лише розширенню словникового запасу, а й підготовці до реального спілкування англійською мовою.

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THE FUNCTIONAL-SEMANTIC FIELD OF THE PASSIVE VOICE IN TECHNICAL ENGLISH AND UKRAINIAN: A CONTRASTIVE PERSPECTIVE ON TEACHING IN ESP CLASSES

With international communication and collaboration on the rise, English has firmly established itself as the dominant language of science, technology, and professional communication. For students and professionals in technical fields, the ability to read, write, and understand technical English is no longer optional – it is a necessity. Within this context, the passive voice emerges as a particularly important grammatical structure. It allows authors to present information objectively, emphasize processes or results over agents, and maintain a formal tone – all of which are typical features of technical texts such as manuals, research papers, and engineering documentation.

However, for Ukrainian-speaking learners of English for Specific Purposes (ESP), mastering the passive voice poses specific challenges. While both English and Ukrainian have mechanisms for expressing passive meaning, the forms they take and the frequency with which they are used differ significantly. Ukrainian often employs reflexive constructions or impersonal forms where English would use a clear passive verb phrase. As a result, learners frequently struggle with accurately identifying, understanding, and using passive structures in English technical contexts.

This article explores the functional and semantic field of the passive voice in both English and Ukrainian, with a focus on how these differences affect ESP

learners. By analysing examples from technical texts and contrasting grammatical norms in both languages, we aim to highlight areas of potential interference and misunderstanding. Furthermore, we offer practical teaching strategies designed to help learners navigate the complexities of the passive voice, enhancing their ability to communicate effectively in technical English. Through this contrastive approach, the article seeks to bridge the gap between linguistic theory and classroom practice in ESP education.

Despite the acknowledged importance of the passive voice in technical communication, it remains one of the most challenging grammatical phenomena for learners of English as a foreign language – particularly in ESP (English for Specific Purposes) settings. This challenge is especially pronounced among Ukrainian-speaking students due to significant structural and functional differences between the two languages. While English frequently relies on passive constructions to present information in an impersonal and objective manner, Ukrainian tends to use alternative strategies, such as reflexive verbs or impersonal syntactic constructions. As a result, direct translation of passive forms or an uncritical application of native-language norms often leads to miscommunication, stylistic inconsistency, or grammatical inaccuracy in technical texts.

This discrepancy poses a dual challenge: linguistic and pedagogical. On the linguistic level, there is a need for a more nuanced understanding of how passive meaning is constructed and interpreted differently in English and Ukrainian technical discourse. On the pedagogical level, instructors must develop effective strategies to help students navigate these differences, moving beyond mechanical grammar drills toward contrastive, usage-based approaches that reflect real-world communication needs.

The problem is also situated within a broader scientific and educational context. As technical education in Ukraine increasingly aligns with international standards and as students prepare to participate in global professional and academic environments, their ability to produce grammatically accurate, stylistically appropriate English texts becomes a key competence. Therefore, understanding the functional and semantic specifics of the passive voice – and addressing the contrastive challenges it presents – is not only a matter of grammatical theory but also a practical task with implications for academic success and professional readiness.

Addressing this problem contributes to both theoretical linguistics (by enriching our understanding of cross-linguistic grammatical patterns) and applied linguistics (by informing effective ESP pedagogy). It also supports the development of curriculum materials that are responsive to the specific needs of Ukrainian learners of technical English.

Recent studies in the field of ESP and contrastive linguistics have increasingly addressed the role of grammatical voice in technical discourse. Notably Borg emphasizes in his report the pedagogical importance of functional grammar (Borg, 2019) in ESP contexts, highlighting the passive voice as a core feature of technical communication. Research by P. Shopin (Shopin, 2023), published in *Scientific Journal of National Pedagogical Dragomanov University,* explores difficulties Ukrainian

learners face when translating English passive constructions, noting the tendency to overuse reflexive forms. Similarly, the corpus-based work of Ping Alvin in *Journal of Science Communication* provides (Ping Alvin, 2014) empirical data on the prevalence of passive forms in technical and scientific writing. However, there remains a gap in studies that specifically contrast the passive voice in English and Ukrainian technical discourse, particularly from a teaching perspective – this article seeks to address that gap through a combined linguistic and methodological lens.

The comparative analysis of passive voice constructions in technical English and Ukrainian reveals substantial differences in both form and frequency of use, which significantly impact learners' ability to comprehend and produce technical texts accurately. The research draws upon parallel corpora of engineering manuals and academic papers to highlight three main areas of divergence that create difficulties for Ukrainian-speaking learners in ESP classes.

Example 1: Agentless passive construction

In English: *"The system was tested under extreme conditions."*

A direct Ukrainian equivalent would often require an impersonal construction: *"Систему випробовували за екстремальних умов"*.

While the English version uses a clear passive voice with no agent, the Ukrainian sentence omits the subject entirely, favouring a verb in active form with an implicit agent. This structural difference can mislead learners into avoiding passive constructions in English altogether or using them unnaturally with explicit agents.

Example 2: Passive with modal verbs

In English: *"The error must be corrected before proceeding."*

In Ukrainian: *"Помилку потрібно виправити перед продовженням"*.

Here, English maintains a grammatical passive voice, whereas Ukrainian employs a verbal noun or impersonal modal construction. Students often fail to reproduce the passive form in English, defaulting to structures like *"It is needed to correct the error,"* which are grammatically awkward or incorrect in technical English.

Example 3: Complex passive structures

In English: *"The data is expected to be analysed by the end of the week."* Ukrainian equivalent: *"Очікується, що дані буде проаналізовано до кінця тижня"*.

This structure illustrates the use of complex passive forms with infinitives in English, which are rare in Ukrainian. Learners tend to overgeneralize Ukrainian syntactic patterns, producing incorrect forms such as *"It expects the data to be analysed,"* misunderstanding the subject-object relationship.

These examples confirm that the passive voice in technical English is not only more frequent but also structurally more versatile than in Ukrainian. Learners struggle to internalize these patterns (Nykyporets, 2023) due to limited exposure to authentic technical texts and insufficient contrastive practice. The study's findings justify the need for targeted pedagogical interventions that highlight these contrastive features. Exercises that integrate translation, sentence transformation, and contextual usage analysis have proven effective in helping learners develop a deeper understanding of passive constructions.

The scientific significance of these results lies in their potential to inform the design of ESP curricula tailored to the linguistic background of Ukrainian students. From a practical perspective, the adoption of a contrastive approach enables instructors to anticipate typical learner errors and address them systematically, ultimately improving students' proficiency (Stepanova, 2025) in technical English and their readiness for global academic and professional environments.

This study highlights the significant functional and structural differences between the use of the passive voice in technical English and Ukrainian, and how these differences affect learners in ESP contexts. It was found that Ukrainian-speaking students often face difficulties in accurately forming and interpreting passive constructions due to the more limited and context-dependent nature of passive structures in their native language. The analysis of real technical texts revealed common areas of interference, such as the omission of passive forms, awkward literal translations, and the overuse of active or reflexive constructions. These findings confirm the necessity of a contrastive linguistic approach in ESP teaching that not only explains grammar rules but also actively compares usage across languages within relevant technical contexts.

From a pedagogical standpoint, the study supports the integration of targeted classroom strategies – such as contrastive grammar exercises, guided translation tasks, and discourse-level analysis – to build learners' awareness of passive structures and their communicative functions in professional English. Such methods foster more confident and accurate language use, particularly in writing and interpreting technical documentation.

As for future research, there is scope for expanding this contrastive analysis to other grammatical features that frequently appear in technical English, such as nominalization or conditional structures. Further empirical studies involving classroom implementation of contrastive tasks and learner performance tracking could provide deeper insight into the effectiveness of proposed teaching strategies. Additionally, developing digital resources and corpora tailored to Ukrainian ESP learners would support more individualized and data-driven instruction, ultimately strengthening their academic and professional language skills.

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