

УДК 81'42

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.17721/APULTP.2024.48.149-162>**Oleg B. Yanush**

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**CURRENT WAYS OF EXPRESSING VOICE  
IN UKRAINIAN LANGUAGE**

**Abstract.** *The article covers consideration and analysis of syntactic rules for the category of voice in modern Ukrainian language, particularly in the sphere of professional communication. The proposed study traces the definitions of active and passive voice constructions, introduces definitions of direct and indirect subject, and also analyzes the formation of the indirect subject, indicating its belonging to the class of animate and inanimate objects. The article considers various ways of correct conveying of thoughts, accurate and logical presentation of the context, which can be achieved through particular syntactic norms of different styles in professional speech, using such verb voices as active and passive, as well as the reflexive voice, which is inherent, in particular, to Ukrainian language. Therefore, the author analyzes semantic structure of a clause from the point of view on reflecting transient process. Indicating the direct order of words in the sentence, it is manifested that subject in a sentence expresses a person or an object, a phenomenon that performs certain action, an object or a person that is in specific texts like natural, technical or social narratives, where subjects may be animate and inanimate ones. Formulating the idea through linguistic means in such clauses, statements, etc., it is affirmed that the semantic structure of the sentence is to be structured by definite syntactical model.*

*Also, through the study it has been defined the status of verbs with the postfix -sia (ukr. -ся) in contemporary Ukrainian language. Its uncertainty of usage is sometimes observed mentioning passive and reflexive voices in Ukrainian. This postfix historical development of applying within the morphological structure of the word, word combination and clause has been analyzed. The author believes that it indicates the action is accomplished by the subject itself. The characteristic features of the development of reflexive verbs used for various semantic connotations are distinguished considering relationship between subject and object in action, which allowed the author to distinguish at least their six qualifications keeping in mind much broader verb classification within reflexive constructions.*

*Taking into consideration that the mentioned verbs with postfix -sia are referred to the reflexive voice. It is emphasized that verbs with the mentioned postfix are derived from transitive verbs.*

*In conclusion it is emphasized that in modern Ukrainian literary language, and especially professional one, two-part active and passive constructions are commonly used, and the usage of reflexive voice needs further scientific investigation and study.*

**Keywords:** syntactic construction, active and passive voice, direct subject, indirect subject, impersonal forms, reflexive voice, indefinite-personal sentence.

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## **АКТУАЛЬНІ СПОСОБИ ВИРАЖЕННЯ СТАНУ В УКРАЇНСЬКІЙ МОВІ**

**Анотація.** У статті розглядаються та системно аналізуються синтаксичні моделі категорії стану в сучасній українській мові, зокрема у сфері професійного спілкування. У пропонованому дослідженні простежено сутність активних і пасивних конструкцій, прямого і непрямого підмета. Проаналізовано також формування непрямого підмета, зважаючи на його приналежність до класу живих істот і неживих предметів. У статті розглядаються різні граматичні способи логічного викладу думок, що досягається за допомогою використання стилістичної норми у професійній комунікації. Зокрема, аналізуються як комунікативні варіанти можливості дієприслівників активного й пасивного стану, а також ресурс зворотньо-середнього стану, який притаманний українській мові. Автор звертається до семантичної структури речення, звертаючи увагу на відображення перехідної дії. Зважаючи на прямий порядок слів у реченні, зазначається, що підмет у реченні може виражати особу чи предмет, або явище, яке виконує певну дію, або предмет чи особу, представлених у текстах: -природничих, технічних та ін. Автор доводить, що мовні засоби в різних типах речень формують специфічні моделі.

Актуалізовано дослідницький погляд на статус дієслів із постфіксом *-ся* в сучасній українській мові. Його невизначеність у вживанні подекуди спостерігається, коли ідеться про використання пасивного та зворотньо-середнього станів в українській мові. Зважено також на історичному розвитку постфіксу, який проаналізовано з точки зору застосування у морфологічній структурі слова, словосполучення та речення. Автор зазначає, що у такому випадку дія виконується самим суб'єктом. Характерні риси розвитку зворотних дієслів, що використовуються для різних семантичних конотацій, виокремлюються з огляду на зв'язок між суб'єктом і об'єктом. Це дозволило автору зосередитися на шести характеристиках явища, що відповідає класифікації дієслів у контексті дослідження зворотних конструкцій.

Зважаючи на те, що зазначені дієслова з постфіксом *-ся* віднесено до зворотньо-середнього стану, наголошується, що дієслова із зазначеним постфіксом є похідними від перехідних дієслів.

У висновках наголошується, що в сучасній українській літературній мові, а особливо професійній, поширені двоскладні активні та пасивні конструкції, а вживання зворотньо-середнього стану потребує подальшого наукового дослідження та вивчення.

**Ключові слова:** синтаксична конструкція, активний і пасивний стан, прямиий додаток, непрямиий додаток, безособові форми, зворотньо-середній стан, неозначено-особове речення.

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The morphological and syntactic features of the Ukrainian language, as a synthetic one, are based on its historical traditions of its formation and development, which are directly related to the way linguistic (intra-lingual) reality is represented by lexical, grammatical and syntactical means of the Ukrainian language. Correct expressing of thoughts and ensuring their adequate perception by extra-linguistic reality is an important factor in reflecting reality in the process of communication. One way to achieve this goal may be the use of active and passive voice structures in speech, which are more inherent to analytical languages. However, the syntactical features of modern Ukrainian language, being undoubtedly based on its historical traditions, are closely related to the way linguistic reality is

represented not only by lexical, grammatical means, but also by coordinational and connective ones of the Ukrainian language. Active and passive constructions of the Ukrainian language, as well as methods and conditions for setting the subject in a sentence, are important factors in preserving the identification features of word/syntagma semantics, i. e. its differentiations, for example, from analytical English language, where syntax and intonation play dominant role in conveying context meanings.

In contrast to literary or colloquial style, the nature of text construction, some cases of establishing word order in business or professional speech, especially with the use of alternating active and passive constructions, has its own characteristic features. One of the main requirements for sentences of this type in business speech is the accuracy and clarity of expression of a sufficiently large amount of complex content within the context. Contextual speech in professional language reflects the connections between objects and concepts in professional activity. Different types of semantic connections require usage of different constructions in order to avoid tautological and stereotyped formations. Template formulations lead to the clerical (chancellery, non-business) style of communication, where regular usage of the latter is allowed only in limited written forms of the official business style, and in unusual contexts it is almost impossible to create meaningfully accurate narratives that can convey the full complexity of the depicted objects and phenomena. Professional language is based on a combination of different styles. In addition to the official business style, there are documentary, scientific-business and epistolary-business styles. These styles require a variety of forms of expression, which is a characteristic feature of the culture of speech, the richness and development of a particular language, being main means of written and oral professional speech.

It goes without saying, that the study of the syntax in Ukrainian language goes back to the 16<sup>th</sup> century, when, as it is well-known, the first research in this direction was carried out by the talented linguist, spiritual writer, publicist, church and public figure M. Smotrytsky. Even then, in his "Grammar", an outstanding monument of Slavic

grammatical idea, Smotrytsky formulated the system of cases as the characteristic means of synthetic Slavic languages, identifying syntax and prosody (rules of rhyming), and thus the connections of words in phrases and sentences.

In Ukrainian linguistics, the active study of verb usage has led to an understanding of the resulting verb semantics. In the aspectological classification system, verbal relations were presented in the article "Theoretical grammar of the Ukrainian language. Morphology" by A. Zahnitko [12]. Recently, scientists have begun to explore different styles of professional speech. The issue of active and passive voice constructions in professional language was also considered by M. Ginzburg [1]. The author, basing his ideas on the research of linguists of the early twentieth century, observed, in particular, the use of two-part and three-part passive constructions, presented criteria for distinguishing active and passive constructions in Ukrainian language, examined formations with verbs ending *-net*, and gave recommendations for usage of various syntactic structures [1, p. 13]. Also, we can find recommendations for the use of transitive and intransitive verbs in professional speech or constructions in the works of Anzhelika Popovich and Lyudmila Marchuk [9, p. 98]. Elena Lavrynets compared the transformation link of different types of active and passive voice [6, p. 43].

Formation and usage of different constructions should be appropriate, consistent with grammatical, syntactical and semantic structure of the text, as well as with the norms of the Ukrainian language in general. In professional speech, particularly, various constructions are often used interchangeably: personal and impersonal sentences, active and passive voices of language, adjective phrases and subordinate modifiers of the clause, adverbial turns of speech and subordinate adverbial clauses, etc. [6, p. 43]. These constructions have grammatical difference, as well as lexical and semantic similarity. So, it is possible to use one or another phrase as interchangeable. In their application special consideration should be paid to the context, form and/or type of document, the meaning of the opinion presented, etc. For example, impersonal clauses are often used in reports, messages, and instructions, where it

is important to emphasize on the actions and measures taken. Regarding the usage of active and passive syntactical structures the following idea is common to be taken into consideration: Passive voice is used when the fact of the action is more important than the indication on the person who fulfilled the action (payment is guaranteed), Active voice is to be used when the indication on the person is important and it is necessary to specify expression of the idea. The issue of these structures' usage is debatable nowadays; linguists are developing recommendations for the use of active and passive phrases in different styles of the Ukrainian language.

Active and passive constructions are two different ways of transmitting a thought by means of particular lingual keeping in mind the same transient extra linguistic reality. Two parts of communication is obligatory in this process, i. e. functioning of the subject and the object. Therefore, the semantic structure of a sentence that reflects transient process has three terms: subject, predicate, and object. In professional texts subjects may be animate creatures (including persons) and inanimate objects (natural, technical or social ones). In order to formulate the idea through linguistic means, the semantic structure of the sentence is to be conveyed by certain syntactical structure. The predicate is to be defined by the verb, i. e. by the actants or doers of the action (subject and object), that are represented by the other parts of sentence. Between the semantic and syntactic structures of sentence there is the same dialectical relations like between the content and the form, that is one semantic structure can be represented by several syntactic structures in a particular language.

There are two main variants, which refer to the fact that the syntactic function of the subject is performed by one or another part of a certain semantic structure: subject or object, and both options reflect different views depending on the situation of lingual reality. At the same time, they do not differ much in terms of the sentence content, which is determined by configuration between words, and many other factors that focus on a specific action, phenomenon or object. In addition, each of these two options can be implemented by different language means. When choosing language means of

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expression, the speaker takes into account some constraints and assumptions caused by the particular language peculiarities and the circumstances of communication. In order to compare these two main variants and their sub-variants, let us take into consideration some of basic constructions that comprise principal and secondary parts of the sentence [1, p. 4].

The majority languages of the world comprising triple active construction, means that the composition of the sentence is conveyed in such a way that the subject performs its main syntax function, that is nominative. Predicate is represented by transitive verb, the meaning of which is conveyed by a direct object literally naming the object, for example: бізнес створює робочі місця (*business creates job positions*). Therefore, active constructions are characterized by the coincidence of subject's syntactical semantic with its grammatical meaning, where together in its action they formulate the main idea of the clause. When describing those syntactical processes in professional texts or speech it would be important to emphasize the role of subject in its particular expression of action or process. In our opinion the object and its attribute are also important, because the usage of passive construction becomes motivated, where the subject takes the position of the indirect object and the object itself implements its syntactical function of the subject. Due to such kind of transformation the syntactic role of the subject decreases, but the object increases. Triple passive construction in grammar regards the way of sentence construction in which the subject expressed in the form of pronoun in plural form performs the syntactical function of the indirect object, and the object expressed in the form of the nominative one is being the subject in such a kind of sentence.

In a way, it is generally accepted that passive constructions are derived from active ones. Let us consider examples: "The Board signed an agreement". This clause, as to say, is classic active construction including subject, taking its position at the very beginning of the sentence, simple predicate expressed by the transitive verb and direct object. "*The agreement is signed by the Board of Directors*" is passive construction, where the object takes place of the subject in the very beginning of the clause; the predicate

is transited into its Past Participle form with auxiliary verb in the form depending upon the person and number of the subject, and the doer of the action being the attributive word combination in indirect case with preposition "by" which is inherent to passive constructions, where the doer of the actions is mentioned. In Ukrainian language Active Voice is formed the same way as in English, like Subject + Predicate + Object. But Passive Voice, due to some peculiarities of the Ukrainian as synthetic language, forms a bit different, i. e. object takes its place in the very beginning of the sentence acquiring features of the subject; then predicate takes its position in the Past Participle form which is considered just the Past Simple in Ukrainian, where auxiliary verb is omitted, which is inherent to the Ukrainian either, and object without preposition, because of its morphological form in indirect case, since the system of cases is quite evolved in Ukrainian language.

From the formal point of view, both structures are constructed correctly in terms of subordination and control. The semantic view of these clauses emphasizes precisely the reflected processes of extralinguistic reality. The subject of active construction is the person, and the object is the thing that is influenced by the person. In passive voice we can observe an indirect subject that denotes inanimate entity bearing formal construction effect.

Let us take into consideration some clauses of the Ukrainian language that do not name the subject directly, that is one may be passive or may not be formally represented at all. We distinguish sentences without specifying the direct subject.

In contemporary Ukrainian language the uncertainty of the status of verbs with the postfix *-sia* (ukr. -ся) is sometimes observed. Historically, this postfix indicates an action being completed over the subject itself. With the development of reflexive verbs the usage of different semantic connotations become their characteristic features, which unequally regard the relationship between the subject and the object of action, which allows to distinguish the following: (1) reflexive action verbs; (2) reciprocal verbs; (3) indirect reflexive verbs; (4) common-verse verbs; (5) active-objectless verbs; (6) passive qualitative verbs [8, p. 232]. reciprocal



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verbs and reflexive pronouns such as each other to describe action that happens mutually, for example: "They discussed the contract with each other". N. Scherbiy uses much broader classification of reflexive constructions based on the reflection indentifications. Passive reflexive verbs were identified as so-called reflexive passive voice [10:186]. In Ukrainian those verbs with the mentioned postfix are referred to the voice defined in grammar as Reflexive one. After all, except the Reflexive Voice, words that are used with this post-fixing are derived from transitive verbs; impersonal verbs that contain the postfix *-sia*, as well as personal verbs used in the meaning of impersonal ones; verbs that do not have correlative transitive verbs. The latter ones are used in the meaning of *to be proud* or *to be afraid of*, so as infinitive form with post-fixing *-sia*.

Some linguists point out that the idea that in modern Ukrainian there are almost no passive verbal forms with postfix *-sia* to indicate the present and other meanings of time (tense). After all, the personal verbal forms with the postfix *-sia* indicate the pre-result state, which is not observed in the Ukrainian language. K. Horodenska believes that those from the Ukrainian passive constructions should be removed, "which include verbs of imperfect aspect with postfix *-sia*, that have been traditionally considered as typical means of forming passive forms for transitive verbs of the imperfect aspect. It is stipulated by the fact that in the syntactic system of the Ukrainian language the mentioned-above passive constructions, as opposed to other Slavic languages, may occur on the edge of periphery.

The triple-part passive construction, which we may confirm, is beyond regulatory norms of use. Impersonality or "neutral passivity" is understood as the part of clause not requiring the definition for the doer of action [8, p. 112]. Consequently, the correct implementation of syntactic forms with verbs ending *-sia* is that of a construction with omitted subject. In some cases, passive subject may be assumed as if it is used for detailing of certain specifications or qualities of the subject, rather than the subject as it is. Authors often recommend avoiding such constructions in Ukrainian, but they can be used where it is necessary to focus on the qualities or functions of the passive subject, which is most often expressed in comparison clauses.

Another aspect being predominant in the syntax of professional speech is the indefinite-personal clauses. Those sentences do not contradict the recommendations of the language culture, and are of precise uncertainty of the action subject being the advantage for uniqueness of the indefinite-personal sentences, used with almost the same frequency and stylistic function in all styles and genres of language, namely considered as inter-style constructions. These sentences do not need to specify the subject, and its indication is often even unnecessary, which is used just to complicate both the nomination and perception, as well as to complex the construction. As for comparison, let us consider the following sentences: *Entrepreneurs generally take up essential subsystems of the world economy on the second level* and *Essential subsystems of the world economy is generally taken up on the second level*.

The clauses with passive participles like "*Ukrainian hryvnia was recognized as one of the most harmonious currencies in the world by the International Financial Bank's Aesthetics Commission in 2008*" show that there is passive subject called "aesthetics commission", which today is defined by linguists as a non-normative entity [3, p. 10]. Passive participle sentences that serve as the grammatical basis of sentence should be used without specifying indirect subject. In that case, where the information carried by the subject is important, it is obligatory to use active construction, for instance: "The International Financial Bank's Aesthetics Commission in 2008 recognized the Ukrainian hryvnia as one of the most beautiful and harmonious currencies in the world" [11, p. 775].

In modern Ukrainian linguistics predicates ending -no, -to (ukr. -но, -то respectively are defined as non-changeable forms that have semantical and syntactical differences. The unchanging forms ending -no, -to are formed from passive participles and intend to effect communication. In addition, they form grammatical center of a simple sentence, being always predicates with subject omitting. Semantically, these forms do not require the presence of the action doer; syntactically, they become the main part of monosyllabic clause. Nowadays, these verbs are regarded as resultative ones, within the meaning of which there is a straight effective completed

action. For example: *To mechanize this theory an algorithm for selecting data and calculations was developed* [11, p. 775].

Predicative forms ending *-no*, *-to* are known to have had a long-standing tradition of usage. They are consolidated as specific feature of Ukrainian syntax. The views of Ukrainian linguists on the functioning of constructions with predicative forms ending *-no*, *-to* are quite interest. In condition of using passive construction in the form of future tense as a predicative, the passive participle should be replaced with verbal joining, or it is to replace these passive constructions with indefinite-personal sentences. For example: "*This job will be offered soon.*" instead of "*This job to offer.*". Some authors define predicative forms ending *-no*, *-to* as "decline of temporality" and assume to use verb-like "primitive-type" connections like *job is offered*, but their compulsory usage goes into more structurally complex sentences, which is obligatory to relate with the past or future tenses. For example: "*An experimental study has been conducted to develop methods for solving this problem.*"; conf. "*An experimental study will be conducted to develop methods for solving this problem.*". The majority of modern linguists support the latter position. Accordingly, sentences with predicative forms ending *-no*, *-to* without verbal links have the meaning of present perfect ("*something has already happened at the time that concerns the expression*"). A. Zahnitko developed semantic classification of verbs, where the author individually defined the verb with the meaning of result [12, p. 221–222], Some other define them as the final stage of the resultativeness [3, p. 171]. For example: "*An experimental study has been conducted to develop methods for solving this problem.*". The following constructions are quite common in scientific texts nowadays: "*The key way for controlling companies was the method external auditing*" [6, p. 42].

It is worth paying attention upon the omitted subject in those non-personal constructions. Verbs ending *-no*, *-to* indicate the effectiveness (e. i. resultativeness) of the action and is not related to the doer of the action.

The common tradition of using Passive Voice in Ukrainian language is that the action is taken into context without the subject

being indicated. Moreover, the subject must neither be active nor passive. The tradition to use of different signs in Ukrainian professional language has formulated as to say distinguished opinion on the realization of passive constructions in speech. The historical consistency of the active voice implementation of subject-object relations in Ukrainian language has led to disappearing indirect subject in passive constructions, particularly in those ones where indirect subject is expressed by certain person. At the same time, the usage of passive voice is often observed in sentences with indirect subject expressed by inanimate one.

**Conclusions.** This would be rightly to notice, that the subject being in a minor position in the sentence is quite a characteristic feature of literary language. It is common for many European languages. Triple active and passive constructions contain the same information, but they differ only in their attitude to the transient process for lingual reality caused by the syntactic functions performed by subject and object. The trend for Ukrainian passive constructs is that the position and function of object is caused by the influence of subject. Since the Ukrainian literary language is rather close to the colloquial one, where the doer of the action is mentioned in the center of the communicative situation, the passive triple-part constructions are not peculiar to it, and usually realizes the state impersonally. Thus, when the speaker wants to emphasize on the subject and the process the subject performs, he/she uses triple-part active constructions. But and when he/she wants to focus on the process and its result, or on the object and its features, it generally omits the subject from the clause.

Therefore, there is a wide-spread use of Reflexive Voice in Ukrainian language that is not inherent to English, in which the mentioned voice is not acknowledged just because of the separate usage of the pronoun *self*, that makes the sentence to be in Active Voice.

It would be necessary to add, that impersonality is peculiar to professional texts either. For this reason, the most common features for modern Ukrainian literary language are incomplete two-part active and passive structures, which can be easily formed with three-part ones omitting of the subject. These constructions consist of two

parts (predicate and object), which are designed to support readability of the clause or expression.

Along with Reflexive Voice in Ukrainian, Active and Passive forms of verbs ending -no and -to (ukr. -но, -мо relatively) are under close attention of scientific researchers; and this layer of Ukrainian syntax needs further investigations and explanations.

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**Актуальні проблеми української лінгвістики: теорія і практика**  
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**Дата надходження до редакції – 12.01.2024**

**Дата затвердження редакцією – 22.02.2024**



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