordinate to the predicate and, thus, most realisations of adverbials in Lithuanian could be considered verb phrases (Ambrazas et al., 2005). However, when analysing the adverbial independently of the predicate it is possible to distinguish other realisations, such as nouns, noun phrases, prepositional phrases, adverbs and infinitive (see Table 1).

Table 1. Syntactic realisations of Lithuanian adverbials

Local adverbials	
Syntactic realisation	Example
Locative case	Kambaryje šilta. Room-M.SG.LOC warm-COM. It is warm in the room .
Prepositional phrase	Grįžau į namus. Return-SG.1P.PAST to home-M.PL.ACC I returned home .
Adverb	Aplinkui žydi gėlės. Around bloom-3P.PRES flower-F.PL.NOM Flowers are blooming around .
Temporal adverbials	
Syntactic realisation	Example
Accusative case	Vidudienį buvo šilta. Midday-M.SG.ACC be-3P.PAST warm-COM. It was warm at midday .
Instrumental case	Vakarais žiūriu televizorių. Evening-PL.INSTR watch-SG.1P.PRES television-M.SG.ACC In the evenings I watch television.
Prepositional phrases	Po kelių dienų atvažiuos draugas. After some-PL.GEN day-F.PL.GEN pref-come-3P.FUTURE friend. A friend will arrive in two days .
Adverbs	Vakar lijo. Yesterday rain-3P.PAST It rained yesterday .
Manner adverbials	
Syntactic realisation	Example
Adverbs	Mano sūnus gražiai dainuoja. My son-M.SG.NOM beautifully sing-3P.PRES My son sings beautifully .
Prepositional phrases	Senelė skaito be akinių. Grandma-F.SG.NOM read-3P.PRES without glasses-M.GEN. Grandma reads without glasses .
Instrumental case	Mašina važiavo dideliu greičiu. Car-F.SG.NOM move-3P.PAST high-M.SG.INSTR speed-M.SG.INSTR. The car was moving at high speed .
Adverbials of reason	
Syntactic realisation	Example
Prepositional phrases	Iš nuovargio greitai užmigo. From fatigue-M.SG.GEN quickly pref-sleep-3P.PAST.

	<i>He fell asleep quickly due to fatigue.</i>
Adverbs	<i>Jai tas filmas kažkodėl nepatiko.</i> <i>She that-SG.NOM movie-M.SG.NOM somehow not-like-3P.PAST.</i> <i>For some reason she didn't like that movie.</i>
Purpose adverbials	
Syntactic realisation	Example
Genitive case	<i>Draugas pakvietė pietų.</i> <i>Friend-M.SG.NOM pref-invite-3P.PAST lunch-PL.GEN</i> <i>A friend invited for lunch.</i>
Dative case	<i>Moteris nusipirko vakarienei daržovių.</i> <i>Woman-F.SG.NOM pref-buy-3P.PAST dinner-SG.DAT vegetable-F.PL.GEN</i> <i>The woman bought vegetables for dinner.</i>
Infinitive	<i>Tėtis nunėšė batus taisyti.</i> <i>Dad-M.SG.NOM pref-take-3P.PAST shoe-M.PL.ACC repair-INF.</i> <i>Dad took the shoes for repair.</i>

Table 1 demonstrates that Lithuanian adverbials regardless of the predicate can be realised as nouns in various cases, adverbs, prepositional cases and infinitives. It is also apparent that the same adverbials have different realisations in English and Lithuanian: the locative adverbial *kambaryje* is a locative case noun in Lithuanian, but in English it is realised as a prepositional phrase *in the room*; other examples include replacement of nouns in different cases in Lithuanian with prepositional phrases in English as in the examples of purpose adverbials: the genitive case noun *pietų* is realised as a prepositional phrase *for lunch* and the dative case noun *vakarienei* is realised as a prepositional phrase *for supper*; the Lithuanian adverbial *taisyti*, which is an infinitive form of a verb, may be realised in English as a prepositional phrase *for repair*.

When comparing the realisations of different languages, it is important to note that the results may be greatly influenced by the register and style of the text analysed.

4. Discussion on syntactic realisations of adverbials

The study is focused on analysis and comparison of syntactic realisations of adverbials in English and Lithuanian. The data for analysis were collected from randomly selected webpages of companies specialising in consumer-oriented telecommunications software or hardware products and business solutions. The sample representing the data of analysis consisted of 500 instances of adverbials in both languages. Examples of adverbials for analysis were taken only if they represented circumstance adverbials and were not parts of phrases or elements modifying nouns in subjects. Quantitative analysis was used to describe adverbial distributions and their

syntactic realisations. It took approximately 3,000 words to collect the set of 250 examples in each language, making it approximately 6,000 words of the source text in total.

Adverbials in English may be realised as single adverbs or adverb phrases, single nouns or noun phrases, prepositional phrases, finite clauses, non-finite clauses, including -ing clauses, -ed clauses, to-infinitive clauses and verbless clauses. Lithuanian adverbials have fewer possible syntactic realisations compared with English. In Lithuanian, adverbials may be realised as prepositional phrases, adverbs, infinitive form and nouns. Only with certain cases, do nouns realise adverbials: genitive, dative, accusative and instrumental and locative case.

The analysis of English adverbials demonstrated that the majority of the syntactic realisations were prepositional phrases (PP, 60%) (see Figure 1). Another biggest group constituted adverbs or adverb phrases (ADV, 18%). Other English adverbials were realised as non-finite to-infinitive clauses (11%), nouns or noun phrases (4%), non-finite -ing clauses (4%), finite clauses (2%) and non-finite -ed clauses (1%). No instances of adverbials realised as verbless clauses were found.

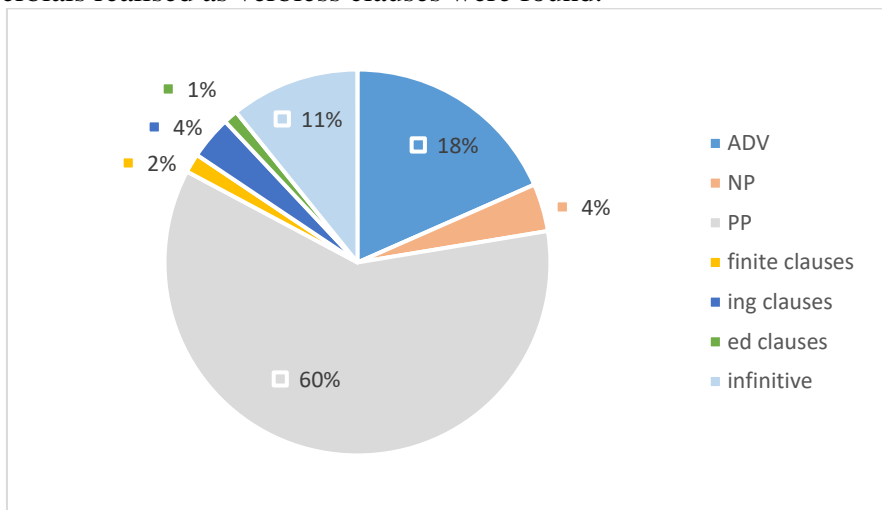


Figure 1. Syntactic realisations of adverbials in English

The analysis of Lithuanian adverbials demonstrated a different distribution of syntactic realisations (see Figure 2). The majority of Lithuanian adverbials were syntactically realised as nouns or noun phrases (66%). Other adverbials were realised as adverbs or adverb phrases (19%), prepositional phrases (14%), and infinitive forms (1%). It is worth mentioning that adverbials realised as nouns or noun phrases were distributed as follows: 38% as dative case, 32% as locative case and 30% as instrumental case. In Lithuanian, the majority of adverbial realisations are

done by nouns and noun phrases, while the rest are approximately evenly split between prepositional phrases and adverbs, while infinitive constructions are very minor with only 3 instances in total.

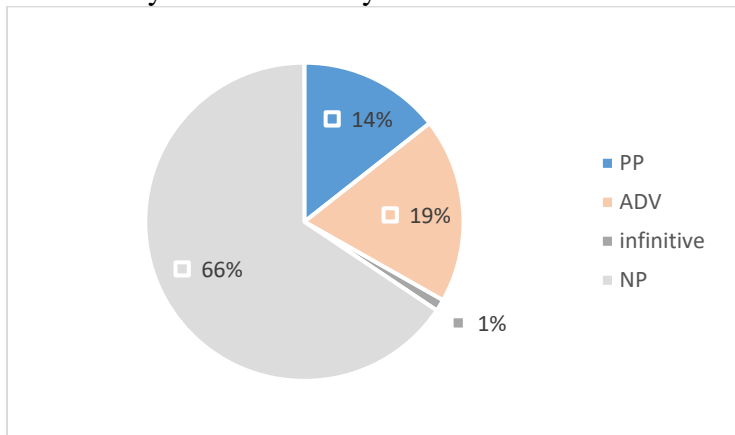


Figure 2. Syntactic realisations of adverbials in Lithuanian

Semantic classification of adverbials is similar in both languages, while the means of realising those adverbials are mostly different. Further, the analysis of individual adverbial groups demonstrates most common syntactic realisations and compares these between English and Lithuanian. Adverbials may be realised by more diverse syntactic forms in English than in Lithuanian.

Adverbials of place are directly comparable in both languages as they are equivalents that perform the same semantic function. In both languages, there were 69 instances of place adverbials. Out of 69 Lithuanian instances of place adverbials, 75% were realised as nouns or noun phrases of the locative case, e.g.

(1) *Šiame telefone įdiegtas* "Texas Instruments" procesorius ...

This-M.SG.LOC phone-M.SG.LOC install-M.SG.PastPTCP "Texas Instruments" processor-M.SG.NOM

A "Texas Instruments" processor has been installed in this phone ...

The remaining 25% were prepositional phrases, e.g.

(2) *Modulis jungiamas prie IP telefono* ...

Module-M.SG.NOM connect-M.SG.PresPTCP to IP telephone-M.SG.GEN

The module is connected to the IP telephone.

Place adverbials in English were mostly realised by prepositional phrases (94%, Examples 3, 4), and the remaining cases (6%) were realised as nouns, e.g.

- (3) *Being a small player in today's market requires agility, sophistication,*
 ...
 (4) ... *keeping the subscriber inside the service provider's brand for messaging...*

Adverbials of time comprised the smallest group of adverbials in both languages, 10 in Lithuanian and 13 in English. In Lithuanian, they were realised as nouns of the instrumental case (50%), e.g.

- (5) ... *kas buvo daroma jo kompiuteryje pokalbio metu.*
what be-3P.PAST do-COM.PTCP his-GEN computer-M.SG.LOC conversation-M.SG.GEN time-M.SG.LOC.
what was done in his computer during the conversation.

Another realisation was noun prepositional phrases (40%).

- (6) *Iki šios dienos, „Yealink“ produktai atitiko ...*
Until this-F.SG.GEN day-F.SG.GEN, “Yealink” product-M.PL.NOM satisfy-3P.PAST
Until this day, “Yealink” products have satisfied ...

And the remaining were accusative case nouns (10%), e.g.

- (7) ... *įrenginiai tarnaus Jums ilgus ateinančius metus.*
equipment-M.PL.NOM serve-3P.FUT you-DAT long-M.PL.ACC come-M.PL.ACC.PresPTCP year-M.PL.ACC
... equipment will serve you long.

In English, time adverbials may be similarly realised as adverbs (46%, *Examples 8, 9*), prepositional phrases (31%, *Example 9*) and nouns or noun phrases (23%).

- (8) *And coming soon with Cisco ONE Software ...*
 (9) ... *voice services that just replicate what we have today ...*
 (10) ... *will continue to deliver substantial revenues for many years to come.*

Lithuanian manner adverbials (including quantity) are roughly equivalent to English process, degree and addition/restriction adverbials as in general they all answer to the same question “*how?*”. Of 106 examples of manner adverbials in Lithuanian, 43% were realised as adverbs, e.g.

- (11) ... *padedantis lengviau bendrauti bei didinantis produktyvumą.*
help-M.SG.NOM.PRES.PTCP easily communicate and enhance-M.SG.NOM.PRES.PTCP productivity-M.SG.ACC
... helping to communicate easier and enhancing productivity.

42% were realised as instrumental case nouns, e.g.

- (12) ... *bei pasižymi aukštu*
sujungimo greičiu ...
and PREF.REFL-mark-3P.PRES high-M.SG.INSTR connection-
M.SG.GEN speed-M.SG.INSTR
... and is characterised by a high connection speed ...

14% were realised as prepositional phrases, e.g.

- (13) ... *buvo sujungę su*
laisvų rankų įranga ...
be-3P.PAST PREF-connect-PL.M.PAST.PTCP with free-
F.PL.GEN hand-F.PL.GEN equipment-F.SG.NOM
... were connected to the hands free device ...

In English, the majority of manner adverbials (99 instances) were realised as prepositional phrases (54%, *Example 14*) and as adverbs (38%, *Example 15*). The remaining 8% of manner adverbs were realised as finite clauses, non-finite -ing clauses and as non-finite infinitive clauses (*Example 16*). Consider:

- (14) ... *a competitive advantage through the Internet of Everything, ...*
 (15) *Work continuously across multiple platforms ...*
 (16) *It empowers them to work together ...*

The numbers again show how Lithuanian adverbials tend to be realised by nouns in different cases while English adverbials due to the lack of the casing system are mostly realised by prepositional phrases.

Another group to be analysed is Lithuanian purpose adverbials (65 instances found). The vast majority of these adverbials were realised as dative case nouns (95%), e.g.

- (17) ... *suteikia galimybę naudotojui*
pritaikyti telefoną ...
provide-3P.PRES possibility-F.SG.ACC user-M.SG.DAT adjust-
INF telephone-M.SG.ACC
... the keys provide a possibility for a user to adjust the telephone to
their needs ...

The remaining 5% were infinitive constructions e.g.

- (18) ... *telefonas, skirtas užtikrinti*
maksimalų produktyvumą ...
telephone-M.SG.NOM intend-M.SG.NOM.PastPTCP ensure-INF
maximum-M.SG.ACC productivity-M.SG.ACC
... the telephone intended to ensure maximum productivity ...

The English purpose adverbials (69 instances) demonstrate more options for their syntactic realisation: 49% were realised as prepositional phrases (*Example 19*), 36% as non-finite infinitive clauses (*Example 20*) and 15% as finite clauses, non-finite -ing clauses (*Example 21*) and non-finite -ed clauses, e.g.

- (19) ... *they deliver innovative communication services to subscribers ...*
- (20) ... *teams will all continue to require evolution ...*
- (21) ... *network functions, giving you and your customers more options and control.*

The comparison of the possible realisations of Lithuanian and English manner and purpose adverbials again shows that prepositional phrases are dominant in English whereas nouns in different cases prevail in Lithuanian.

Overall, the findings demonstrated that the syntactic realisations of English adverbials tended mostly to be based on prepositional phrases, while Lithuanian adverbials were most frequently realised as nouns of different grammatical cases. Adverbials in English demonstrated to have more realisation options. Besides, English adverbials much more frequently were syntactically realised through non-finite clauses, while in Lithuanian only purpose adverbials were realised as non-finite infinitive clauses.

Conclusion

The comparison was drawn between English and Lithuanian in order to spot and describe similarities and differences in syntactic realisations of circumstance adverbials. As expected, the findings demonstrated significant differences. English adverbials may be realised in a variety of ways employing a number of syntactic structures. Meanwhile, Lithuanian adverbials have a limited number of possible realisations. Although adverbials in English may be classified into smaller categories, Lithuanian adverbials may also be grouped according to their semantic function to form equivalent categories.

The findings of this study revealed that adverbials in the analysed texts occurred in a similar frequency in both languages. The semantic distribution of adverbials in technical, telecommunications-related, texts online was similar in both languages as there was roughly the similar number of instances discovered in each semantic category. Adverbials of place, manner and purpose in Lithuanian and English demonstrated to make up the majority of all the instances analysed, while time adverbials showed to have a significantly lower number of instances compared with other three categories in the analysed corpus.

English adverbials in technical texts were mostly realised by prepositional phrases due to the lack of the case system in English. On the other hand, Lithuanian adverbials were mostly syntactically realised by nouns of different grammatical cases. Adverbials realised as adverbs had a similar frequency in both languages. Adverbials realised as non-finite clauses

were much more common in English, as in Lithuanian only purpose adverbials were infrequently realised as non-finite infinitive constructions.

Although languages under comparison have different language structures, the frequency of adverbials and semantic distribution across the texts analysed were found to be similar. Nevertheless, major differences were in the syntactic realisation, due to the case system present in Lithuanian and absent in English.

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List of Abbreviations

ACC – Accusative
COM – common gender
DAT – dative
F –feminine
FUT – future
GEN – genitive
INF – infinitive
INS – instrumental
LOC – locative
M – masculine
N – noun
NegP – negative phrase
NOM – nominative
P – person
PASS – passive
PAST – past
PERF – perfect
PL – plural
PREF – prefix
PRS – present
PTCP – participle
REFL – reflexive
SG – singular