A contrastive study of the English and Myanmar configurations of process, participants, and circumstances from the systemic functional perspective

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ABSTRACT

This study seeks to explore the similarities and distinctions inherent in the transitivity configurations of English and Myanmar from the Systemic Functional perspective. The investigation reveals that both languages share a commonality in comprising three fundamental elements: process, participant roles, and circumstantial elements. However, their degree of integration between processes and participants is comparatively limited. Salient distinguishing features emerge in terms of the sequencing of transitivity elements, their ellipsis, and salience. In English transitivity configurations, processes typically manifest after the first or second participant role, or both. In instances involving an empty Subject (It/There), the process immediately ensues. Additionally, the positional relations between processes and participant roles are more numerous. Circumstantial elements conventionally find placement at the clause's outset, between the first participant role and process, between the process and second participant role, or at the clause's conclusion. Ellipsis of participant roles may occur sporadically. Conversely, Myanmar transitivity configurations exhibit participant roles at the clause's beginning, with processes commonly positioned at the clause's culmination. The positional relations between processes and participant roles are less frequent. Circumstantial elements are conventionally situated at the clause's outset, between participant roles, or preceding the process. While ellipsis of processes is infrequent, ellipsis of participant roles transpires more frequently. These findings significantly contribute to the ongoing comparative analysis of transitivity configurations across languages, especially in the context of Myanmar and other global languages.

I. INTRODUCTION

Within the existing scholarly literature, several studies have undertaken a comparative examination of English and Myanmar linguistics, predominantly focusing on lexical aspects (San San Hnin Tun 2006; Bhita 2018; Ei Ei Soe Min and Matsumura 2019). Notably absent from this body of work, however, is a contrastive exploration of English and Myanmar linguistic features from the vantage point of social semiotics.

In the realm of language studies, a holistic approach is advocated, urging scholars to move beyond a mere investigation of abstract, generalized rules detached from specific usage contexts (Thompson 2004/2008). Halliday (1994/2000) has proposed an insightful description of the transitivity system in English, capturing the human experience across physical, social, mental, and abstract realms through six key process types: material, mental, relational, behavioral, verbal, and existential processes. While subsequent modifications to Halliday's framework have been made by Fawcett (1980, 1987, forthcoming) and He et al. (2017), it is acknowledged that a singular, universal transitivity system inadequately captures the nuanced structures inherent in individual languages due to the intricate nature of human language.

Numerous linguists, drawing on hypotheses proposed by various scholars, have endeavored to formulate transitivity systems for diverse languages, including Myanmar. However, a distinctive gap exists in the literature, as there has been no prior examination of Myanmar transitivity parameters, particularly when juxtaposed with Japanese and English, while considering the nuances of social semiotics. To address this void, this study employs Halliday's Systemic Functional Linguistic (SFL) theory to conduct a comparative analysis of transitivity configurations in English and Myanmar. Notably, the transitivity system of Chinese, as proposed by He (2022), serves as a foundational reference for this study.

This study focuses on elucidating the disparities in how Myanmar and English speakers articulate their world experiences through an in-depth contrastive study of transitivity systems and configurations. By utilizing He's (2022) transitivity model, intricately linked to the work of He et al. (2017), and incorporating social-cultural and cognitive approaches, this study introduces a novel framework for understanding Myanmar speakers' representations within the SFL framework. This endeavor contributes significantly to the comparative analysis of transitivity configurations, shedding light on the inherent nature of linguistic distinctions between Myanmar and other languages.

II. METHOD

This study adopts a combination of qualitative and quantitative research methods, mainly involving comparison, description and interpretation. It chooses He's (2022) new model of the transitivity system of Chinese as a theoretical framework for analyzing English and Myanmar clauses within the framework of SFL rather than other transitivity theories because He (2022) adopts a downward approach to the construction of transitivity system, and goes further to categorize processes and participant roles including compound PRs. This study first qualitatively analyzes the instances of English and Myanmar spoken and written discourse by means of He's (2022) new model of the transitivity system, and investigates the similarities and differences of the arrangements of three main elements: processes, participants, and circumstances in English and Myanmar transitivity configurations from a comparative analysis. This study not only includes the qualitative methods such as induction and deduction, analysis and synthesis, abstraction and generalization, but also the quantitative ones, involving mathematical statistics, and experimental analysis. The mixed methods help to give full play to their respective strengths, and make the research work more in-depth and extensive for some linguistic problems.

SFL is a function-oriented appliable approach to linguistics, and it concerns social semiotics (Halliday 1985, 1994/2000; Halliday and Matthiessen 2004, 2014; Fawcett 1980, 1987, forthcoming). Therefore, the current research from an SFL perspective is in nature meaning-focused. From the macro dimension, this study identifies how the Myanmar people represent the world experience differently from the English people, and what motivates the similarities and differences between English and Myanmar transitivity configurations. The current study undertakes a literature review of the previous studies of English and Myanmar transitivity and transitivity systems, and a comparison of transitivity systems between/across languages, evaluating definitions of transitivity and transitivity system from an integrated SFL theory.

In this study, data are collected primarily by observation, and the goal is to determine similarities and differences that are related to the particular situation or environment of the two groups. These similarities and differences are identified through qualitative observation methods. Most of the data used in this study are taken from authentic texts of English and Myanmar, especially from literary texts and news reports. The data used in the present study is collected from SEAlang Library Burmese Corpus[1] which comprises more than 11 million of Myanmar collocates. The data is searched by inputting the key words of Myanmar from this corpus. English-language news reports are mainly extracted

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[1] http://sealang.net/burmese/corpus.htm

from BBC News on the Internet[2]. Myanmar-language news reports are mainly extracted from "Myanma Alin Daily", a state-run Myanmar language daily newspaper, which is also available on the Internet[3].

III. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

PREVIOUS COMPARISONS OF TRANSITIVITY SYSTEMS BETWEEN/ACROSS LANGUAGES

Over the last two decades, there has been a growing scholarly interest in the examination of transitivity systems within and across languages, particularly within the framework of Systemic Functional Linguistics. The predominant focus of prior research has been grounded in Halliday's transitivity theory (Halliday, 1985), as evidenced by works such as TÚ (2011), Sun and Zhao (2012), Al-Janabi (2013), and Lavid and Arus (2002). Nevertheless, a notable gap exists in the literature concerning comparative studies that specifically delve into transitivity systems encompassing configurations.

While there has been a surge in comparative investigations of transitivity systems between English and various languages, encompassing both Oriental languages like Arabic, Persian, Chinese, Japanese, and Vietnamese, as well as Occidental languages like Spanish, no systemic functionalist inquiry has yet delved into how speakers of Myanmar articulate their perceptions of the world, both externally and internally, within a comparative framework. This lacuna presents an opportunity for valuable insights, particularly for learners engaged with the Myanmar language and scholars conducting research in the realm of Myanmar linguistics. Consequently, this study aims to address this gap by selecting the transitivity configurations of English and Myanmar as objects of comparison.

COMPARING TRANSITIVITY CONFIGURATIONS BETWEEN ENGLISH AND MYANMAR

In both English and Myanmar transitivity systems, transitivity configurations represent each basic process type. These configurations encompass the process itself, participant roles within the process, and circumstantial elements associated with the process. Both languages exhibit only one type of process and participant integration, leading to relatively low integration levels within their transitivity systems. Nevertheless, a notable distinction arises between the two languages in terms of the sequence of transitivity elements, as well as their ellipsis and salience.

Similarities

The transitivity configurations observed in both English and Myanmar encompass three semantic elements: the procedural action, the entities engaged in the action, and the contextual factors linked to the action. Of these three components, process and

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[2] https://www.bbc.com/
[3] https://www.burmalibrary.org/en/category/myanmar-alin-2022

participants are central elements, while circumstances are peripheral elements. Based on the comparison between the transitivity configurations of English and Myanmar, it can be seen clearly that there are some identical configurations in English and Myanmar that realize different domains of experience of the physical and social world, mental world and abstract world that are represented by action processes, mental processes and relational processes respectively. In terms of action processes, English and Myanmar share similar configurations. For instance, both languages use the Agent + Process configuration to express autonomous actions, as seen in Example (1). They also use the Affected + Process configuration to convey autonomous processes that involve something happening, as demonstrated in Example (2). Furthermore, both languages utilize the Created + Process structure for expressing autonomous creative actions, as shown in Example (3). Finally, they employ the Behaver + Process construction to represent autonomous behaviors, illustrated in Example (4).

(1) a.

Kino [Ag]	nodded [Auto-action: doing]	dumbly.
participant	process	circumstance

(John Steinbeck 1945: 36)

b.

keno-gamue [Ag]	*khathtonhtainnhtainn-bin*	*gaunnnyeikpya-the* [Auto-action: doing].
Kino-SBJMARK	dumbly-EMPMARK	nod-PRS.DECL.SENTSUF
participant	circumstance	process

'Kino nodded dumbly.'

(Htin Lin 1999: 60)

(2) a. Dinner time [Af]   approached [Auto-action: happening].

participant	process

b.

ethotphyint	*nyazarpwedorteyamyiachein-thot* [Af]	*taphyaye:phyaye:*	*neeketlar-khet-the* [Auto-action: happening].
in.this.way	dinner.time-ALL	slowly	approach-PST-DECL.SENTSUF
-	participant	circumstance	process

'Dinner time approached.'

(Maung Htin Aung 1962: 103)

(3) a. The Minbu Solar Power Plant [Cre]   is being implemented [Auto-action: creating].

participant	process

b.

minnbue:nayyauncheswanninthonndatarrpaye:setyon-go [Cre]	*akaunahtephor-tesauk-lyetshi-bar-the* [Auto-action: creating].
Minbu.Solar.Power.Plant-OBJMARK	implement-build-PROG-POLMARK-DECL.SENTSUF
participant	process

'The Minbu Solar Power Plant is being implemented.'

(*Myanma Alinn Daily* 2019: 3)[4]

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[4] https://www.burmalibrary.org/sites/burmalibrary.org/files/obl/mal_28.6.19.pdf.

(4) a. But Maung Chit [Behr]   remained [Auto-action: behaving]   gazing [PrEx].

	participant	process

b. *maunchit-garr* [Behr]   *angaye:tharrkyi-hlyetpinshithaye:-i* [Auto-action: behaving].

Mg.Chit-SBJMARK   gaze-PROG-DECL.SENTSUF

participant	process

'But Maung Chit remained gazing.'

(http://sealang.net/burmese/bitext.htm)

As for mental processes, English and Myanmar share the configuration of Emoter + Process that realizes an autonomous emotive mental process as in Example (5), the configurations of Communicator-Communicatee + Process and Communicated + Communicator + Process that realize an autonomous communicative mental process as in Examples (6) and (7).

(5) a. He [Em]   was [Auto-mental: emotive]   uneasy [PrEx1]   and nervous [PrEx2].

participant	process			

(John Steinbeck 1945: 95)

b. *thu-hmar* [Em]   *seikmathetmatharphyit=kar* [Auto-mental: emotive]   ([Em])   *hteiklantnaythaloshi-i* [Auto-mental: emotive].

3SG-SBJMARK   uneasy=CONJ   nervous-PRS.DECL.SENTSUF

participant	process	(participant)	process

'He was uneasy and nervous.'

(Htin Lin 1999: 139)

(6) a. They [Comr-Comee]   are talking [Auto-mental: communicative].

participant	process

b.

lagaunndot-ga-thar [Comr-Comee]	*zagarrpyaw-nay-gya-i* [Auto-mental: communicative].
3PL-SBJMARK-EXCL	talk-PROG-PLMARK-DECL.SENTSUF
participant	process

'They are talking.'

(Science Mg Wa 1998: 28, as quoted in Lai Yee Win 2021)

(7) a.

"It is a pearl of great value," [Comd]		Kino [Comr]	said [Auto-mental: communicative].
participant		participant	process

(John Steinbeck 1945: 64)

b.

'dar	*tanboe-theikkyee-det*	*pale-bya'=hu* [Comd]	*keno-ga* [Comr]	*so-the* [Auto-mental: communicative].
DEM	value-AUG=REL	pearl-POLMARK=COMP	Kino-SBJMARK	say-DECL.SENTSUF
participant			participant	process

"It is a pearl of great value," Kino said.

(Htin Lin 1999: 97)

As for relational processes, English and Myanmar share the configuration of Carrier + Process that realizes an autonomous attributive relational process as in Example (8), the configuration of Correlator1-Correlator2 + Process that realizes an autonomous correlational relational process as in Example (9), and the configuration of Existent + Process that realizes an autonomous existential relational process as in Example (10).

(8) a.

Stars [Ca]	shine [Auto-relational: attributive + At]	on a clear night.
participant	process	circumstance

b.

kye-myarr-the [Ca]	*kyelinthaw*	*nya-hnaik*	*winnlettaukpa-nay-gya-the* [Auto-relational: attributive + At].
star-PLMARK-SBJMARK	clear.MOD	night-ABLMARK	shine-PROG-PLMARK-DECL.SENTSUF
participant	circumstance		process

'Stars shine on a clear night.'

(http://sealang.net/burmese/bitext.htm)

(9) a.

And	we [Cor1-Cor2]	will be married [Auto-relational: correlational]	now.
-	participant	process	circumstance

(John Steinbeck 1945: 36)

b.

akhule	*kyamadot* [Cor1-Cor2]	*lethtat-kya-bar-me* [Auto-relational: correlational].
now	1PL.NOM	married-PLMARK-POLMARK-IRR.ASS
circumstance	participant	process

'And we will be married now.'

(Htin Lin 1999: 60)

(10) a.

The songs [Ext]	remained [Auto-relational: existential].
participant	process

(John Steinbeck 1945: 2)

b.

thotthor	*taye:chin-myarr-gadort* [Ext]	*kyanyit-par-thaye:-the* [Auto-relational: existential].
but	song-PLMARK-SBJMARK	remain-POLMARK-still-DECL.SENTSUF
-	participant	process

'The songs remained.'

(Htin Lin 1999: 13)

Moreover, English and Myanmar also share a low level of process and participant role integration. There is only one type of process and participant role integration in English and Myanmar. As shown in Example (8) above, the relational process /winnlettaukpa/ "shine" is conflated with the participant of Attribute in both languages. Not only the type of process and participant role integration but also the integration of two participant roles occur in both languages. In English and Myanmar transitivity configurations, there are not only simple participant roles (PRs) but also compound participant roles (PRs). Compound PRs take the roles of two simple participants such as Agent-Carrier, Affected-Carrier, Affected-Emoter, Agent-Perceiver, Agent-Cognizant, Affected-Cognizant, Agent-Existent and Affected-Existent. These compound participants are found in both languages: English and Myanmar as shown in examples (11a) and (11b).

(11) Examples of compound PRs in English and Myanmar transitivity configurations.

a.	The news	came	to the doctor.		
	Af-Ca	Pro	Dir:Des		

(John Steinbeck 1945: 28)

b.	*thaukkyarnayt*	*nyanay-dainn*	*kyanor*	*detdatue:*	*pyan-the.*
	Friday	evening-every	1SG.M.NOM	Dadet.Oo	return-PRS.DECL.SENTSUF
	Cir		Ag-Ca	Dir: Des	Pro

'Every Friday evening, I return to Dadet Oo.'

(Lae Twin Thar Saw Chit 2004: 116)

Differences

Transitivity configurations of basic-level processes in English and Myanmar's transitivity systems vary greatly in terms of the sequence of transitivity elements, their ellipsis, and salience.

The Relative Order of Process and Participants in English and Myanmar Transitivity Configurations

In English, the positioning of a process in a sentence generally occurs after the first participant role, the second participant role, or both. If an empty subject 'It/There' is present, the process immediately follows it. Based on He et al.'s (2017) transitivity system of English, this study summarizes thirteen primary relative orders of processes and participant roles in English transitivity configurations: (1) PR1 + Pro + PR2 as in Example 12a,

(2) PR2 + Pro + PR1 as in Example 12b, (3) PR2 + PR1 + Pro as in Example 12c, (4) PR1 + PR2(=Pro) as in Example 12d, (5) PR1 + Pro + PR2 + PR3 as in Example 12e, (6) It/There + Pro + PR1 + PR2 as in Example 12f, (7) It + Pro + PR2 + PR1 as in Example 12g, (8) PR2 + there + Pro + PR1 as in Example 12h, (9) PR1 + Pro as in Example 12i, (10) PR2 + Pro as in Example 12j, (11) It/There + Pro + PR1 as in Example 12k, (12) It + Pro + PR2 as in Example 12l, and (13) It + Pro as in Example 12m.

(12) English examples

    a. Western ministers [Ag] will hold [Auto-action: doing] crisis talks [Af] in Brussels on Friday[5]. (BBC News)

    b. The city of Sumy [Af] has been surrounded [Auto-action: doing] by Russian troops [Ag]. (BBC News)

    c. "Has he any money?" [Comd] the doctor [Comr] demanded [Auto-mental: communicative]. (John Steinbeck 1945: 15)

    d. Her beautiful hair [Ca] shines [Auto-relational attributive + At].

    e. And last he [Ag] turned [Auto-action: doing] his head [Af-Ca] to Juana, his wife [Dir: Des]. (John Steinbeck 1945: 1)

    f. There are [Auto-relational: existential] four major nuclear plants [Ext] in Ukraine[6] [Loc]. (BBC News)

    g. It would be [Auto-relational: attributive] great [At] to come to the UK [Ca] because this country has many more possibilities to have a better life[7]. (BBC News)

    h. In Kino's head [Loc] there was [Auto-relational: existential] a song [Ext] now, clear and soft. (John Steinbeck 1945: 15)

    i. The roosters [Ag] had been crowing [Auto-action: doing] for some time. (John Steinbeck 1945: 1)

    j. A fire [Af] broke [Auto-action: happening] out [PrEx] at the Zaporizhzhia nuclear plant – the largest in Europe. (BBC News)

    k. It really scared [Auto-mental: emotive] me [Em] when my mum exactly quoted Russian TV[8]. (BBC News)

    l. It happened [Auto-action: happening] that on that same night Sam had invited Rose to supper [Af]. (He et al. 2017: 38)

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[5] https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-60613438

[6] https://www.bbc.com/news/world-60609633

[7] https://www.bbc.com/news/live/world-europe-60532634

[8] https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-60600487

m. It's raining [Auto-action: happening] outside. (He et al. 2017: 156)

For Myanmar, the participant roles come first, and the process appears, in principle, in the final position of a clause and its place is quite fixed. Based on Lai Yee Win's (2021) description of the transitivity system of Myanmar, and the transitivity analysis of Myanmar texts, particularly of news reports and literary texts, this study presents seven main relative orders of the process and the participant roles in Myanmar transitivity configurations: (1) PR1 + PR2 + Pro as in Example 13a, (2) PR2 + PR1 + Pro as in Example 13b, (3) PR1 + PR2(=Pro) as in Example 13c, (4) PR1 + PR2 + PR3 + Pro as in Example 13d, (5) PR1 + Pro as in Example 13e, (6) PR2 + Pro as in Example 13f, and (7) PR1 + PR2 + (Pro) as in Example 13g.

(13) Myanmar examples

a. *pyepa*   *khayeethwarretthe-dway-ga* [Ag-Ca]   *adika*   *bagan-go* [Dir: Des]   *lar-gya-de* [Auto-action: doing]*.*

foreign   tourist-PLMARK-SBJMARK   mainly   Bagan-DEST   come-PLMARK-PRS.DECL.SENTSUF

'Foreign tourists mainly come to Bagan.'

b. *"khayeethwarrlokengann-netpatthettet*   *lokengann-dway=le*   *toetet-larme"=hu* [Comd]

tourism-concerning.ABLMARK   business-PLMARK=ADDCONN   develop-FUT=that.COMP

ue:theinnlwin-ga [Comr]   *pyawkyarr-the* [Auto-mental: communicative]*.*

U.Thein.Lwin-SBJMARK   say-PST.DECL.SENTSUF

'U Thein Lwin said that businesses related to tourism will also develop.'

c. *thue-i-hanpanamueayar-galaye:-myarr-hmar* [Ca]   *khalaye:-ta-yauk-hne*   *Chitsayar* [Auto-relational: attributive + At].

3SG-GEN-gesture-DIM-PLMARK-SBJMARK   child-one-CLF-CMPR   lovely

'Her gestures are lovely like a child.'

(Journal Kyaw Ma Ma Lay 1957: 100)

d. *thetthet-ga* [Comr]   *hla-go* [Comee]   *yangon-twin*   *aloke-shar=myi-akyaunn* [Comd]   *pyawpya-laikthe* [Auto-mental: communicative].

Thet.Thet-SBJMARK   Hla-OBJMARK   Yangon-LOC   job-seek=COMP-matter   tell-PFV.DECL.SENTSUF

'Thet Thet has told Hla about the matter that she will seek a job in Yangon.'

(Journal Kyaw Ma Ma Lay 1957: 46)

e. *aye:myathaw*   *lay-thit-the* [Ag]   *lwinttaiklar-the* [Auto-action: happening].

cool   wind-new.MOD-SBJMARK   blow-PRS.DECL.SENTSUF

'The cool fresh wind blows.'

(Journal Kyaw Ma Ma Lay 1957: 45)

f. *adika*   *khayeethwarrlokengann* [Af]   *myinttet-larme* [Auto-action: happening].

mainly   tourism   develop-FUT.DECL.SENTSUF

'Tourism will mainly develop.'

g. *pyonn=laiktainn*   *hlapathaw*   *pachaint-galaye:*   *porlar-the-ga-le* [Ca]

smile=whenever.CONJ   beautiful   dimple-DIM   appear-DECL.SENTSUF-SBJMARK-ADDCONN

thue-i   *htue:charrthaw*   *swesaunhmu* [At]   (*phyit-the* [Auto-relational: attributive].)

3SG-GEN   special   attraction   (COP-PRS.DECL.SENTSUF)

'Whenever she smiles, beautiful dimples are her special attraction.'

(Lae Twin Thar Saw Chit 2004: 99)

Table 1 summarizes the positional relations of the process and participant roles involved in English and Myanmar transitivity configurations.

Table 1. The Positional Relations of the Process and Participant Roles in English and Myanmar

No.	English		Myanmar	
	Positional relation	**Example sentence**	**Positional relation**	**Example sentence**
1	PR1 + Pro + PR2	12a	PR1 + PR2 + Pro	13a
2	PR2 + Pro + PR1	12b	PR2 + PR1 + Pro	13b
3	PR2 + PR1 + Pro	12c	PR1 + PR2(=Pro)	13c
4	PR1 + PR2(=Pro)	12d	PR1 + PR2 + PR3 + Pro	13d
5	PR1 + Pro + PR2 + PR3	12e	PR1 + Pro	13e
6	It/There + Pro + PR1 + PR2	12f	PR2 + Pro	13f
7	It + Pro + PR2 + PR1	12g	PR1 + PR2 + (Pro)	13g
8	PR2 + there + Pro + PR1	12h		
9	PR1 + Pro	12i		
10	PR2 + Pro	12j		
11	It/There + Pro + PR1	12k		
12	It + Pro + PR2	12l		
13	It + Pro	12m		

English and Myanmar share identical configurations consisting of only one participant, such as 'PR1 + Pro,' 'PR2 + Pro,' and 'PR1 + PR2 (=Pro),' as illustrated in Table 1. Simultaneously, there are also differences between them, manifested in three aspects:

a. Number of positional relations

In English, there are numerous positional relations between the process and the participant roles, both of which have a certain degree of freedom in terms of their positions. In contrast, the positional relations of the process and the participant roles in Myanmar are more limited than in English. To illustrate, English employs thirteen distinct positional relations for the process and participant roles, whereas Myanmar utilizes only seven, as demonstrated in Table 1.

b. The position of the process

In English and Myanmar, the process does not occur at the beginning of the clause. In English, the process primarily occurs after Participant 1, Participant 2, or both. In English configurations where there is an empty subject 'It' or 'There,' the process immediately follows it. In Myanmar, participants are salient and always appear at the beginning of a clause. The position of the process is relatively fixed and postpositional in the clause. Unlike English, the empty subjects 'It' or 'There' never appear in Myanmar transitivity configurations (see Table 1).

c. The ellipsis of the process

Every major clause in English contains a process, which is the most important element within these clauses. Without this process, the clause becomes grammatically incorrect and loses its meaning. Therefore, omitting the process is not possible in English transitivity configurations. Conversely, the omission of the process is observed in Myanmar transitivity configurations. As demonstrated in Example (13g), the relational process of attribution in Myanmar, marked by the copula verb /phyit-the/ "copula verb", is capable of being omitted. This ellipsis of the process does not adversely affect the comprehension of the meaning within the Myanmar clause.

The Positions of Circumstances in English and Myanmar Transitivity Configurations

Halliday (1994/2000: 151) states nine types of circumstantial element: (1) Extent, (2) Location, (3) Manner, (4) Cause, (5) Contingency, (6) Accompaniment, (7) Role, (8) Matter, (9) Angle. Compare the two clauses "John keeps his car in the garage" and "John washes his car in the garage". In the first clause, 'in the garage' is considered an essential element required by the verb, and thus, it functions as a participant. In contrast, in the second clause, 'in the garage' is optional and serves as a circumstance. Circumstantial elements, which include prepositional phrases like 'in the garage,' adverbial groups like 'quickly,' and nominal groups like 'last night,' express different types of circumstances. However, the positions of these groups or phrases can vary in English and Myanmar transitivity configurations. For instance, English prepositional phrases denoting Time, Place, and Means are typically positioned before the first participant role, as shown in Example (14a). Alternatively, they might come after the process if there's no second participant role, as demonstrated in Example (14b), or after the second participant role, as illustrated in Example (14c).

(14) Examples of English prepositional phrase serving as circumstance (John Steinbeck 1945)

a. Outside the brush house in the tuna clump [Cir: Place], a covey of little birds [Ag] chittered [Auto-action: doing] and ([Ag]) flurried [Auto-action: doing] with their wings [Cir: Means]. (John Steinbeck 1945)

b. Kino [Ag] awakened [Auto-action: happening] in the near dark [Cir: Time]. (John Steinbeck 1945)

c. The day [Ag] had drawn [Auto-action: doing] only a pale wash of light [Af] in the lower sky to the east [Cir: Place]. (John Steinbeck 1945)

English adverbial groups serving as circumstances of Quality and Manner are usually placed at the beginning of a clause as in Example (15a), after the process when there is no second participant role as in Example (15b), after the second participant role as in

Example (15c), between the process and the second participant role as in Example (15d), or between the first participant role and the process as in Example (15e).

(15) Examples of English adverbial group serving as circumstance (John Steinbeck 1945)

a. Slowly [Cir: Manner] he [Ag] put [Auto-action: doing] his suppliant hat [Af-Ca] on his head [Dir: Des]. (John Steinbeck 1945)

b. The dawn [Ag] came [Auto-action: happening] quickly [Cir: Quality] now [Cir: Time]. (John Steinbeck 1945)

c. A thin, timid dog [Ag] came [Auto-action: doing] close [PrEx] and, at a soft word from Kino, ([Ag]) curled [Auto-action: doing] up [PrEx], ([Ag]) arranged [Auto-action: doing] its tail [Af-Ca] neatly [Cir: Manner] over its feet [Dir: Des], and ([Ag]) laid [Auto-action: doing] its chin [Af-Ca] delicately [Cir: Manner] on the pile [Dir: Des].

d. Juana [Ag] sang [Auto-action: doing] softly [Cir: Quality] an ancient song that had only three notes and yet endless variety of interval [Ra].

e. Every man [Cor1] suddenly [Cir: Quality] became [Auto-relational: correlational] related [PrEx] to Kino's pearl [Cor2].

   English nominal groups serving as circumstances of Duration and Time are usually placed at the beginning of a clause as in Example (16a), or at the end of a clause as in Example (16b). Table 2 shows the positions of three types of groups/phrases serving as circumstantial elements in English clauses.

(16) Examples of English nominal group serving as circumstance (John Steinbeck 1945)

a. All night [Cir: Duration] they [Ag] walked [Auto-action: doing] and ([Ag]) never changed [Auto-action: doing] their pace [Af]. (John Steinbeck 1945)

b. He [Comr] makes [Auto-mental: communicative] the sermon [Comd] every year [Cir: Time]. (John Steinbeck 1945)

Table 2. The Positions of Three Types of Groups/Phrases Serving as Circumstances in English Clauses

Type \\ Location	Group/phrase		
	Prepositional phrase	Adverbial group	Nominal group
At the beginning of a clause	+	+	+
Between the first participant role and process	–	+	–
Between process and the second participant role	–	+	–
After the second participant role /after the process (when there is no second participant role)/at the end of a clause	+	+	+

Based on an analysis of transitivity in literary texts from Myanmar, it has been observed that Myanmar prepositional phrases, when serving as circumstances of Place and Means, are commonly positioned in three ways:

a. Between the first participant role and the process, in cases where there is no second participant role. For example, as shown in (17a).

b. Between the first participant role and the second participant role, as illustrated in (17b).

c. Between the second participant role and the process, as demonstrated in (17c).

(17) Examples of Myanmar prepositional phrase serving as circumstance

a. *ue:minnhan-the* [Ag]   *hnayaukhtainsophar-twin* [Cir: Place]   *yeye-baye:hnaik* [Cir: Place]   *winhtain-laikthe* [Auto-action: doing].

U.Min.Han-SBJMARK   couch-LOC   Yi.Yi-beside.LOC   sit-PFV.DECL.SENTSUF

'U Min Han sat beside Yi Yi on the couch.'

(Journal Kyaw Ma Ma Lay 1957)

b. ([Ag-Ca])   *meeyahtarr-phyint* [Cir: Means]   *dadetue:-thot* [Dir: Des]   *pyan-the* [Auto-action: doing].

   train-INS   Dadet.Oo-ALL   return-PRS.DECL.SENTSUF

'I return to Dadet Oo by train.'

(Lae Twin Thar Saw Chit 2004)

c.
maunthanchaunn-the [Ag-Ca]	*yangon-hma* [Dir: So]	*manndalaye:-thot* [Dir: Des]	*karr-phyint* [Cir: Means]	*thwarr-the* [Auto-action: doing].
Mg.Than.Chaung-SBJMARK	Yangon-from.ABLMARK	Mandalay-ALL	car-INS	go-PRS.DECL.SENTSUF

'Mg Than Chaung goes from Yangon to Mandalay by car.'

(Myanmar Organization 2018)

Myanmar adverbial groups serving as circumstances of Manner are usually placed between the first participant role and the process when there is no second participant role as in Example (18a), or between the second participant role and the process as in Example (18b).

(18) Examples of Myanmar adverbial group serving as circumstance

a.
kyanor-ga-dort [Cog]	*khainmarzwar* [Cir: Manner]	*sonnphyat-laikthe* [Auto-mental: cognitive].
1SG.M-SBJMARK-EMPMARK	firmly	decide-PFV.DECL.SENTSUF

'I have decided firmly.'

(Lae Twin Thar Saw Chit 2004: 16)

b.
maunhlawinn-the [Ag-Ca]	*kyaunn-thot* [Dir: Des]	*myanmyan* [Cir: Manner]	*thwarr-the* [Auto-action: doing].
Mg.Hla.Win-SBJMARK	school-ALL	quickly	go-PRS.DECL.SENTSUF

'Mg Hla Win goes to school quickly.'

(Myanmar Organization 2018)

Myanmar nominal groups serving as circumstances of Time are usually placed at the beginning of a clause as in Example (19a), or between the first participant role and the second participant role as in Example (19b), or between the second participant role and the process as in Example (19c). Table 3 shows the positions of three types of groups/phrases serving as circumstantial elements in Myanmar clauses.

(19) Examples of Myanmar nominal group serving as circumstance

a. *nyanay-twin* [Cir: Time]   *maaye:phyue=hnint*   *kyanor* [Ag]   *lannshauk-gya-the* [Auto-action: doing].

evening-ABLMARK   Ma.Aye.Phyu=and.CONJ   1SG.M   walk-PLMARK-PRS.DECL.SENTSUF

'Every evening, Ma Aye Phyu and I go for a walk.'

(Lae Twin Thar Saw Chit 2004)

b. *phayphaygyee*   *tharrdot* [Ag-Ca]   *netphyankhar* [Cir: Time]   *innwa* [Dir: Des]   *thwarrle-gya-hmar* [Auto-action: doing].

dad   1PL.NOM   tomorrow   Inwa   visit-PLMARK-IRR.ASS

'Dad, we will visit Inwa tomorrow.'

(Lae Twin Thar Saw Chit 2004)

c. *maunthanchaunn-the* [Ag-Ca]   *manndalaye:-thot* [Dir: Des]   *manetphyan* [Cir: Time]   *yauk-mye* [Auto-action: doing].

Mg.Than.Chaung-SBJMARK   Mandalay-ALL   tomorrow   arrive-IRR.ASS

'Mg Than Chaung will arrive at Mandalay tomorrow.'

(Myanmar Organization 2018)

Table 3. The Positions of Three Types of Groups/Phrases Serving as Circumstances in Myanmar Clauses

Type / Location	Group/phrase		
	Prepositional phrase	Adverbial group	Nominal group
At the beginning of a clause	+	–	+
Between the first participant role and the second participant role/between the first participant role and the process (when there is no second participant role)	+	+	+
Between the second participant role and the process	+	+	+

The preceding analysis reveals that, within the English language, circumstantial elements are traditionally positioned preceding the initial participant role, interposed between the first participant role and the process, positioned between the process and the second participant role, or situated at the conclusion of a clause. In the case of Myanmar, circumstantial elements are conventionally situated at the onset of a clause, positioned between the first participant role and the second participant role, placed between the first participant role and the process in the absence of a second participant role, or positioned between the second participant role and the process. Figures 1 and 2 provide visual representations delineating the placements of circumstantial elements and their manifestations in the transitivity configurations of English and Myanmar, respectively.
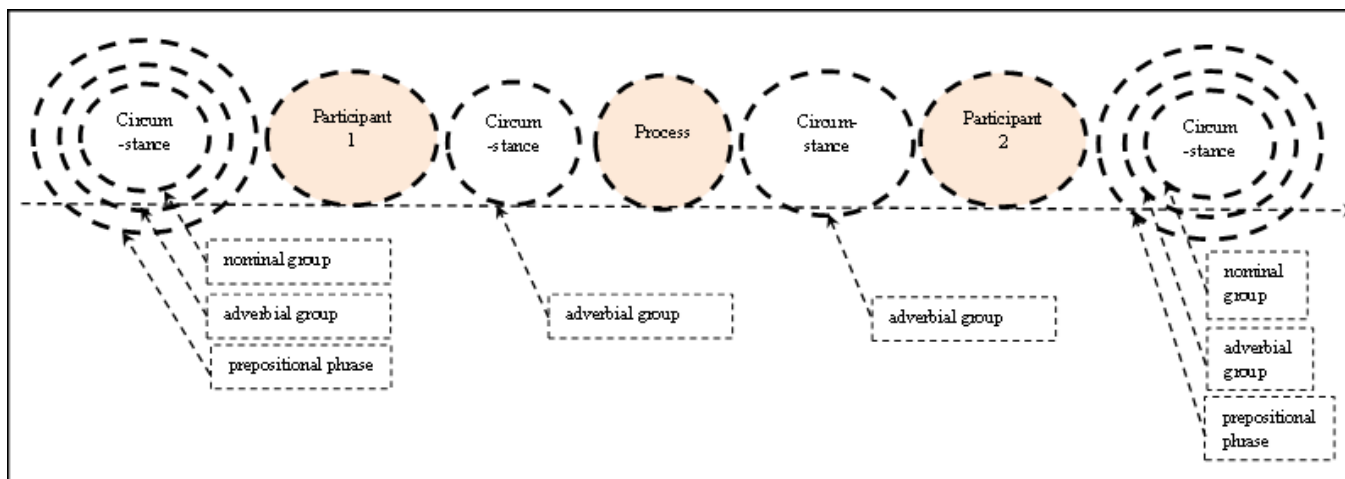
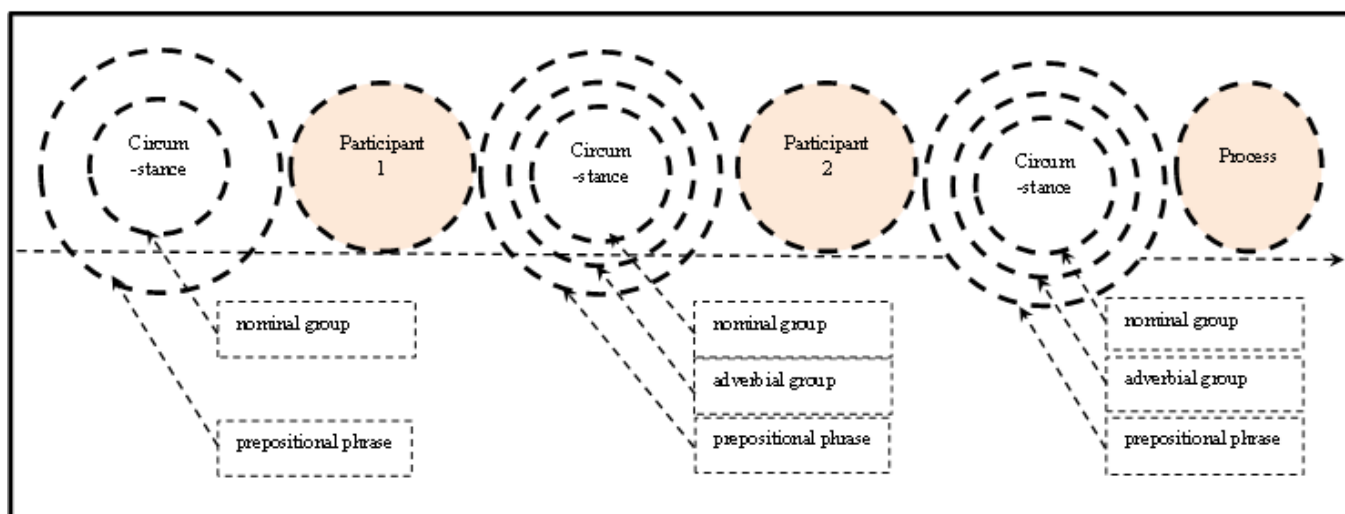Figure 1. The Positions of Circumstances and their Realizations in English Transitivity Configurations

Figure 2. The Positions of Circumstances and their Realizations in Myanmar Transitivity Configurations

The Ellipsis and Salience of Process or Participant in English and Myanmar Transitivity Configurations

While ellipsis of process or participant can be observed in the transitivity configuration of Myanmar, it is rarely found in English. In English, every major clause contains a process. Given that the process is the most salient element in English clauses, the ellipsis of process is not encountered. If the process is omitted, the clause becomes both ungrammatical and devoid of meaning. However, ellipsis of the participant does occur in English discourse. To illustrate, let's consider the transitivity analysis of the following excerpt from an English novel (see Example 20).

(20) Excerpt from English Novel (John Steinbeck 1945)

a. Juana [Ag-Ca] went [Auto-action: doing] to the fire pit [Dir: Des] and ([Ag]) uncovered [Auto-action: doing] a coal [Af] and ([Ag]) fanned [Auto-action: doing] it [Af] alive while she [Ag] broke [Auto-action: doing] little pieces of brush [Af-Ca] over it [Af-Dir: Des].

b1. Now Kino [Ag] got [Auto-action: doing] up [PrEx] and ([Ag]) wrapped [Auto-action: doing] his blanket [Af-Ca] about his head and nose and shoulders [Af-Dir: Des].

b2. He [Ag] slipped [Auto-action: doing] his feet [Af-Ca] into his sandals [Af-Dir: Des] and ([Ag-Ca]) went [Auto-action: doing] outside [Dir: Des] to watch the dawn.

c1. Outside the door he [Ag] squatted [Auto-action: doing] down [PrEx] and ([Ag]) gathered [Auto-action: doing] the blanket ends [Af-Ca] about his knees [Af-Dir: Des].

c2. He [Perc] saw [Auto-mental: perceptive] the specks of Gulf clouds flame high in the air [Ph].

c3. And a goat [Ag-Ca] came [Auto-action: doing] near [Dir: Des] and ([Ag-Perc]) sniffed [Auto-mental: perceptive] at him [Ph] and ([Behr]) stared [Auto-action: behaving] with its cold yellow eyes.

c4. Behind him Juana's fire [Af] leaped [Auto-action: happening] into flame [PrEx] and ([Ag]) threw [Auto-action: doing] spears of light [Af-Ca] through the chinks of the brush house wall [Dir: Pa] and ([Ag]) threw [Auto-action: doing] a wavering square of light [Af-Ca] out the door [Dir: Des].

c5. A late moth [Ag-Ca] blustered [Auto-action: doing] in [Dir: Des] to find the fire.

c6. The Song of the Family [Ca] came [Auto-relational: directional] now from behind Kino [Dir: So].

c7. And the rhythm of the family song [Tk] was [Auto-relational: identifying] the grinding stone where Juana worked the corn for the morning cakes [Vl].

d1. The dawn [Ag] came [Auto-action: happening] quickly now, a wash, a glow, a lightness, and then an explosion of fire as the sun [Ag] arose [Auto-action: happening] out of the Gulf.

d2. Kino [Ag] looked [Auto-action: doing] down [PrEx] to cover his eyes from the glare.

d3. He [Perc] could hear [Auto-mental: perceptive] the pat of the corncakes in the house and the rich smell of them on the cooking plate [Ph].

d4. The ants [Ca] were [Auto-relational: attributive] busy [At] on the ground, big black ones with shiny bodies and little dusty quick ants.

The excerpt consists of 14 sentences made up of 25 clauses in which there is no process omission. The excerpt should have 49 participants altogether, yet only 40 participants accounting for 81.6% of the total number of participants appear in the excerpt (see Table 4).

Table 4. The Ellipsis of Participant in the Excerpt from English Novel

Sentence	The number of processes	The number of participants that should be present	The number of participants that actually appears
a	4	9	7
b1	2	4	3
b2	2	5	4
c1	2	4	3
c2	1	2	2
c3	3	5	3
c4	3	7	5
c5	1	2	2
c6	1	2	2
c7	1	2	2
d1	2	2	2
d2	1	1	1
d3	1	2	2
d4	1	2	2
Total	25	49	40

Differing from English, in Myanmar discourse, there is not only the ellipsis of the 'Process' but also the ellipsis of the 'Participant.' These linguistic phenomena are exemplified in Example (21) below.

(21) Excerpt from Myanmar Novel (Lae Twin Thar Saw Chit 2004)

a. *kyanor* [Ca]   *tetgatho-hmar*   *sayar* [At]   *phyit=pyeenauk* [Auto-relational: attributive]

1SG.M.NOM   university-LOC   tutor   become=after.CONJ

([Ag])   *mahar-weiksar* [Af]   *set-tet-ya-the* [Auto-action: doing].

master-arts		continue-attend-OBLG-PRS.DECL.SENTSUF

'After I have become a tutor at university, I have to continue to attend Master of Arts.'

b1. *kyanordot*   *atann-hmar*   *lue-ga* [Ca]   *ne-i* [Auto-relational: attributive + At].

1PL(GEN)   class-LOC   person-SBJMARK   few-PRS.DECL.SENTSUF

'There are few people in class.'

b2. *arrlonnbaunnhma*   *ngarr-yauk-hte* [Ext]   ([Auto-relational: existential]).

altogether   five-CLF-EXCL

'There are only five people.'

b3.

meinnkhalaye:-ga	*laye:-yauk*	*yaukkyarrlaye:-ga*	*kyanor-tayaukhte* [Ext]	([Auto-relational: existential]).
girl-SBJMARK	four-CLF	boy-SBJMARK	1SG.M-only.one	

'There are four girls and only one boy.'

c.

tetgatho-hmar [Posr]	*neepyasayar*	*sayarmaphyitnaythue-dway-parthalo*	*aluttetthue-le* [Posd]	*par-i* [Auto-relational: possessive].
university-LOC	tutor.M	tutor.F-PLMARK-including	outsider-ADDCONN	include-PRS.DECL.SENTSUF

'There are not only tutors but also outsiders among the students who are attending master courses at university.'

d.

kyanordot	*atann-htetwin*	*ahtue:charrzonn-hmar* [VI]	*yinnmar* [Tk]	([Auto-relational: identifying])
1PL(GEN)	class-in.LOC	most.popular-SBJMARK	Yin.Mar	

'The most popular one in our class is Yin Mar.'

e1.

yinnmar-the [Cor1]	*kyanor-hnint* [Cor2]	*kyaunntharr-bawa-gadega*	*atann-tue-the* [Auto-relational: correlational].
Yin.Mar-SBJMARK	1SG.M-COM	student-life-since.ABLMARK	class-same-PRS.DECL.SENTSUF

'Yin Mar and I have been in the same class since our student life.'

e2.

kyanor-ga [Ca]		*nauksonn-hnit-twin*	*kwarlefainnphyit=ywayt* [Auto-relational: attributive + At]
1SG.M-SBJMARK		final-year-ABLMARK	qualified=CONJ
([Ca])	*tetgatho-hmar*	*neepyasayar* [At]	*pyanphyit-the* [Auto-relational: attributive]*.*
	university-LOC	tutor	become.PFV-DECL.SENTSUF

'I was qualified in my final year and became a tutor at university.'

f1.

thue-ga [Ag]	*aunyonthar-aun-the* [Auto-action: happening].
3SG-SBJMARK	just-pass-PRS.DECL.SENTSUF

'She just passed.'

f2.

([Ca])	*kwarlefainn‹ma›phyit* [Auto-relational: attributive].
	qualified‹NEG›

'She is not qualified.'

f3.

htotgyaunt	([Ag]) *nauksonn-hnit-hmar*	*takharhtaththtainpye e*	*kwarlefainnphyit-aun*	*phyay-ya-the* [Auto-action: doing].
so	final-year-ABLMARK	again	qualified-INF	answer-OBLG-PRS.DECL.SENTSUF

'So, she has to answer again to be qualified in the final year.'

g.

kyanor-ga [Ca]	*sayar* [At]	*phyit=pyee* [Auto-relational: attributive]
1SG.M-SBJMARK	teacher	become=CONJ
([Ag])	*ta-hnit*	*narr=ywayt* [Auto-action: doing]
	one-year	suspend=CONJ
([Ag])	*yakhu*	*maharweiksar-set-tet=dort* [Auto-action: doing]
	now	master-continue-attend=CONJ

([Ca])   *atanntue* [Ca]   *larphyitnay-gya-the* [Auto-relational: attributive].

classmate   become.PRS-PLMARK-DECL.SENTSUF

'When I became a tutor, I suspended my studies for one year, and when I continue to attend the master course now, we will become classmates.'

The excerpt consists of 7 paragraphs (a, b, c, d, e, f, g) composed of 12 sentences (a, b1, b2, b3, c, d, e1, e2, f1, f2, f3, g) and 18 clauses in which 3 out of 17 processes are omitted. Only 14 processes accounting for 82.4% of the total number of processes occur in the excerpt. The excerpt should have 25 participants altogether, yet only 18 participants accounting for 72 % of the total number of participants occur in the excerpt (see Table 5). This highlights that the ellipsis of participants occurs at a larger proportion than the ellipsis of process in Myanmar discourse.

Table 5. The ellipsis of process and participant in the excerpt from Myanmar novel

Sentence	The number of processes that should be present	The number of processes that actually appears	The number of participants that should be present	The number of participants that actually appears
a	2	2	4	3
b1	1	1	1	1
b2	1	0	1	1
b3	1	0	1	1
c	1	1	2	2
d	1	0	2	2
e1	1	1	2	2
e2	2	2	3	2
f1	1	1	1	1
f2	1	1	1	0
f3	1	1	1	0
g	4	4	6	3
Total	17	14	25	18

IV. CONCLUSION

This research undertakes a comparative analysis of the transitivity configurations in English and Myanmar. The study focuses on the subtle subordinate-level categories associated with fundamental processes in the transitivity systems of both languages, revealing variations between them.

English and Myanmar exhibit a shared characteristic of low process and participant integration. The transitivity configurations in both languages encompass the process itself, participant roles (including simple and compound roles), and circumstantial elements linked to the process. However, significant differences arise in the sequence, ellipsis, and salience of these semantic elements. In English, the process is typically positioned after the initial participant role, the second participant role, or both. The relationships between the process and participant roles are diverse. Circumstantial elements in English are conventionally placed before the subject, between the subject and predicate, between the predicate and complement, after the complement, or after the predicate in the absence of a complement. Participant roles may occasionally be omitted through ellipsis.

In contrast, Myanmar's transitivity configurations present distinct characteristics. Participant roles take precedence at the beginning of the clause, while the process is situated at the clause's conclusion, with limited positional relationships between them. Circumstantial elements in Myanmar are predominantly placed at the start of the clause, between the subject and complement, between the subject and predicate (in the absence of a complement), or between complement and predicate. Process ellipsis is infrequent in Myanmar, whereas participant role ellipsis occurs more frequently. These comparative findings contribute valuable insights to the examination of transitivity configurations across languages, particularly in the context of Myanmar.

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Abbreviations

Af	Affected
Af-Ca	Affected-Carrier
Af-Posd	Affected-Possessed
Af-Posr	Affected-Possessor
Ag	Agent
Ag-Ca	Agent-Carrier
Ag-Cog	Agent-Cognizant
At	Attribute
Auto	Autonomous
Behr	Behaver
Ca	Carrier
Cir	Circumstance
Cir: Pl	Circumstance: Place
Cir: TP	Circumstance: Time position
Cog	Cognizant
Comd	Communicated
Comee	Communicatee
Comr	Communicator
Cor1	Correlator1
Cor2	Correlator2
Cre	Created
Des	Destination
Desr	Desiderator
Dir	Direction
Em	Emoter
Ext	Existent
Infl	Influential
Loc	Location
Perc	Perceiver
Ph	Phenomenon
Posr	Possessor
Posd	Possessed
PR	Participant Role

Pro	Process
Ra	Range
So	Source
Tk	Token
Vl	Value

Abbreviations also Found in the Leipzig Glossing Rules

3PL	third person plural
1SG	first person singular
2SG	second person singular
3SG	third person singular
ABLMARK	ablative marker
ACC	accusative
ADDCONN	additive connective
AFFMARK	affectionate marker
ALL	allative
ANA	anaphoric
APPEL	appellative
ASSOC	associative
CAPAMOD	capability modality
CAUS	causative
CLF	classifier
CMPR	comparative
COM	comitative
COMP	complementizer
COMPA	compassion
CONJ	conjunction
CONN	connective
COP	copula
DAT	dative
DECL.SENTSUF	declarative sentence suffix
DET	determiner
DIM	diminutive

DU	dual
EMPMARK	emphatic marker
EXCL	exclusive
EXPER	experiential
F	female
FUT	future
GEN	genitive
INCL	inclusive
INF	infinitive
INS	instrumental
INT.SENTSUF	interrogative sentence suffix
LOC	locative
M	male
MOD	modifier
NEG	negative
NEGDECL.SENTSUF	negative declarative sentence suffix
NOM	nominative
OBJMARK	object marker
OBLG	obligation
OPT	optative
PFV	perfective
PLMARK	plural marker
POLMARK	polite marker
POSTDECL.SENTSUF	positive declarative sentence suffix
PROG	progressive
PRS	present
PST	past
PURP	purposive
REFL	reflexive
REL	relative
SBJMARK	subject marker
SUP	superlative