TRANSLATING COMPLEX NOUN PHRASES IN THE CONTEXT OF CIVIL PROTECTION: LEXICAL AND GRAMMATICAL CONSIDERATIONS

ПЕРЕКЛАД СКЛАДНИХ ІМЕННИКОВИХ СЛОВОСПОЛУЧЕНЬ У КОНТЕКСТІ ЦИВІЛЬНОГО ЗАХИСТУ: ЛЕКСИЧНІ ТА ГРАМАТИЧНІ АСПЕКТИ

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This article explores the lexical and grammatical peculiarities of translating complex noun phrases (CNPs) within civil protection discourse, drawing on selected examples from English and Ukrainian civil protection materials, specifically those published on the Dovidka.info platform – an information hub designed to support the civilian population during wartime and other crisis situations. CNPs, which are commonly used to convey technical, procedural, or institutional concepts, often present challenges due to their condensed structure and specialised content.

On the lexical level, the study examines how translators handle terminological specificity, navigate culturally embedded expressions, and resolve semantic ambiguity. The analysis highlights the importance of context-sensitive lexical selection to ensure both terminological accuracy and communicative clarity in the target language. Typical strategies include the use of established equivalents, lexical expansion, and adaptation to culturally relevant forms. These approaches help preserve the communicative intent of the original while enhancing accessibility for Ukrainian-speaking audiences.

From a grammatical perspective, the research focuses on structural mismatches between English and Ukrainian, such as the use of premodification in English versus postmodification in Ukrainian, as well as differences in word order and syntactic hierarchy. The findings show that effective translation frequently involves grammatical transformations – including genitive case constructions, syntactic reordering, and the introduction of clarifying elements – to adapt English CNPs to Ukrainian norms without compromising meaning or register. In many cases, noun-heavy English phrases are restructured into more analytically transparent Ukrainian equivalents.

The study offers insight into the types of transformations most commonly employed and underscores the translator's role in mediating between linguistic systems while preserving the functional purpose of the original message. These findings may inform future research in specialised translation and contribute to the development of practical guidelines for rendering complex terminology in high-stakes communication contexts.

Key words: complex noun phrases, lexical challenges, grammatical transformation, civil protection discourse, translation strategies, nominalization.

У цій статті досліджуються лексичні та граматичні особливості перекладу складних іменникових фраз (СІФ) у дискурсі цивільного захисту на основі вибраних прикладів з англійських та українських матеріалів з цивільного захисту, зокрема тих, що опубліковані на платформі Dovidka.info – інформаційному центрі, призначеному для підтримки цивільного населення під час війни та інших кризових ситуацій. СІФ, які зазвичай використовуються для передачі технічних, процедурних або інституційних понять, часто становлять певні труднощі через свою стислу структуру та спеціалізований зміст.

На лексичному рівні в дослідженні розглядається, як перекладачі поводяться з термінологічною специфікою, орієнтуються в культурно вкорінених виразах та вирішують семантичну неоднозначність. Аналіз підкреслює важливість контекстно-залежного лексичного вибору для забезпечення як термінологічної точності, так і комунікативної чіткості в мові перекладу. Типові стратегії включають використання усталених еквівалентів, лексичне розширення та адаптацію до культурно релевантних форм. Ці підходи допомагають зберегти комунікативний намір оригіналу, одночасно підвищуючи доступність для україномовної аудиторії.

З граматичної точки зору, дослідження зосереджується на структурних невідповідностях між англійською та українською мовами, таких як використання премодифікації в англійській мові проти постмодифікації в українській, а також на відмінностях у порядку слів та синтаксичній ієрархії. Результати показують, що ефективний переклад часто передбачає граматичні трансформації, включаючи конструкції родового відмінка, синтаксичне перегрупування та введення пояснювальних елементів, щоб адаптувати англійські складні іменникові фрази до українських норм без шкоди для значення або стилю. У багатьох випадках англійські фрази з великою кількістю іменників реструктуруються в більш зрозумілі українські еквіваленти.

Дослідження дає уявлення про типи перетворень, які найчастіше використовуються, та підкреслює роль перекладача в посередництві між мовними системами, зберігаючи функціональне призначення оригінального повідомлення. Ці результати можуть стати основою для майбутніх досліджень у галузі спеціалізованого перекладу та сприяти розробці практичних рекомендацій щодо перекладу складної термінології в контексті комунікації з високими вимогами до точності.

Ключові слова: складні іменникові фрази, лексичні труднощі, граматичні трансформації, дискурс цивільного захисту, перекладацькі стратегії, номіналізація.

Problem statement. In the face of escalating global instability – including military conflicts, natural disasters, and other large-scale emergencies – the role of efficient communication in the sphere of civil protection has become increasingly vital. Materials produced in this domain must ensure not only accuracy and clarity but also accessibility for broad audiences. Consequently, the demand for high-quality translation from English into Ukrainian has intensified, particularly with regard to linguistically dense structures such as complex noun phrases (CNPs).

CNPs play a central role in conveying specialized and often intricate information in a compact form. However, their rendering poses significant challenges stemming from the lack of direct equivalents in the target language. These include context-sensitive interpretation, careful lexical selection, grammatical adaptation, and, in some cases, syntactic restructuring or lexical expansion to achieve functional equivalence.

Despite their prevalence in technical and official texts, the translation of complex noun phrases within the specific domain of civil protection remains insufficiently explored in contemporary translation scholarship. This article seeks to address this gap by analysing recurring lexical and grammatical issues and proposing solutions that enhance the functional adequacy and linguistic consistency of Ukrainian renditions.

The analysis of the latest research and publications. Against this backdrop, the translation of specialised texts pertaining to safety, crisis response, and emergency risk communication has drawn heightened academic attention. Scholars have examined how linguistically complex and terminologically saturated materials are conveyed across languages, offering valuable insights into lexical, syntactic, and pragmatic challenges – all of which are directly relevant to the present research focus.

Svitlana Kiyko (2023) explored approaches to rendering safety and life protection texts, with particular emphasis on contextual reinterpretation, lexical adaptation, and syntactic restructuring [4, pp. 128–133]. Her findings highlight the complexity of conveying security-related terminology and risk phrases in Ukrainian, stressing the importance of functional equivalence and terminological clarity – issues that directly intersect with the challenges posed by complex noun phrases in civil protection discourse.

In a closely related area, Olena Babych and Anna Monashnenko (2023) examined how media content was rendered during martial law, highlighting the importance of translator's responsibility, cultural sensitivity, and pragmatic adjustment when dealing with emotionally charged and terminology-heavy materials [1, pp. 66–75]. Although their study focuses on media texts, it reinforces the broader argument that emergency-related content demands linguistic precision and thoughtful adaptation, particularly when addressing a civilian audience in a wartime context.

Iryna Bezhener and Anastasiia Kusik (2022) investigated the communicative and pragmatic functioning of contemporary Ukrainian military vocabulary, focusing on how military terms are integrated syntactically into the target-language discourse [2, pp. 12–22]. Their observations on maintaining communicative intent and structural coherence in translation provide a relevant foundation for this study's emphasis on the treatment of multi-element noun phrases in civil protection texts.

While each of these studies concentrates on specific domains – including media, military, or security-related texts – they collectively underscore the relevance and complexity of translating terminology-rich materials related to crisis communication. However, the specific issue of rendering complex noun phrases in civil protection discourse remains underexplored. This article aims to contribute to existing scholarship by analysing lexical and grammatical strategies for their accurate and functional reproduction in Ukrainian, thus enriching the academic discourse on translation practices in specialised and crisis-related contexts.

The aim of the study is to provide a comprehensive analysis of the lexical and grammatical characteristics of complex noun phrases found in English-language civil protection discourse and to outline the main difficulties involved in conveying them into Ukrainian. The study aspires to enhance understanding of the translation process for such constructions and to support the development of more precise and reader-oriented translation practices in specialised communication.

Presentation of the main material. As Biber et al. [3] state, "A complex noun phrase is typically composed of a head noun plus one or more modifiers, which can include prenomial adjectives, nouns, participles, and postnominal prepositional or relative clauses, functioning together to provide detailed description or specification." Such phrases are particularly common in civil protection discourse due to the need for accuracy, conciseness, and technical specificity.

On the lexical level, difficulties arise from the ambiguity of internal relations within the phrase, the presence of culturally or terminologically bound items, and the need for semantic clarification. On the

grammatical level, structural differences between English and Ukrainian require the translator to modify word order, use postmodification instead of premodification, and adapt syntactic patterns to the norms of the target language.

The following section provides a brief outline of the key lexical and grammatical features identified in a representative sample of complex noun phrases taken from English- and Ukrainian-language versions of civil protection guidelines.

The examples below illustrate three main types of lexical issues encountered in the translation process: **terminological specificity, cultural adaptation** and **semantic ambiguity.**

In the category of terminological specificity, both examples illustrate how adherence to standardised terminology ensures clarity and preserves the functional equivalence of the source terms:

Emergency rescue service → аварійно-рятувальна служба [4, 6]. This phrase refers to a specific type of public emergency response unit. The Ukrainian equivalent is an established term in official documentation, and its use reflects terminological consistency. The phrase is translated by using compound adjectives (*аварійно-рятувальна*) that match professional usage in Ukrainian emergency protocols.

Powder fire extinguisher → порошковий вогнегасник [4, 6]. Here, the term *powder fire extinguisher* refers to a well-known piece of firefighting equipment. In Ukrainian, the translation employs an adjective (*порошковий*) to describe the type of extinguisher, following standard technical nomenclature.

Some complex noun phrases involve elements whose interpretation depends on cultural or regional norms, requiring adaptation rather than direct translation. In the category of cultural adaptation, the following examples demonstrate how contextual and cultural awareness plays a key role in ensuring translation adequacy:

Ground floor → перший поверх [4, 6]. This translation reflects a cultural and systemic difference. In British English, *ground floor* corresponds to the Ukrainian *перший поверх*, whereas in American English, it may be interpreted as the *first floor*. The translator must be aware of these differences and adapt the translation accordingly so that it corresponds to Ukrainian perceptions of space.

Emergency suitcase → тривожна валіза [4, 6]. The concept of an emergency suitcase as a pre-packed kit for evacuation is culturally embedded and therefore requires context-sensitive rendering. In Ukrainian discourse, the term *тривожна валіза* has become widely accepted, particularly during wartime, even though the adjective *тривожна* does not literally correspond to *emergency*. This choice reflects conventional usage and enhances communicative effectiveness in the target-language context.

In the category of semantic ambiguity, the following examples demonstrate how lexical choices depend on context and require balancing between neutrality and specificity:

Control device → керувальний пристрій [4, 6]. This phrase can denote various mechanisms or technologies. Without specific context, the Ukrainian equivalent *керувальний пристрій* conveys a neutral but technically appropriate meaning. The translation preserves the general sense while maintaining a professional tone. Given more context, a more precise term such as пульт керування might be preferable to reflect a specific type of control device.

Tail section (of the bomb) → хвостова частина бомби [4, 6]. The English term is inherently ambiguous until clarified by context. It might refer to a technical component like stabilising fins or simply a part of the object. The Ukrainian translation introduces a postmodification (*частина бомби*), which adds clarity and ensures the phrase is context-sensitive and explicitly denotes which part is meant.

Fire escape → пожежна драбина [4, 6]. In the context of fire safety instructions for multi-storey buildings, the term fire escape specifically refers to an external ladder or staircase used for emergency evacuation. The Ukrainian equivalent, *пожежна драбина,* accurately denotes this physical evacuation device. The example sentence emphasizes practical use: if the usual downward escape route is blocked, residents are advised to climb onto the roof or use the fire escape. This underscores that *пожежна драбина* is understood as a tangible, structural element rather than a general exit route. The translation, therefore, requires precise lexical choice to reflect this functional and situational specificity.

In addition to lexical considerations, grammatical features play a crucial role in translating complex noun phrases, particularly in ensuring syntactic coherence and stylistic adequacy in the target language. Key challenges stem from structural differences between English and Ukrainian, such as word order, the placement of modifiers, and the grammatical realisation of attributes. These often require converting premodifiers into postmodifying elements, inserting functional words, or rephrasing dense nominal constructions to suit Ukrainian syntactic norms.

To illustrate how these issues arise in practice, several representative examples from authentic civil protection materials are presented below.

Respiratory protection equipment → засоби захисту органів дихання [4, 6]. The English compound noun uses a premodifying structure (*respiratory protection*), which is restructured in Ukrainian into a noun phrase with postmodification (*захисту органів дихання*). This shift reflects common syntactic patterns in Ukrainian technical discourse and ensures greater clarity and grammatical cohesion.

Disaster response coordination mechanism → механізм координації заходів реагування на надзвичайні ситуації [4, 6]. This example demonstrates a major grammatical restructuring. The compact English phrase, consisting of four consecutive nouns, is rendered in Ukrainian as a longer, more explicit construction. To make the relationships between the components clear, the translation uses a series of connected phrases, which is more typical and natural for Ukrainian syntax.

Salvo fire systems → системи залпового вогню [4, 6]. The English premodifying phrase *salvo fire* is translated using a genitive construction (*залпового вогню*), which is a standard method in Ukrainian for expressing attributes that would otherwise be represented as premodifiers in English.

Air defence systems → системи протиповітряної оборони [4, 6]. Here, the compound modifier *air defence* is rendered as a genitive noun phrase (*протиповітряної оборони*), following the syntactic norms of Ukrainian technical terminology. The grammatical shift from a compound adjective to a noun-based modifier improves clarity and acceptability.

Carbon monoxide poisoning → отруєння чадним газом [4, 6]. This phrase involves a grammatical shift from a compound modifier to an instrumental phrase in Ukrainian. The use of *чадним газом* conveys the cause of the poisoning through a more natural syntactic structure in Ukrainian medical and safety discourse.

Metal detector frames → рамки металодетекторів [4, 6]. In this example, the compound noun *metal detector* functions as a modifier of *frames* in English. Since Ukrainian does not use noun-noun compounding in the same way, the phrase is restructured using a genitive case (*металодетекторів*) to show the relationship between the two nouns. This transformation involves shifting from an attributive noun phrase to a noun with a dependent noun in the genitive case, which is a typical grammatical strategy for conveying specification or belonging in Ukrainian.

Conclusions. This research illustrates that the translation of intricate noun phrases within civil protection documents requires careful lexical selection and adaptable grammatical modifications. It is essential to strike a balance between terminological precision and cultural as well as contextual relevance to achieve clarity in understanding. Grammatical adjustments – like converting English premodifiers into Ukrainian postmodifiers and reorganizing noun groups – are vital for generating syntactically accurate and comprehensible translations. The successful interpretation of complex noun phrases relies on the translator's skill in managing these linguistic variances while maintaining the original intent and communicative purpose.

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