

UDC 811.11:81'276.6; 81'44
DOI <https://doi.org/10.26661/2414-1135-2020-80-1-4>

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF RENDERING ELEMENTS OF ADMINISTRATIVE DIVISIONS IN ENGLISH-UKRAINIAN TERMS

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Key words: *toponym, administrative territorial divisions, translation, transliteration, neutral connotation.*

The article deals with the translation of administrative divisions on the basis of American media discourse. When translating documents or other texts, the rendering of administrative divisions and proper names is of minor concern to the translators, in comparison to special terms or idiomatic expressions. However, consistency and standardization are what interpreters need and what they do not yet have, at least between the American English and Ukrainian. Various renderings of administrative divisions are discussed for two directions: a) from English (U.S. terms) into Ukrainian, and b) from Ukrainian into English. The paper seeks to address how to solve the problem of administrative units' translation as a part of culture-specific items. The main objective of the article is to comprehensively investigate the ways of rendering the levels of administrative division in the USA and Ukraine, and current strategies applied by translators. In this context, the article examines the types of translation transformations, representation of transmitting of administrative divisions from English to Ukrainian, the best ways of the terms translation complying with the rules of Ukrainian language. Special attention is focused on national standardization of geographical names, namely on the conversion of endonyms: transliteration, transcription, translation and exonymization. Emphasis is placed on translation as a method of name conversion when the toponym includes a "translatable" generic term, meaning the source toponym, has semantic or lexical; on transliteration, the method of names conversion, which requires the replacement of each character in the source script by a corresponding character of the target script; on transcription, which is a phonetic approach to name conversion rather than a "letter-for-letter transformation" as in transliteration. The study highlights that administrative units are meaningful and able to convey hidden information, which in turn cannot be understood without profound cultural awareness, as well as this form of culture-specific items should be rendered into the target language by using both linguistic and cultural knowledge.

ПОРІВНЯЛЬНИЙ АНАЛІЗ ПЕРЕКЛАДУ ЕЛЕМЕНТІВ АДМІНІСТРАТИВНО-ТЕРИТОРІАЛЬНИХ ОДИНИЦЬ В АНГЛО-УКРАЇНСЬКИХ ТЕРМІНАХ

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Ключові слова: *топонім, адміністративно-територіальний устрій, переклад, транслітерація, нейтральна конотація.*

Стаття присвячена проблемам перекладу адміністративно-територіальних одиниць на основі дискурсу американських ЗМІ. Під час перекладу документів чи інших текстів переклад адміністративно-територіальних одиниць та власних назв викликає незначне занепокоєння перекладачів порівняно зі спеціальними термінами чи ідіоматичними висловами. Однак узгодженість та стандартизація – це те, що потрібно перекладачам, але й те, чого вони не мають, принаймні це стосується американської англійської та української мов. Багато перекладів стосовно адміністративно-територіального поділу обговорюються за двома напрямками: з англійської (американські терміни) українською та з української англійською. Стаття прагне знайти рішення щодо перекладу адміністративних одиниць як культурно зумовлених термінів. Основна мета статті полягає у всебічному дослідженні способів перекладу рівнів адміністративного поділу в США та Україні та поточних стратегій, що застосовуються перекладачами. У цьому контексті в статті розглядаються типи перекладацьких трансформацій, надано приклади перекладу адміністративних поділів з англійської українською, а також найкращі способи перекладу термінів, що відповідають правилам української мови. Особлива увага приділяється національній стандартизації географічних назв, а саме перетворенню ендонімів за допомогою транслітерації, транскрипції, перекладу та екзонімізації. Акцент робиться на перекладі як на методі перетворення імен, коли топонім включає «перекладний» загальний термін, що є джерелом топоніма, і має семантичний або лексичний характер, транслітерації – методі перекладу імен, який вимагає заміни кожного символу у вихідному сценарії відповідним символом цільового сценарію; транскрипції, що є фонетичним підходом до перекладу імен, а не «буквеним перетворенням», як у транслітерації. У дослідженні підкреслюється, що адміністративні одиниці є значущими та здатні передавати приховану інформацію, яку своєю чергою неможливо зрозуміти без глибокої культурної обізнаності; ця форма одиниць, що стосується певної культури, має відтворюватися цільовою мовою за допомогою як лінгвістичних, так і культурних знань.

Problem statement. Proper names and administrative divisions are used in all spheres of human activity, which means that they can be found in a wide variety of functional styles. Translation of proper names and terms for administrative units requires special attention since errors in translation can lead to inaccuracies and misinformation. Therefore, when translating administrative divisions, the translator faces very difficult tasks, namely: it is necessary to accurately reflect the cultural and

national specifics of divisions, to preserve their sounding as much as possible.

The transfer of toponymic units has always been a rather controversial issue, both in theory and in the practice of translation. Many Ukrainian and foreign scientists (I.V. Korunets [3], B.M. Azhniuk [1], V.I. Karaban [2], D.I. Yermolovich [1; 10]) assert that difficulties with proper names translation also arise because of the lack of distinct rules to avoid divergences in language systems and cultures. Even

the existing rules are not always followed in the practice of translation, although a translator should bear in mind the importance of those rules for the official texts translation. The problem of adequate conveying of terms for administrative units is described in this article. As the material for the study of this issue, from our point of view, the most relevant are texts of American media discourse.

Purpose of the article. The aim of this research is to define lexical, semantic and grammatical specifics of rendering administrative divisions, identify the main problems arising in this process and offer the most adequate ways of translating such units.

Presentation of the main material. According to the “Manual for the National Standardization of Geographical Names” by the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names, there are four processes for the conversion of endonyms: (1) transliteration, (2) transcription, (3) translation and (4) exonymization [5]. An endonym is the name of a geographical feature in the language or languages occurring in the precinct where the feature is situated [4]. Names conversion is the process of transferring a name, and in particular an endonym, from one language to another or from one script to a different one [4; 8]. This may become necessary when one deals with, or is situated in, a multilingual country, and has to standardize the names in two or more languages and/or scripts, or when the need arises in a monolingual country to supply names in different scripts, either to its own citizens or to institutions in another country [6].

Let us consider first the administrative divisions in the United States. It would be much easier for us if these divisions could be put in one unambiguous downward line, for example, state – county – city (village). Alas, the reality is far from this, and, even at the uppermost level, we have not one but three essentially equal terms: *state*, *commonwealth* (the official label for several states), and *district* (as in District of Columbia). The first of these terms (state) appears in “United States”.

Thus, in Ukrainian the established rendering is *штат* (although the Ukrainian mass media prefer the exact transliteration: *смеїт*).

The term *commonwealth* has probably no specific connotation when applied to some states in official documents. Moreover, the official letterheads may sound like this: “Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. Office of the Secretary of State”. So the meaning seems identical, and some dictionaries suggest translating *commonwealth* the same way as *state*, although the correct version is *співдружність*.

The District of Columbia represents a unique first-level administrative division in the United States. Although the majority of sources render *district* here as *округ*, perhaps a better solution would be to transliterate it as *дистрикт*, saving *округ* for *county* (see Table 1).

On the second level of administrative division in the U.S., we again have three terms. The most common one is *county*; its equivalents in just two states are *parish* (in Louisiana) and *borough* (in Alaska). First of all, for the benefit of clarity and uniformity of translation, all three of them should be rendered identically. If we consult the dictionaries, only one of the several versions given for these terms is common for all three of them: *округ*. However, there is much controversy surrounding the Russian version of *county*. For some reason, most of the Russian mass media in this country adhere to the term *графство* with the root “*граф*”, meaning “*count*” in English. Of course, in England, where this term originated, it makes sense, but in the U.S., where there have never been any counts, *графство* sounds highly inappropriate. It is interesting that in Russia they mostly reserve the term *графство* for Britain, and no Ukrainian sources provide a similar rendering (though the local ones give a rather archaic *новім*) [8; 10].

Coming now to the third, and the lowest level, of administrative division in the U.S., we observe a highly vague variety of terms. The terms *city* and *village* seem to plainly correspond to *місто* and *село*. However, one must be careful with the term *village*, since its original

Table 1

Preferred Renderings of U.S. Administrative Units in Russian and English

U.S. Term	Respondents' Preferred Ukrainian	Author's Preference if Different
State	Штат	
Commonwealth	Співдружність	
County	Округ	
Parish	Округ	
Borough	----	Боро (sometimes)
City	Місто	
Township	Містечко	Тауншип (sometimes)
Municipality	Місто	Міське селище
Village	Село	Селище or Містечко
District	Район	Округ
Vicinage	Округа	Округ

agricultural connotation has mostly disappeared in this country, so instead of, in most cases, the more appropriate term would be *селище* or *містечко*, depending on the actual predominantly rural or predominantly urban situation there. And of course, where *city* or *village* are incorporated in the proper name, as in Atlantic City or Greenwich Village, they should just be transliterated: *сiтi* and *вiледж* [8; 10].

But besides these, there are also such terms as *borough*, *township*, and *municipality*. All of them represent units within a county (or its equivalent) with some local self-governmental powers, but with no apparent distinctions. When we analyzed maps of several counties in New Jersey, where there are *boroughs* and *townships* of the same name, we found no specific order of magnitude for them – neither in area nor in population. A *borough* may have either more or less area and population than a *township*; the *municipality* seems to be generic for this category (including also *city* and *village*) [4; 6].

One rendering that is common for all three of these terms in the dictionaries is *район*. However, this term as understood in Ukraine implies the more or less even (in terms of area) subdivision of a higher-level administrative unit (*область*), just like *county* versus *state* in the United States. But the subdivision of a *county* into *municipalities* is highly uneven. For example, in Monmouth County, their range in area is between 0.10 and 62.10 square miles. Thus, the preferred rendering of *municipality* as a generic term would probably be something like *міське селище*, meaning an urban settlement. Or, if we sacrifice briefness completely, the more precise versions may be used: *населений пункт міського типу* [7; 9; 10].

As for *borough* and *township*, two possible approaches should be considered: translation and transliteration. Since there is no apparent difference between these terms, there may be just one translation for both of them – most likely *містечко*. As we have seen, this translation would frequently coincide with the translations for *village*, which would do no harm to the meaning of the respective words in the languages concerned. However, when confronted with the need to render two different “municipalities” having just one proper name, one would be in jeopardy. For example, in the same Monmouth County, there are Freehold Township and Freehold Borough. To distinguish between them, we do not see any better way than transliteration: *тауншип*.

The term *borough* has yet another meaning: one of the five administrative units of New York City. Here, fortunately, there is no need for transliteration, since big cities in Ukraine are likewise subdivided, and such a subdivision is called *район*. The same term, as we have seen, applies to a subdivision of *область*, and to distinguish between them when needed an adjective, *міський*, precedes *район* when it is within a city.

Up to this point we have been discussing political administrative divisions in the U.S., but there are other administrative divisions as well, sometimes confusingly similar to the political ones. An example of such a term is our good acquaintance *district*, as in *school district* and *judicial district*. No better rendering of this seems to exist than *округ*, preceded, if needed, with a corresponding adjective. Sometimes a rare term with the same meaning can be encountered. For example, in the State of New Jersey, when dividing the territory for judicial purposes, they use *vicinage* instead of *district*, while in other places they use *circuit*. But, of course, their translation should be the same as for *district*.

Let us now reverse the direction and discuss how to render Ukrainian terms for administrative division in English. The most frequent first-level division is *область/oblast*, with variations given above; its transliteration would probably have to reflect the pronunciation differences. Its translation variants include *region*, *district*, and *province*. Of these, *region* seems to be larger than *district* (so it would be wise to use them for different levels of administrative division), and *province* is neutral [7; 9].

When a country has more than one level of administrative division (above the local, municipality-type level), it would probably be acceptable to use *region* for the first level (*область* and its variants,) and *district* for the second (*район*). However, when there is only one level above local (as in relatively small countries like Moldova or Lithuania), *district* will do (see **Table 2**).

Before going to the lowest level of administrative division, we should mention that in Ukraine and in some countries of CIS (Commonwealth of Independent States) there are parallel first-level administrative divisions. Some of them are obvious in translation: *республіка* = *republic*; *автономна республіка* = *autonomous republic*; *автономний округ* = *autonomous district*; however, *край* is not. Dictionaries give *territory*, while maps give transliterated *krai* or *krai*. Our opinion is that *territory*, as a neutral term, is preferable to any transliteration [7; 9].

Finally, the lowest level of administrative division in Ukraine is represented by the following pairs: *місто* can be translated quite clearly as *city* or *town*; *село* as *village*; *селище* as *settlement*; and there are also *селище міського типу*. In the last term, the urban character of a settlement is emphasized, therefore the best rendering would be *urban settlement*. We would rather avoid a shorter version (*municipality*) here because in the U.S. this term is broader and includes cities, while the Ukrainian term discussed refers to localities of a lower category than cities [10].

Conclusions. Translators need a profound knowledge of Source Language and Target Language. The background knowledge of translators

Table 2

Preferred Renderings of Russian Administrative Units in English

Ukrainian Term	Respondents' Preferred English	Author's Preference if Different
Республіка	Republic	
Автономна республіка	Autonomous Republic	
Край	Territory	
Область	Oblast	Region or Province
Автономна область	Autonomous Oblast	Autonomous Region
Автономний округ	Autonomous District	
Район	District	
Місто	City	City or Town
Селище	Village	Settlement
Селище міського типу	Municipal Settlement	Urban Settlement
Село	Village	

shouldn't be limited only by grammar, phonetics and morphology, but it should also include knowledge on Culture-Specific Items. Translators should be careful with the translation of proper names otherwise Target Language audience would be confused with the translated material. Knowledge and commonly accepted standard of proper names' translation is needed to Ukrainian translators to convey Source Language text in a proper manner. In this regard, we recommend translators to attach great importance to the translation of proper names, as they are able to make readers aware of information necessary for reaching complete comprehension of the text.

As can be seen from the article, to render administrative units, a translator should follow certain rules and recommendations: identify the unit and its type, define the national identity, check for any traditional equivalents, and only then make a well-considered translation decision.

Findings of the current study suggest the most appropriate methods of rendering administrative units which, depending on a number of factors, involve transliteration according to the governmentally established Romanization rules, practical transcription, transposition and grammatical transformation. A detailed analysis of modern approaches to the translation of administrative units provides the further research opportunities.

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