

УДК 81'36.811.111

**M. BIRYUKOVA,**

*Senior Lecturer of English Philology and Translation Department  
Alfred Nobel University, Dnipropetrovsk*

## **STRATEGIES FOR TRANSLATING PASSIVE CONSTRUCTIONS FROM ENGLISH INTO UKRAINIAN**

This article is dedicated to the peculiarities of passive constructions in the English language and comparison of their usage and formation in the Ukrainian language. Passive voice as a grammatical category which is used in different types of texts has always attracted attention of linguists. The difference in the usage and formation of passive voice leads to some difficulties while translating passive forms from English into the Ukrainian language. This article includes different ways to deal with the difficulties.

*Key words: passive voice, active voice, grammatical category, ways of translation, verb forms, indefinite personal sentences.*

**D**uring many years such phenomenon as translation has attracted attention of many linguists from different countries. Different scientists give various definitions to this process. For example V.M. Krupnov considers that translation is a difficult creative and analytical process which is connected with rendering the meaning of the original text and which requires all the resources of the translator [10]. At the same time L.S. Barkhudarov defines translation as converting one source language text into the target language text preserving the content and the meaning [2]. Translation plays the great role not only as a science, but also as a means of studying cultures, literature and scientific activity of different countries. Translation helps to realize cross-cultural and multilingual communication which contributes into the cultural development of a person. It is necessary to point out that translation and its parts have always been a topical issue for investigation. During the process of translation a great number of difficulties can arise. These difficulties are connected with diversity in lexical and grammatical structures of languages. Each grammar phenomenon does not always have necessary means of rendering in the target language. Passive voice constructions can be mentioned as one of such grammatical structures. It is clear that the relations between grammatical systems of two languages rarely have full coincidence [2]. This factor makes translators to employ different changes to achieve adequacy in translation. Many linguists consider that translation of passive voice constructions can be accompanied with difficulties as there are some differences in the usage of the passive voice in the English language in comparison with the Ukrainian language. It is these differences which require precise research and comparison in both languages.

As it is known the passive voice is widely used in both English and Ukrainian texts. But there are some differences in the usage of this grammatical form in the mentioned languages. It is necessary to study this grammatical phenomenon thoroughly in order to define the difficulties and find out the ways of their solving. The verbal category of voice shows the direction of the process as regards the participants of the situation reflected in the syntactic construction.

According to the dictionary the category of voice is a verbal form which demonstrates different relations between the subject and the object of the action and is formed by the verb stem. The category of voice shows the relation of the subject (doer) of the action and the object (thing) which the action is directed to. A.L. Pumpyanskiy studies this category as the verbal category which points to the relation of the subject or the object to the action itself [11]. B.O. Ilyish emphasizes that there are two definitions of this category. According to the first definition the category of voice shows the relations between the subject and the action, according to the second definition the category of voice expresses the relations between the object and the subject [8]. The linguist Y.A. Zhluktenko considers that the category of voice in the English language is the system of two-member oppositions (*to love – is loved*) which show if the action is fulfilled by the subject or by the object. In the Ukrainian language the category of voice is used to express the relations between the subject and the object of the action [6]. So the grammatical core of the category of voice is the possibility to express subject-object relations to the action.

The grammatical system of both languages has both active and passive voice of the verb. Active voice verbs express the action which is performed by the person or the thing which is the subject of the sentence. Sentences with active voice verbs are not difficult for the translation in comparison with the sentences with the passive voice constructions. Passive voice shows the action which is done to the thing which is the subject from the side of the other person or subject. The forms of the passive voice define the action which is directed to the subject when the subject is not the doer or the object of the action.

In the English language the passive voice is formed with the help of auxiliary verb *to be* in the appropriate tense form and *Past Participle* of the notional verb. M.A. Belyayeva in her grammar book emphasizes that the verbs in the passive voice are used in all tense forms as well as the active voice verbs except the forms of Present Perfect Continuous, Past Perfect Continuous, Future Perfect Continuous forms. These forms are replaced by the Present Perfect, Past Perfect, Future Indefinite forms:

*By the middle of the nineteenth century about sixty different dements **had been discovered**.* –  
До середини дев'ятнадцятого сторіччя було відкрито приблизно 60 нових елементів [3].

The negative and interrogative forms in the English language are formed as well as the forms in the active voice.

In the Ukrainian language there are three forms of the passive voice: 1) the form made from the non-perfect verbs with the help of reflective particle *-ся*; 2) passive participles made from the perfect and non-perfect verbs in indicative mood; 3) participial predicative forms in *-но, -то*. The category of voice shows the subject and object relations which do not coincide with the logical scheme of the utterance. In case there is no object, the subject is used instead of it. The category of voice can be employed only with the transitive verbs in the Ukrainian language. The peculiarity of the English language in comparison with Ukrainian is that the replacement of the active voice into the passive can be made with all types of transitive verbs which can be used either with the prepositions or without them. The presence or the absence of the object does not play any role:

*They were expected.* – *We expected them.*

The category of voice has a much broader representation in the system of the English verb than in the system of the Russian verb, since in English not only transitive, but also intransitive objective verbs including prepositional ones can be used in the passive. Besides, verbs taking not one but two objects, as a rule, can feature both of them in the position of the passive subject. Still, not all verbs which are capable to take an object are actually used in the passive. In particular, the passive form is alien to many verbs of the some subclass, such as *have, belong, cost, resemble, fail, and misgive*, etc. thus, in accord with their relation to the passive voice all the verbs can be divided into two large sets: the set of passivised verbs and the set of non-passivised verbs. A question then should be posed whether; the category of voice is a full-representative verbal category, i.e. represented in the system of the verb as a whole, or a partial representative category, confined only to the passivised verbal set. Considerations of

both form and function tend to interpret voice rather as a full-representative category, the same as person, number, tense and aspect. Three reasons can be given to back this appraisal.

First, the integral categorial presentation of non-passivised verbs fully coincides with that of passivised verbs used in the active voice; second, the active voice as the weak member of the categorial opposition is characterized in general not by the «active» meaning as such, but by the extensive non-passive meaning of a very wide range of actual significations, some of them approaching by their process-direction characteristics those of non-passivised verbs. Third, the demarcation line between the passivised and non-passivised set is by no means rigid, and the verbs of the non-passivised order may migrate into passivised order in various contextual conditions. Thus, the category of voice should be interpreted as being reflected in the whole system of verbs, the active voice form if not directly, then indirectly.

In the Ukrainian language the passive voice forms are made only with the perfect aspect verbs and the replacement from the active into the passive form is not always possible and new grammatical means should be searched for.

Another peculiarity of the English passive constructions is the usage of the prepositions *with* and *by*. According to A.L. Pumpyanskiy the doer or the thing which are expressed with the help of the noun or pronoun can be used in the passive construction with the help of the prepositions *with* and *by*. These prepositions show the relations which are expressed in the Ukrainian language by the instrumental case:

*This was done by many scientists. – Це було зроблено багатьма вченими.*

*Many shops are equiped with automatic machinery. – Багато цехів обладнанні автоматичними станками [11].*

The issue of the correct usage of the prepositions *with* and *by* is quite complicated and is not fully researched. It is well-known that in the Ukrainian language we use different questions asking about animate and inanimate objects. In the English language we use preposition *by* speaking about animate objects and preposition *with* for inanimate objects:

*This method of nitration has been reported by several investigators.*

*– Цей метод нітрування був вже описаний декількома вченими (ким?)*

*The protein was filtered, washed thoroughly with water, and the buffer salts were removed with Biodeminrolit resin. – Білок було профільтровано, промиваючи водою, і буферні солі було видалено смолою біодемінроліт (чим?).*

According to linguists the divergences in the systems of both languages can be found only on the text level. That is why the studying of the peculiarities of the passive voice usage is topical for the full understanding of the voice category and for solving the problem of its adequate translation. Y.V. Breus says that there are two situations when the passive constructions may be used correctly: 1) if the subject is unknown; 2) if the subject is known but cannot be mentioned because of some reasons:

*We squander most of our hard-earned petrodollars or spend them on equipment that takes years to come into use – this is what we should be worried about, not the fact that we export oil. – Та обставина, що більша частина грошей проїдається або витрачається на обладнання, яке роками не вводиться в дію, має турбувати нас куди більше, ніж сам факт експорту нафти [4].*

The usage of the passive constructions is connected with the general structure of the English language and with the partial absence of cases. In the Ukrainian language the ideas can be expressed in different ways: 1) *Це обладнання купувалось згідно з контрактом.* 2) *Це обладнання закупили згідно з контрактом.* 3) *Це обладнання було куплено згідно з контрактом.* But in the English language the only construction is possible: *This equipment was bought according to the contract [9].*

In the English language the passive constructions in the scientific texts are used more widely than in Ukrainian. It is connected with some language peculiarities. It is possible to replace a

sentence with the active verb into the passive even if there is a direct or prepositional object. But we cannot do it in the Ukrainian language.

Passive constructions in some English sentences do not have their equivalents in the Ukrainian.

*He was told the news. This state of things cannot be put up with.*

Moreover, some English transitive verbs can be translated into Ukrainian only with the help of intransitive verbs with prepositional or indirect object. These verbs are **to affect** діяти, впливати на, **to attend** бути присутнім на, **to follow** іти за, **to influence** впливати на, **to join** приєднуватися до, **to need** відчувати потребу в, **to treat** поводитися з, **to refuse** відмовлятися від:

*We were all deeply affected by the news of his experiments. – На всіх нас вплинула новина про його експерименти [7].*

It is also important that some English phraseological word combinations can be used in passive constructions, for example, **to make use of**, **to pay attention to**, **to take notice of**. These word combinations cannot be rendered in Ukrainian by the appropriate verbs without changing passive into active construction:

*His remarks were taken no notice of. – На його зауваження не звернули уваги [7].*

In the scientific, technical and publicistic texts passive constructions are more widely used form than in other texts. There are several factors which influence the usage of the passive voice. In the first place there is a tendency not to describe the action from the first person. Secondly, most of the verbs which mean action, reaction or process are transitive. And at last many journals and other editions which publish this literature require more compressed style:

*The man was orbited around the Earth. – Людину було запущено на орбіту навколо Землі [11].*

In the Ukrainian language passive constructions are not widely used even if there is a transitive verb which corresponds to the English passive form of the verb. Passive constructions are usually replaced by the active voice forms according to the stylistic norms in order to express logical stress:

*These fears were reiterated by the representative of the Weavers' Association, who said the closure would cause much hardship. – Ці ж побоювання виразив також і представник Асоціації ткачів, який сказав, що закриття шахт викличе більші труднощі [7].*

Passive constructions are employed in the specialized texts in several cases. When the active subject that is the doer of the action is unknown or cannot be mentioned:

*The lamp is connected in series. – Лампа підключена послідовно.*

If the active subject is messed deliberately as the main idea is connected with the passive subject:

*The launching of spaceship was carried out with great success. – Запуск космічного корабля було здійснено з великим успіхом.* In case the author wants to emphasize the passive subject e.g. *Nearly 600 houses were smashed by the hurricane. – Майже 600 будинків було зруйновано ураганом.*

There are some cases when the active and passive constructions are used together:

*Oxygen is drawn directly from a cylinder and passes through the cylinder reducing valve. – Кисень беруть прямо з циліндру, і він проходить через зменшувальний клапан циліндру.*

In conclusion we can say that passive constructions are more widely used in the English texts in comparison with the Ukrainian texts and this difference can be the problem of translation which should be solved by the linguists. The problem of translation is also connected with the rules of passive constructions formation in both languages. There are some cases when the passive form

should not be changed and can be left passive in the target text. This can be achieved only if there is an appropriate verb which can be used in passive form:

*The banning of taxi tips and the increasing of fares by equivalent amounts is to be suggested in the Commons tomorrow. – Завтра в палаті общин буде внесено пропозицію про заборо-  
ну брати чаєві від пасажирів таксі та про відповідне збільшення плати за проїзд [4].*

There is only one way to express passive voice in the English language, but the Ukrainian language has some of them. The active forms are widely used in the translation instead of passive constructions. Some sentences can be replaced by the indefinite personal ones, some verbs should be changed or sometimes even lexical means can be used to express passive voice:

*Thousands of London print workers have been urged by their branches to support Tuesday's lobby of Parliament against the wage-freeze. – Місцеві лондонські організації робітників дру-  
карень закликали своїх членів у вівторок взяти участь у поході до депутатів парламен-  
ту з протестом проти замороження заробітної плати.*

In case there is an appropriate Ukrainian transitive verb which can be equivalent to the English verb with indirect or prepositional object the English passive construction can be left without changing:

*The Sherman Anti-Trust Law is being interefered with. – Закон Шермана, спрямований  
проти монополій, постійно порушується.*

In case there is an appropriate Ukrainian intransitive verb which can be equivalent to the English verb with indirect or prepositional object the English passive construction should be changed into the active one:

*The bed was not slept in. – У ліжку ніхто не спав.*

There are some cases when the form of the verb coincide but according to the stylistic norms we cannot leave passive construction without changing:

*He was the sort of person more at ease being asked than asking. – Він належав до тих лю-  
дей, які з більшою охотою відповідають на питання, ніж ставлять їх іншим.*

The verbs in the form of **Indefinite Passive** can be rendered in Ukrainian with the help of:

a) combination of the verb *бути* and passive participle or passive construction with impersonal undeclined forms in *-но, -то*:

*An International movement of scientists for peace and disarmament **was founded** in 1955. – Міжнародний рух вчених за мир та роззброєння **було засновано** в 1955 році.*

b) verb which has particle *-ся* in its form in the appropriate tense form:

*The First Goodwill Games **were held** in Moscow. – Перші Ігри Доброї Волі **проводилися**  
в Москві.*

c) indefinite personal sentences:

*Planes **are allowed** to take off and land at Heathrow from six in the morning till eleven at night. – Зліт та посадка літаків в аеропорті Хітроу **дозволяється** з шостої до  
одинадцятої ночі.*

The verbs in the form of **Continuous Passive** can be translated into Ukrainian by:

a) the non-perfect forms of the verb in *-ся*:

*In most industrial cities atmosphere, soil and water **are being** constantly **polluted** with  
substances harmful to all living things. – Атмосфера, ґрунт та вода в більшості промисло-  
вих міст постійно **забруднюються** речовинами, які є небезпечними для всього живого.*

b) the indefinite personal sentences:

*The Russian language is **being taught** in many countries. – Російська мова **викладається**  
в багатьох країнах.*

The verbs in the form of **Perfect Passive** can be rendered in the Ukrainian language with the help of perfect aspect forms of the verb in active or passive voice or by the verbs in the third person plural of active or passive voice in the indefinite personal sentences:

*Anti-smog measures such as mandatory pollution control devices on cars and factories have been introduced in Los Angeles.* – *Такі засоби боротьби зі смогом як установка на автомобілях та промислових підприємствах механізмів обов'язкового контролю за забрудненням повітря а) були введені, б) введені, в) ввели в Лос-Анжелесі.*

The linguist A.Y. Kovalenko pays much attention to the passive constructions with the formal subject *it*, for example, *it is said, it is reported*. He says that such sentences can be rendered by indefinite personal sentences and are accompanied by the *that* which should be translated as *що*: ***It is said that these measurements are very important.*** – ***Кажуть, що ці виміри дуже важливі*** [9].

The combination of the modal verb with the infinitive in the passive voice can be translated by the active or passive voice forms:

*This technical article must be translated.* – *а) Ця технічна стаття повинна бути перекладена. б) Цю технічну статтю потрібно перекласти.*

In the English language the phraseological word combinations can be used in the form of passive voice. These word combinations are sense entities and can be rendered by the appropriate verb or combination of a verb and a noun:

*Care must be taken to lower the temperature.* – *Слід вжити заходів, щоб знизити температуру.*

While translating passive constructions with transitive English verbs which have the appropriate Ukrainian equivalents with prepositional object, the preposition is put before the English subject:

*The war was followed by the revolution.* – *Після війни почалася революція.*

Taking into account all the peculiarities we can say that translating passive constructions from English into Ukrainian the translator can face many difficulties connected with the differences in this grammatical category in both languages. But at the same time there are a lot of ways and methods to have an adequate translation according to the stylistic, grammar and lexical norms of the target language.

### Bibliography

1. Аракин В.Д. Сравнительная типология английского и русского языков: учебн. пособие / В.Д. Аракин. – М.: Высшая школа, 2000. – 256 с.
2. Бархударов Л.С. Язык и перевод (Вопросы общей и частной теории перевода) / Л.С. Бархударов. – М.: Международные отношения, 1975. – 240 с.
3. Беляева М.А. Грамматика английского языка / М.А. Беляева. – М.: Высшая школа, 1977. – 333 с.
4. Бреус Е.В. Теория и практика перевода с английского языка на русский: учебн. пособие / Е.В. Бреус. – 2-е изд.. – М.: Изд-во УРАО, 2003. – 104 с.
5. Бровченко Т.О. Основы контрактивного аналізу мов / Т.О. Бровченко // Порівняльні дослідження з граматики англійської, української, російської мов. – К.: Наукова думка, 1981. – С. 17–62.
6. Жлуктенко Ю.О. Порівняльна граMATика англійської та української мов / Ю.О. Жлуктенко. – К.: Радянська школа, 1960. – 157 с.
7. Зражевская Т.А. Трудности перевода с английского языка на русский (на материале газетных статей) / Т.А. Зражевская, Л.М. Беляева. – М.: Международные отношения, 1972. – 140 с.
8. Ильиш Б.А. Строй современного английского языка / Б.А. Ильиш. – Л.: Просвещение, 1971. – 367 с.

9. Коваленко А.Я. Загальний курс науково-технічного перекладу: учбов. посіб. / А.Я. Коваленко. – К.: Вища школа, 2001. – 290 с.
10. Крупнов В.Н. В творческой лаборатории переводчика / В.Н. Крупнов. – М.: Сов. писатель, 1968. – 449 с.
11. Пумпянский А.Л. Чтение и перевод английской научной и технической литературы / А.Л. Пумпянский. – М.: Наука, 1964. – 383 с.

Статтю присвячено вивченню особливостей пасивних конструкцій в англійській мові та порівнянню випадків використання та побудови форм пасивного стану в українській мові. Пасивний стан як граматична категорія, яка використовується в різних типах текстів, завжди привертала увагу науковців. Відмінності у використанні та формуванні форм пасивного стану є причинами виникнення труднощів при його перекладі з англійської на українську мову. У цій статті наведено можливі способи подолання таких труднощів.

*Ключові слова: пасивний стан, активний стан, граматична категорія, способи перекладу, форми дієслова, неозначено-особові речення.*

Статья посвящена изучению особенностей пассивных конструкций в английском языке и сравнению случаев использования и образования форм пассивного залога в украинском языке. Пассивный залог как грамматическая категория, которая используется в разных типах текстов, всегда привлекал внимание ученых. Отличие в использовании и образовании пассивного залога являются причинами возникновения трудностей при его переводе с английского на украинский язык. В данной статье приводятся возможные способы преодоления таких трудностей.

*Ключевые слова: пассивный залог, активный залог, грамматическая категория, способы перевода, формы глагола, неопределенно-личные предложения.*

*Надійшло до редакції 8.06.2012.*