

THE LOCATIVE IN XITSONGA

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Abstract

The locative in Xitsonga will be discussed with attention to the following:

- Locative nouns with suffix **-ini** and prefix **e-** as a functional category
- Locative class nouns with nominal modifiers
- Place names
- Locative prepositions
- Prepositions with a locative
- Locative as internal argument
- Locative alternation

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1. LOCATIVE NOUNS

Three distinctive locative nouns may be recognized: firstly locative nouns with locative prefixes and suffixes, secondly locative class nouns which originally belong to specific locative classes 16, 17 and 18 as they may still appear in other Bantu languages e.g. in Namibia and Zimbabwe (e.g. Kwangali, Shona), and thirdly place nouns which appear with a locative prefix in Xitsonga.

1.1 Locative nouns with suffixes and prefixes

A noun may appear with a locative interpretation firstly by means of locative morphemes. The locative morphemes are the following:

with prefix [e-] and suffix [-ini]:

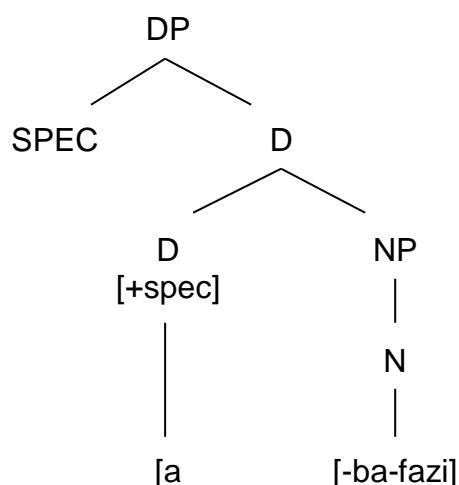
Vavanuna va-y-a [e-ndleleni] (<ndlela+ini)
(Men AgrS-go-fv loc-road-loc: the men are going to the road)

The suffix **-ini** above is unproblematic. It is only Xitsonga and the Nguni languages (with i.a. IsiXhosa and IsiZulu) which have a prefix [e-]. The Nguni languages have nouns which appear with a prefix:

IsiXhosa: prefixes [a-], [i-] or [u-]

[i-ndoda], [a-bafazi], [u-sana]
(man, women, baby)

The locative prefix [e-] appears with most nouns except nouns in class 1a. Visser (2008) gives evidence that these prefixes represent a functional category determiner within a DP bearing the feature [+Specific]:



See Visser 2008:16.

See i.a. Von Staden (1968) and Du Plessis (1978) for a discussion of these nominal prefixes, as well as Mojapelo (2007) for definiteness.

The locative prefix [e-] in Xitsonga is optional:

Vana va-y-a [e-xikolweni]

Vana va-y-a [xi-kolweni]

(Children AgrS-go-fv (loc)-school-loc: the children are going to school)

There is also evidence that this locative prefix has the same functional category and interpretation as the prefixes of Nguni, as indicated above. The prefix [e-] is replaced by a demonstrative [le] in the following instances:

Copulatives: Vana va [le [xikolweni]

(Children AgrS loc school-loc: the children are in the school)

With prepositions **na** and **hi**:

[na [le [xikolweni] (with/and in school)

[hi [le [xikolweni] (with in school)

With possessive [a]:

vutlhari [by-a [le [xikolweni]

(wisdom Agr-poss loc-school-loc: wisdom in the school)

The demonstrative root in Xitsonga and isiZulu is [la-]:

Xitsonga:

Class 7: le-xi

LOC: la-ha

isiZulu:

le-si

la-pha

These demonstratives are determiners within a DP. The locative [le] in the examples above e.g. [hi [le [xikolweni] can also appear as a locative demonstrative with a locative noun in a DP as a complement of a verb. In such cases it may appear without its locative noun as all demonstratives are allowed to do:

Vana va-y-a [le]

(Children AgrS-go-fv there: The children are going there)

There is also a locative demonstrative [la] (here).

These locative demonstratives appear with locative nouns without the locative prefix [e-] as complement of verbs as above in a DP:

Vana va-y-a [le [xikolweni]

(Children AgrS-go-fv there school-loc: the children are going there to school)

1.2 Locative class nouns

Nouns in the Bantu languages are distinguished through a feature of grammatical gender. This gender feature appears with nouns in a class system. Each noun appears in a specific noun class and can be recognized through a class prefix. The term noun class is now generally preferred and not gender (see Corbett 1991, Aronoff 1993, Beard 1995). Following Meinhof (1932) nouns are classified in noun classes with specific paired numbers e.g. class 1/2 for the nouns [mo-tho/ba-tho] (person/persons) in Sesotho, where the prefix **mo-** represents class 1 and the prefix **ba-** class 2. Meinhof (1932:40) distinguishes three locative class nouns with the locative prefixes [pa-, ku-, mu-] in class 16, 17 and 18 resp. However, they are no longer functional in the SA Bantu languages although there are remnants of these

prefixes present on locative nouns. These old locative class nouns still appear with a variety of nominal modifiers and agreement as will be shown below. A list of some of these locative class nouns are given below:

| Tshivenda | IsiXhosa | Sesotho | Xitsonga | English |
|---|--|---|--|---|
| Fhasi ḁasi phanda kule tsini muruhu ngomu nṯha nṅḁa | Phantsi ezantsi phambili kude kufuphi emva phakathi phezulu entla phandle | Fatshe tlase pele hole haufi morao hare hodimo ntle | Ehansi emahlweni ekule ekusuhi endzhaku endzeni ehenhla ehandle | Down below front, before far near back, behind inside above outside |

1.3 Place names

In Xitsonga and the Nguni languages place names appear with a prefix [e-] (only if the place names do not refer to a human):

IsiXhosa: Amadoda a-y-a [eKapa]
(Men AgrS-go-fv loc.Cape.Town: the men are going to Cape Town)

Xitsonga: Vavanuna va-y-a [eGyani]
(Men AgrS-go-fv loc.Giyani: the men are going to Giyani)

This locative prefix [e-] may be left out under the same conditions as above.

2. LOCATIVE PREPOSITIONS

There are two types of locative prepositions in these S.A languages, i.e. a preposition derived from a locative class prefix and a possessive locative phrase with locative agreement with a possessive [-a-].

2.1 Locative preposition from a locative noun

Sesotho: [ho] IsiXhosa: [ku]
Xitsonga: [eka] Tshivenda: [kha]

The use of these prepositions is compulsory with nouns of class 1a (with names of persons and relationship terms a.o.) and with pronouns:

Nouns of class 1a/2a

Sesotho: [ho [ntate] IsiXhosa: [ku- [tata]
Tshivenda: [kha [vhokhotsi] Xitsonga: [eka [tatana]
English: loc father: to/from father

Pronouns

| | | | |
|------------|------------------------|-----------|-------------|
| Sesotho: | [ho [bona] | IsiXhosa: | [ku- [bo] |
| Tshivenda: | [kha [vho] | Xitsonga: | [eka [vona] |
| English: | loc them: to/from them | | |

There is however some uncertainty about Xitsonga [eka]. It seems as if there are two lexical items in **eka**, i.e. a locative determiner [e] and a locative possessive [ka].

With regard to the locative determiner [e]:

- a. It may be replaced by any determiner as in the case of locative nouns with the prefix [e-] and suffix [-ini] (see above):

With nouns of class 1a:

-kongoma [e [ka [Gaza]

(go straight to Gaza)

-kongoma [laho [ka [Gaza]

(Go straight there to Gaza)

With pronouns:

-ta [e [ka [hina]

(come to us)

-ta [laha [ka [hina]

(come here to us)

- b. It may be left out:

Egondzweni [leri [yindlu a-yi-langut-e [ka [rona] / [eka [rona] (loc.road.loc rel.det
house past-AgrS-look-perf loc it:

on the road which the house looked at it: on the road which faced the house)

Vana va [le [ka [hina]

vana va [ka [hina]

(children Agr-poss loc us: children of our place)

With regard to the locative [ka]:

It regularly appears with a locative head noun in a locative DP:

[endzhaku [k-a [yena]

(back loc.Agr-poss him: behind him)

[ehenhla [ka-a [vele]

(above loc.gr-poss breast: above the breast)

Nouns in Tshivenda and Xitsonga may always appear with the locative suffix [-ini/ -ni] or the locative preposition:

Tshivenda: [vhathu-ni] or [kha vhathu]

Xitsonga: [e-muti-ni] or [eka muti]

Nominal modifiers in general appear after their heads. But they may also appear before their head nouns. Nominal modifiers which appear before their heads or without any overt head noun, have to use the locative prepositions above and not the locatives with [-ini]. Some of these nominal modifiers in the locative are given below:

Absolute pronouns:

[eka [vona] (vanhu)
(to/from them (people))

Demonstratives:

[eka [lava] (vanhu)
(to/from these (people))

Quantifiers:

[eka [hinkwavo] (vanhu)
(to/from all (the people))

Possessives:

[eka [v-a [mina] (vana)
(to/from of me (children))

Adjectives:

[eka [lontsongo] (n'wana)
(to/from the small (child))

Relative clauses

[eka [loyi [a-ril-a-ka] (n'wana)
(to/from the one who cries (the child))

2.2 Possessive locative phrase

The locative possessive consists of a locative agreement morpheme with a possessive [-a] followed by a complement. The complement consists mainly of DPs with a head noun in class 1a or a pronoun. The possessive with locative agreement refers to someone's place or home:

3. LOCATIVE NOMINAL MODIFIERS

There are various nominal modifiers which appear with locative heads which also have a locative reference. Some of these locative nominal modifiers will be given below:

3.1 Demonstratives

| | | | |
|---------------|--------|--------|----------|
| La (here) | laha | lomu | (here) |
| le (there) | laho | lomo | (there) |
| hala (there) | lahaya | lomuya | (yonder) |
| haleno (here) | | | |

See Nxumalo (1994) for various compound demonstratives and also some non-deictic demonstratives in Xitsonga.

Examples:

| | |
|---|-------------------------------------|
| La mutini (here in-village) | kwa-la nkoveni (here in-valley) |
| kwa-le ku-hloteni (there in-to-hunt) | laha kaya (here in-home) |
| lahaya kulenyana (yonder not-far) | lomu milambyeni (here in-rivers) |
| laho ntirhweni (there in-work) | le xifanisweni (there in-photo) |

All demonstratives in Xitsonga may appear with a locative **kwa** as shown in some examples above. These demonstratives can appear without overt locative heads or after locative heads:

-tirha [la]
(work here)
[tirha [emutini laha]
(work in-village here)

3.2 Absolute pronoun

Xitsonga: kona
kona emutini
(there in-village)

3.3 Quantifier

Xitsonga: hinkwako
hinkwako edorobeni
(everywhere in-town)

3.4 Relative clause:

Xitsonga:
[ekhwatini [laha [ku-tlhum-e-ke]
(in-bush rel.det loc.agr-dense-perf-rel. marker: in the bush where it is dense)

3.5 Possessive

Xitsonga: ka
ehenhla ka vele
(above of breast)
ekaya ka yena
(in-home of him)

4. DISTRIBUTION OF LOCATIVE PHRASES

As in the case of all DP's the locative phrase may also appear as subject or object of a sentence, i.e. as external or internal argument.

4.1 Subject

[Lahaya hansi] [a-ku-tel-e hi ngati]

(There below past-loc.agr-be.full-perf with blood: there below is full of blood)

The locative agreement above refers to the locative subject and it is thus a subjectival locative agreement morpheme.

4.2 Object

Ndz-a-ku-tiv-a [eGiyani]

(I-pres-there-know-fv in-Giyani: I know it there in Giyani)

The object status of **Giyani** is established through its locative objectival agreement morpheme i.e. **ku**.

4.3 The locative as complement of a preposition

4.3.1 The instrumental preposition

Xitsonga [hi]:

[hi [le [ntirhwe-ni]

(with loc.det work-loc: in the vicinity of the work)

The preposition **hi** and the locative determiner [e-] in [e-ntirhwe-ni] are not allowed to assimilate. A new locative determiner [le] is then introduced.

[hi [le [ndzhaku [ka [vana]

(with loc.det behind of children: in the vicinity behind the children)

The same locative determiner **le** is necessary here.

The instrumental preposition above generally gives an extra meaning to the locative of the vicinity in which something may appear.

4.3.2 The associative preposition

Xitsonga [na]:

[na [le [nambye-ni]

(with/and loc.det river-loc: also in the river)

As above, the locative determiner changes to [le] to prevent assimilation.

4.3.3 The possessive and the locative

[vana [v-a [le [dorobe-ni]

(children Agr-poss loc.det town-loc: children of in town: town children)

The det again changed to **le** to prevent assimilation between [a] and [e].

5. LOCATIVES AS INTERNAL ARGUMENTS OF VERBS

5.1 Copulative verbs

Locative phrases may appear as internal arguments of copulative verbs with a reference to location:

With the verb [LI]:

Vanhu va [le [mutini]
(People AgrS in-village)

With the verb [ri]:

loko vanhu va-ri [emutini]
(if people AgrS-cop.vb in-village)

With the verb [nga]:

Vanhu [lava [va-nga [emutini]
(people rel.det AgrS.cop.vb in-village: people who are in the village)

See Du Plessis (2010) for a detailed study of the copulative in these languages.

5.2 Verbs of existence

The locative internal argument of verbs of existence refers to **location**:

Madala u-tsham-a [endlwini]
(Old.man AgrS-stay-fv in-house)

Vanhu va-hany-a [edorobeni]
(People AgrS-live-fv in-town)

Vavasati va-sal-a [emutini]
(Women AgrS-stay.behind-fv in-village)

Byanyi byi-mil-a [etshangeni]
(Grass AgrS-grow-fv in-kraal)

5.3 Verbs of motion

The locative internal argument refers to location:

Wanuna u-fik-a [edoroboni]
(Man AgrS-arrive-fv in-town)

Vana va-nghena [exikolweni]
(Children AgrS-enter-fv in-school)

The locative internal argument refers to direction:

Tihomu ti-y-a [etshangeni]
(Cattle AgrS-go-fv to-kraal)

The locative internal argument refers to source:

Vaverengi va-tlhel-a [exirhapeni]
(Workers AgrS-return-fv from-garden)

5.4 Verbs of putting

-veka buku etafuleni
(put book on-table)

-aneka swiambalo edarateni
(hang clothes on-wire)

-sindza botere exinkweni
(smear butter on-bread)

-fihla buku entlaweni
(hide book in-class)

-chela mati enghilazini
(pour water in-glass)

-tsondzela ntambu embandzeni
(twist rope around-pole)

-fafaza chefu eswitsotsweni
(spray poison on-insects)

-layicha nhundzu egolonyini
(load goods on-wagon)

5.5 Verbs of removing

-susa nhundzu eka movha (take-away goods from-car)
-rhula poto eka xitofu (remove pot from stove)
-hlongola wansati emutini (chase-away woman from-village)
-vandla byevu emurhini (strip bark from-tree)
-xokola mutwa eka nenge (pull-out thorn from-leg)
-yiva mali ebankini (steal money from bank)
-phanga swiambalo eka yindlu (rob clothes from-house)
-vutla n'wana exikolweni (snatch child from-school)
-khoma tihomu emutini (seize cattle from-village)
-hala swakudya endyelweni (scrape food from-plate)
-hlangula mati etafuleni (wipe water from-table)
-kama mati eka swiambalo (wring water from-clothes)
-kukula matluka exivaveni (sweep leaves from-court-yard)

5.6 Experiencer verbs

See i.a. Madzivhandila (1999): experiencer verbs relate to mental states of an experiencer.

With intransitive verbs

Subject experiencer

With most intransitive experiencer verbs the subject argument of the predicate is the experiencer:

[Vana] v-a-tsak-a
(Children AgrS-pres-glad-fv: the children are glad)

Locative experiencer

In passive constructions the external argument is de-externalized and appears as complement of some preposition:

[pro_i ki-a-tsak-iw-a [hi vana]
(pro AgrS-pres-glad-pass-fv prep children: there is being glad by the children)

The “children” above appears as complement of a preposition and it is the experiencer.

With such passive constructions as above the experiencer may alternatively be a locative experiencer:

[pro_i] ki-a-tsak-iw-a [eka [vanhu lava tekana-ka]
(pro AgrS-pres-glad-pass-fv loc people reldet-marry-relmarker: there is being glad to people who marry)

The experiencer above is the “people who marry” and it appears as complement of a locative preposition such as [eka]

Locative or object experiencer

When an experiencer verb appears with the causative suffix [-is-] the experiencer may appear in the object position of the clause:

Vana va-tsak-is-a [vatswari]
(Children AgrS-glad-caus-fv parents: the children make the parents glad)

The object “parents” above is the experiencer.

Alternatively the experiencer may appear as a locative experiencer:

Vana v-a-tsak-is-a [eka vatswari]
(Children AgrS-pres-glad-caus-fv loc parents: the children are pleasing to the parents)

The “parents” above is the experiencer which appears as complement of a locative preposition such as [eka].

With an Infinitive clause as subject with causative verbs the experiencer may also be the object or locative:

Object experiencer:

Ku-/swi-tsak-is-a [vana] [ku-tshama la];
(AgrS-glad-caus-fv children to-stay here: it makes the children glad to stay here)

The object “children” above is the experiencer and the Infinitive clause “to stay here” is the subject.

Locative experiencer:

K-a-/swi-a-tsak-is-a [eka vana] [ku-tshama la];
(AgrS-pres-glad-caus-fv loc children to-stay here: it is pleasing the children to stay here)

The experiencer “children” now appears as complement of the locative preposition such as [kha] above.

Transitive verbs

The experiencer may either appear in the subject or object position of the predicate depending on the type of verb:

Subject experiencer:

[Vanhu] va-venga khamba
(People AgrS-hate thief)

Object experiencer:

[proi] ndzi-xisa [mudyondzisi]
(pro I-deceive teacher)

5.7 Creation verbs

The material with which a product is created may appear either with an instrumental PP with [ka/nga/hi] as head or with a locative phrase (see i.a. Mavumengwana (1998):

Transitive verbs

MOULD

-vumba [mbita] [hi vumba leri/eka vumba/eri]
-vumba [vumba leri ri-v-a mbita]
(mould pot with-this-clay/from-this-clay)
(mould this clay it-become pot)

KNIT

-luka [jesi] [hi wulu leyi/eka wulu leyi]
 -luka [wulu leyi yi-v-a jesi]
 (knit jersey with-this-wool/from-this-wool)
 (knit this wool it-become jersey)

CARVE

-vatla [ndlopfu] [hi murhi lowu/eka murhi lowu]
 -vatla [murhi lowu wu-v-a ndlopfu]
 (carve elephant with-this-wood/from-this-wood)
 (carve this wood it-become elephant)

KNEAD

-pfuva [xinkwa] [hi mbila leyi/eka mbila leyi]
 -pfuva [mbila leyi yi-v-a xinkwa]
 (knead bread with this dough/from this dough)
 (knead this dough it-become bread)

SEW

-rhunga [rhoko] [hi lapi leri/eka lapi leri]
 -rhunga [lapi leri ri-v-a rhoko]
 (sew dress with this material/from this material)
 (sew this material it-become dress)

COOK

-sweka [vuswa] [hi mugayo lowu/eka mugayo lowu]
 -sweka [mugayo lowu wu-v-a vuswa]
 (cook porridge with this meal / from this meal)
 (cook this meal it-become porridge)

Intransitive verbs**GROW**

[Ximilana] xi-ta-mila [hi mbewu leyi/eka mbewu leyi]
 [Mbewu leyi] yi-ta-mila ku-v-a/yi-v-a ximilana]
 (plant it-will-grow with this seed/from this seed)
 (this seed it-will-grow to/it-become plant)

6. LOCATIVE ALTERNATION

In locative alternation the locative argument may alternate with the object in transitive verbs or the subject in intransitive verbs. In either case the alternation has an influence on transitivity with locative arguments. See i.a. Levin (1993), Ackerman (1990), Machobane (1995) and Mphigalale (1997) for a discussion on the locative alternation.

6.1 With transitive verbs

Various example sentences with locative alternation will be given below. In the sentence below, the verb [chel-a] (pour) has two internal arguments, i.e. [mati] (water) which is a DP appearing in the object position of the sentence, and [e-nghilazi-ni] (in glass) which is a locative phrase with the locative morpheme [-ini]. In locative alternation the locative argument will lose its locative morpheme and it will alternate with the object. However, [nghilazi] will retain its locative interpretation of location and [mati] will also retain its interpretation of theme. Thus, the locative [e-nghilazi-ni] will now become [nghilazi] which is a DP and it will now function as the object of the sentence. The DP [mati] will become an adjunct. Within Information Structure the DP [nghilazi] will be in a topic position.

6.1.1 Verbs of putting

Pour verbs

[Pour]:

Wansati u-chel-a [mati] [e-nghilazi-ni]
(Woman AgrS-pour-fv water loc-glass: the woman pours the water in the glass)

Locative alternation:

Wansati u-chel-a [nghilazi] [mati]
(Woman AgrS-pour-fv glass water: the glass is the place in which the woman pours the water)

Spray verbs

[Spray]:

Wanuna u-fafaz-a [chefu] [e-switsotswe-ni]
(Man AgrS-spray-fv poison loc-insects: the man sprays poison on the insects)

Locative alternation:

Wanuna u-fafaz-a [switsotso] [chefu]
(Man AgrS-spray-fv insects poison: the insects are the place on which the man sprays the poison)

Load verbs

[Load]:

Vavanuna va-layich-a [nhundzu] [e-golonyi-ni]
(Men AgrS-load-fv goods loc-wagon: the men load the goods on the wagon)

Locative alternation:

Vavanuna va-layich-a [golonyi] [nhundzu]

(Men AgrS-load-fv wagon goods: the wagon is the place on which the men load the goods)

6.1.2 Verbs of removing

Remove verbs

[Remove]:

Wansati u-rhul-a [poto] [eka xitofu]

(Woman AgrS-remove-fv pot loc-stove: the woman removes the pot from the stove)

Locative alternation:

Wansati u-rhul-a [xitofu] [poto]

(Woman AgrS-remove-fv stove pot: the stove is the place from which the woman removes the pot)

Pull out verbs

[Pull out]:

Wanuna u-xokol-a [mutwa] [eka nenge]

(man AgrS-pull.out-fv thorn loc-leg: the man pulls the thorn out of the leg)

Locative alternation:

Wanuna u-xokol-a [nenge] [mutwa]

(Man AgrS-pull.out-fv leg thorn: the leg is the place from out of which the man pulls the thorn)

Clear verbs

[Scrape]:

Wansati u-hal-a [rikoko] [eka poto]

(Woman AgrS-scrape-fv crust loc-pot: the woman scrapes the crust from the pot)

Locative alternation:

Wansati u-hal-a [poto] [rikoko]

(Woman AgrS-scrape-fv pot crust: the pot is the place from which the woman scrapes the crust)

6.2 With intransitive verbs

In the IsiXhosa sentence below the locative phrase [e-ndlwi-ni] (in the house) is an internal argument of the verb [-hlal-a] (stay). It appears with two locative morphemes, i.e. a prefix [e-] and a suffix [-ini]. With locative alternation it will lose these two locative morphemes and it will now appear as [indlu] (house). It will alternate with the subject [ixhego] (old man) but will retain its interpretation of location. The old subject

argument appears as an adjunct in the sentence and it will also retain its original interpretation. The new subject [indlu] appears in a topic position.

Verbs of existence

[Stay]:

[Madala] u-tsham-a [e-ndlwi-ni]
(Old.man AgrS-stay-fv loc-house: the old man stays in the house)

Locative alternation:

[Yindlu] yi-tsham-a [madala]
(House AgrS-stay-fv old.man: the house is the place where the old man stays)

[Grow]

[Byanyi] byi-mil-a [e-tshange-ni]
(Grass AgrS-grow-fv loc-kraal: the grass grows in the kraal)

Locative alternation:

[Tshanga] ri-mil-a [byanyi]
(Kraal AgrS-grow-fv grass: the kraal is the place where the grass grows)

[Blossom]:

[Swiluva] swi-rhumbu-k-a [e-xirhape-ni]
(Flowers AgrS-blossom-fv loc-garden: the flowers blossom in the garden)

Locative alternation:

[Xirhapa] xi-rhumbuk-a [swiluva]
(Garden AgrS-blossom-fv flowers: the garden is the place where the flowers blossom)

[Ferment]:

[Byalwa] byi-vil-a [e-mbite-ni]
(Beer AgrS-ferment-fv loc-pot: the beer ferments in the pot)

Locative alternation:

[Mbita] yi-vil-a [byalwa]
(Pot AgrS-ferment beer: the pot is the place in which the beer ferments)

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Abbreviations

| | |
|-------|-----------------------|
| adj | adjective |
| agr | agreement |
| AgrO | objectival agreement |
| AgrS | subjectival agreement |
| appl | applicative |
| caus | causative |
| cop | copulative |
| det | determiner |
| expl | expletive |
| fut | future tense |
| fv | final vowel |
| inf | infinitive |
| instr | instrument |
| intr | intransitive |
| loc | locative |

| | |
|--------|---------------|
| neg | negative |
| neut | neuter |
| pass | passive |
| past | past tense |
| perf | perfect tense |
| poss | possessive |
| pres | present tense |
| ptc | participle |
| recipr | reciprocal |
| refl | reflexive |
| rev | reversive |
| subj | subjunctive |
| top | topic |
| tr | transitive |
| vb | verb |