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THE DYNAMICS OF REFERENCE: MEANING, CONTEXT, INTERPRETATION

Nataliia DIACHUK

Zhytomyr Ivan Franko State University

natadiachuk@gmail.com

<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-5905-6813>

*The study investigates reference as a central mechanism of textual cohesion and stylistic effect in literary discourse, with particular emphasis on its function in translation. Reference, understood as the relationship between linguistic units and the entities they denote, enables the recurrence of meaning without unnecessary repetition, while coreference establishes interconnected chains of expressions that contribute to characterisation and narrative coherence. The analysis explores the challenges posed by pronominalization, synonymic substitution, and the rendering of stylistically marked units across languages. Special attention is devoted to the translation of humour, wordplay, and culturally embedded expressions in Terry Pratchett's *Soul Music*, where the preservation of referential ties requires creative strategies such as calquing, domestication, and localisation.*

The comparative examination of English and Ukrainian discourse reveals systematic differences in referential practices: Ukrainian translations often rely less on pronominal reference and more on nominal variation, reflecting grammatical and lexical conventions of the target language. This tendency reshapes the rhythm and stylistic texture of the narrative, while still maintaining coherence. The findings highlight the necessity of reconstructing foreign linguistic and cultural frameworks with stylistic fidelity, yet simultaneously adapting them to the norms of the receiving culture.

Ultimately, the study argues that successful translation of referential structures depends on achieving a delicate balance between semantic accuracy, stylistic integrity, and cultural resonance. By foregrounding reference as both a linguistic and stylistic phenomenon, the research underscores its pivotal role in shaping the reader's perception of character, narrative flow, and the aesthetic qualities of translated literary discourse.

Key words: *text cohesion, coreferential ties, literary discourse, intertextual analysis, cultural localisation*

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I. INTRODUCTION

Reference constitutes the relationship between an object and the linguistic unit employed to denote or recall that object. This mechanism enables the repeated mention of an entity without resorting to redundancy or tautology. Referential cohesion is maintained through the identity or synonymy of its elements (Liu R., Mao R., Luu A. T., Cambria E., 2023). The interpretation of reference is one of the most intricate tasks in linguistics, owing to the inherent ambiguity and polysemy of its components, which are readily subject to contextual influence (Bohnet B., Alberti C., Collins M., 2023).

The **topicality** of studying reference is evident in the growing interest in text as a system of interconnected elements, where reference plays a crucial role in ensuring contextual cohesion. This is significant not only for theoretical linguists but also for translators, who must navigate referential chains to preserve meaning in alternative discourses.

The **study aims** to investigate and analyse both theoretical and practical knowledge concerning the structure and organisation of reference, the nature of such relations, and the functions performed by its elements within the text. This is achieved via the analysis and observation of the associative cooperation of referential and coreferential units in literary works.

The **empirical foundation** of this study is constituted by Terry Pratchett's *Discworld* novel, specifically *Soul Music* (translated into Ukrainian by O. Liubarska). These texts serve as the primary corpus for examining the mechanisms of reference and coreference within literary discourse, providing a fertile ground for analysing the interplay between linguistic structures and their translation across cultural and linguistic boundaries.

This study sets out several **key tasks** that together form the basis of the investigation. It examines the structure of reference as a linguistic phenomenon, providing the theoretical background for the analysis. It then explores how reference functions as a system of related elements, identifying the main participants in these relations and the roles they play in literary texts. The research also outlines the conditions that make referentiality possible, with special attention to semantic and stylistic connections. Another important thing to consider is to address the challenges of translation, especially the difficulties of recognising, adapting, and accurately conveying references across languages. This includes tracing how references and their elements work as expressive units that ensure cohesion and interaction in the text, and examining the problems of adapting them into English-language literary work such as Pratchett's *Soul Music*. The study further investigates stylistic changes that occur during translation, focusing on how valency and usage affect the adaptation of discourse. It also considers lacunar vocabulary as contextually significant units of referential relations, discussing both the problems they create and the strategies for adapting them. Finally, the research highlights stylistically marked units in literary texts and explains the challenges they present for translators.

This study applies a range of complementary **methods** to ensure both theoretical depth and practical relevance. The analytical method is used to examine the internal structure of referential and coreferential relations. The descriptive method allows for the systematic presentation of examples drawn from the literary corpus, illustrating how these mechanisms operate in practice. The comparative method highlights differences and similarities between the original English texts and their Ukrainian translations, while the contextual method focuses on the role of discourse environment in shaping meaning. Contrastive analysis is employed to reveal cross-linguistic patterns and to identify the challenges of adapting referential structures across languages. Together, these methods provide a balanced framework that combines close linguistic observation with broader interpretive analysis, enabling a nuanced understanding of how reference and coreference contribute to textual cohesion and stylistic expression.

The novelty of this research lies in its synthesis of theoretical insights into the structure of reference and coreferential expressions with their practical application in the interpretation of literary discourse. It advances the field by not only consolidating existing knowledge but also by demonstrating how these mechanisms function in translation, where semantic identity and stylistic nuance must be preserved across linguistic boundaries. In addition, the study identifies key linguistic processes and examines them through the lens of semantic relations, which act as prerequisites for referentiality. By doing so, it highlights the ways in which these processes influence the representation and functioning of reference, offering new perspectives on the interaction between linguistic form, textual cohesion, and translation practice.

II. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A closer examination of reference and its patterns requires attention to the underlying mechanisms that influence reference and shape its interpretation (Sperber D., Wilson D., 2012). These influencing factors include shared cultural knowledge and established ways of expression, which restrict the possible choice of words. Such forms include accepted modes of speech and widely recognised models among native speakers, such as proverbs, sayings, colloquial phrases, and idioms. For translators, it is essential to recognise these types of reference to convey meaning correctly and effectively from one language environment to another. It is not only the meaning itself but also the manner of presentation that must align with the source text. When adapting foreign-language discourse, domestication strategies should be employed only when justified, as excessive adaptation may distort the target version and weaken cohesion. Ignoring standard referential connections can lead to a loss of coherence and integrity (Žitkus V., Butkienė R., Butleris R., 2023). Translators, therefore, should prioritise authenticity, and such cases demand stylistic awareness. By understanding the accepted and conventional forms of expression in the source language and finding their equivalents in the target language, the translator preserves the original discourse and its referential ties as intended by the author, whilst also adapting the text to the cultural norms of the receiving language (Martinelli G., Barba E., Navigli R. Maverick, 2023).

Irony emerges as a distinctive mode of reference, one in which localised information is evoked through metaphorical transference. This mechanism not only reshapes meaning but also stratifies the audience: on the one hand, those who become the “targets” of irony, and on the other, those who are incorporated into the ironic discourse and capable of discerning its layered implications (Brondino A., 2023).

Terry Pratchett is distinguished by his use of hidden surprises and subtle jokes embedded in dialogues and, most notably, in the names of his characters. Via allusions and referential play, he achieves both stylistic and humorous effects.

In the novel *Soul Music*, the Ukrainian translator O. Liubarska frequently employs calquing in rendering character names, where this strategy is feasible. For example, *Rebecca Snell* (Pratchett T. *Soul Music* 1994) is translated as *Ребекка Повідець* (Любарська О. *Музика душі* 2022), where *snell* refers to “a short line of gut or horsehair by which a fish hook is attached to a longer line.” Similarly, *Quirm College for Young Ladies* becomes *Квірмський пансіон для юних панянок*, while *Miss Cumber* and *Miss Greggs* (Pratchett T. *Soul Music* 1994) are rendered as *панна Шкод* and *панна Стадна* (Любарська О. *Музика душі* 2022).

The case of *Susan Sto Helit* (Pratchett T. *Soul Music* 1994) illustrates a combined strategy of localisation and calquing. The surname *Sto Helit* was adapted into Ukrainian as *Стогелітська* (Любарська О. *Музика душі* 2022), with the suffix *-ська*, commonly used in Ukrainian surnames, particularly in feminine forms, to indicate gender and enhance familiarity for the reader. Since the referential source of the name is not immediately evident even to native English speakers, the

translator's choice enhances naturalness in Ukrainian. Moreover, the initial element *Sto* resonates with Slavic languages, where it translates as “one hundred,” further reinforcing the plausibility of a Slavic origin.

Other examples include *Miss Traitor* and *Miss Stamp*, which were rendered as *панна Зрада* and *панна Штамп*. In these cases, the translator opted to preserve the original referential ties by employing literal translation. The surname *Traitor* was adapted into Ukrainian with phonetic adjustment to avoid direct imitation while maintaining the intended allusion, whereas *Stamp* was translated directly as *Штамп*, thereby retaining its associative link to the original.

We observe the morphological root *zrad-* with the added ending *-z*, which conveys the referential meaning while simultaneously preserving a foreign-sounding quality. In the case of *Miss Eulalie Butts* (*Панна Євлалія Дунс*), the translator employed a mixed strategy of literal and semantic copying in order to achieve domestication in the Ukrainian version. Calquing was applied to the surname, while the given name was adapted beyond simple transliteration to make it more acceptable and natural for the Ukrainian reader.

Further examples of approximate translation and adaptation of proper names in Pratchett's *Soul Music* include (Pratchett T. *Soul Music*, 1994):

- **Llamedos / Ллямеди** – calquing with domestication, where the foreign-sounding suffix *-dos* was replaced with the Ukrainianized *-ди*.
- **Imp the bard / Бард на ім'я Імп** – calquing with structural transformation. Since Ukrainian lacks articles, the translator achieved the effect of definiteness by adding the prepositional phrase *на ім'я*.
- *The Death of Rats* (*Смерть Щупів*) represents the application of calquing in the translation of a proper name.

In the case of *The Death* (*Смерть*), Pratchett deliberately employed the definite article *the* before the proper name of the character, thereby signalling to the reader that this is not simply an instance of death, but rather the designation of a central figure embodying a metaphysical entity within the narrative. The Ukrainian translator, however, was deprived of the possibility of using an article to achieve this clarification. Instead, the grammatical conventions of Ukrainian provided compensatory means of adaptation: according to the rules of usage, a word capitalised in the middle of a sentence is recognised as a proper name, thereby preserving the referential function.

- Similarly, *Hogswatchnight* was rendered as *Вепроніч*. Here, the translator employed calquing as a method of nomination, borrowing the structural principle of the original while adapting it to Ukrainian linguistic norms.

Researchers increasingly focus on the problem of how stylistic phenomena are perceived. The task involves not only the comparison of genres and speech styles, but also the psychological dimensions and cultural challenges that become central to comparative stylistics. Style is not limited to a type of intentional expressive verbal creation; it also functions as a socially normative system in which linguistic realities operate as a form of subjective influence, activated through the dynamic aspect of style (Liu R., Mao R., Luu A. T., Cambria E., 2023). Thus, style encompasses both static and dynamic dimensions, and the theory of style is regarded as the practice of language use. The study of stylistic norms in different languages varies depending on the means and techniques of linguistic construction accepted in each particular case. Translators are therefore concerned with analysing speech culture as a product of communicative competence, developed by native speakers in the process of socialisation. With this knowledge, it becomes easier to work with foreign discourse and to adapt it not only in accordance with the accepted norms of the target language but also in line with the original form. Stylistically marked units are valuable for their impact on the reader's perception of discourse. Regardless of whether the author seeks a dramatic, ironic, or humorous effect, the appropriate set of expressions must be employed to create the corresponding environment

of discourse (Babii O., 2015). The principal task of the translator is to preserve the original stylistic level in the target version of the text. Even when substitution or domestication of units occurs, such changes are justified if they help maintain the author's intended effect.

The objective is to conduct a systematic analysis of the stylistically marked units in Pratchett's *Soul Music*, to undertake a comparative examination of the original structures and their translated equivalents, and to evaluate the extent to which the translator has succeeded in preserving and conveying the intended stylistic effect.

Parenthetical phrases, interjections, and idiomatic expressions are a rich source of stylistically marked units in language. The challenge, however, is that they cannot usually be translated word-for-word. The most effective approach is to identify the meaning of the expression and then select an equivalent in the target language that conveys the same sense (Bohnet B., Alberti C., Collins M., 2023). It is not enough to ensure that the original expression corresponds to its chosen equivalent; one must also verify that the equivalent, when translated back into the source language, continues to reflect the original meaning. A translation can therefore be considered successful if, in the process of reverse translation, the sense remains intact without distortion and with minimal loss of reference.

For instance, "*It was the politeness that scared the daylight out of Miss Butts*" (Pratchett T. *Soul Music* 1994, p. 32) was translated as "*Чемність у таких випадках панну Дупс лякала, аж в очах темніло*" (Любарська О. *Музика душі* 2022, с. 53) In this case, the translator succeeded in identifying a Ukrainian stylistic unit that closely mirrors both the emotional intensity and the metaphorical resonance of the original. A literal rendering of "*scared the daylight out of*" would produce something akin to "*злякати день з когось*," which is nonsensical. Literal translation here (a) fails to capture the intended meaning and (b) strips the phrase of its emotional charge. The appropriate strategy is therefore (a) to establish the intended sense of the expression and (b) to locate a stylistic equivalent in the target language that preserves its figurative force. The Ukrainian phrase "*аж в очах темніло*" achieves precisely this effect.

When translating humorous or satirical expressions, the translator must adhere to the author's style wherever possible. This may involve reproducing a paraphrase or wordplay from the original. Humour, however, represents one of the most challenging aspects of translation, since maintaining the original referential ties is often either impossible or highly problematic (Čović A., 2020). Where suitable cultural equivalents can be identified, the expression undergoes adaptation and acquires a new form absent in the original, yet still capable of conveying the intended effect. In translating humorous or satirical expressions, the translator must strive to preserve the author's stylistic voice whenever circumstances permit. This may involve reproducing a paraphrase or wordplay directly from the source text. Humour, therefore, is among the most challenging elements of translation, since maintaining the original referential ties is often either impossible or highly uncertain. Where appropriate cultural equivalents can be identified, the expression undergoes adaptation and emerges in a new form absent from the original, yet capable of transmitting the intended effect with equal force.

"Then we play somewhere where the Guild won't find us," said Glod cheerfully. "We find a club somewhere"

"Got a club," said Lias, proudly.

"Got a nail in it."

"I mean a nightclub," said Glod. "Still got a nail in it at night."

(Pratchett T. *Soul Music* 1994, p. 160)

—Тоді треба виступати там, де нас гільдія не знайде, – осінило Толоза. – Знайдемо, де щось таке відпочити.

- Мочити — не проблема, — впевнено сказав Ванняк.
 — Я про виступ, — пояснив Толоз.
 — Я й на виступах можу. (Любарська О. Музика душі 2022, с. 190)

Terry Pratchett is renowned for his puns and wordplay. He frequently employs synonyms, homonyms, and polysemy as the foundation for his humour, which inevitably poses a challenge for translators attempting to adapt such expressions appropriately. In these cases, the only viable strategy for the translator is to reconstruct the pun by drawing upon homophonic, linguistic, and extralinguistic resources available in the target language. A literal translation of the following passage from *Soul Music* would undermine both its stylistic and humorous effect, erasing the original reference entirely. The translator therefore chose to preserve the intended effect through adaptation, guided by the grammatical and lexical conventions of the target language.

*“That’s a harp he’s playing, Nobby,” said one of them, after watching Imp for a while.
 “Lyre.”*

“No, it’s the honest truth, I’m—” The fat guard frowned and looked down. You’ve just been waiting all your life to say that, ain’t you, Nobby,” he said. I bet you were born hoping that one day someone’d say That’s a harp’ so you could say ‘lyre,’ on account of it being a pun or play on words. Well, har har.

Imp stopped playing. It was impossible to continue, in the circumstances. (Pratchett T. Soul Music 1994, p. 71)

*Це він на арфі виграє, Ноббі, – сказав один, трохи поспостерігавши за Імпом.
 – Програє.*

– Ні, коли на правду... – огрядний вартовий насупився й опустил очі. – Ти, певно, все життя чекав, щоби отаке сказати, правда ж, Ноббі? Зуб дам, що ти народився із думкою, що колись настане день, коли хтось скаже «він на арфі виграє», і ти, такий весь із себе кмітливий веселун, скажеш «програє». Ну, молодець, молодець.

Імп припинив грати. Неможливо грати за таких умов. (Любарська О. Музика душі 2022, с. 92)

In this case, the pun arises from the homonymy of the words “lyre” and “liar.” The guard, intending to tease his colleague, makes him believe he has been called a liar, prompting the colleague to defend himself before realizing the joke. In Ukrainian, however, the translator faced a challenge: “lyre” becomes «ліра» and “liar” becomes «брехун»—two words that bear no phonetic resemblance. To preserve the humor, the translator shifted the wordplay to another pair of near-homonyms available in Ukrainian discourse.

By exploiting the interchangeable suffixes «про-» and «ви-», she created a pun between «програвати» (to lose) and «вигравати» (to win). The latter also carries the secondary meaning of “to play with precision,” which later in the dialogue introduces an additional layer of ambiguity. Thus, in the Ukrainian version, the pun is reimagined as follows:

*«Це він на арфі виграє, Ноббі, — сказав один, трохи поспостерігавши за Імпом.
 — Програє.»*

Here, the humour is preserved not through literal transfer but through creative adaptation, demonstrating how the translator reconstructed the pun using the linguistic resources of Ukrainian while maintaining the playful ambiguity of the original.

Coreferential linkage functions as one of the principal semantic and cotextual mechanisms shaping the interpretation of discourse. As the chain of references gradually expands, the stylistic effect intensifies, along with the impact it produces. The longest and most informative coreferential sequences are typically those composed of proper names. Through intertextual analysis of such chains, one can obtain valuable data regarding characterisation, narrative significance, and the stylistic techniques employed in the depiction of a figure.

By comparing and analysing the coreferential sequences in the original and translated discourse, it becomes possible to determine the number of adaptations and the strategies used to achieve them, thereby assessing the degree of correspondence and the success of informational transfer. As an illustrative example, we may consider the nominal coreferential chain consisting of references to the central character of Terry Pratchett's *Soul Music* – Death.

“... the Death of the Discworld... He... he...an immortal anthropomorphic personification...he...the Grim Reaper ...Death ...Death... Death ...he ...the watcher...Death...Death...he...Death...he...He...he...he...he...He...he...Death...Sir...Sir...I...I...sir ...Death...he...Death... “Sir?...you...Yessir?...I... “Sir?” ...sir...I...I...sir?” ...Death...like him...” (Pratchett T. *Soul Music* 1994, p. 110)

*Смерть, який опікується Дискосвітом... йому...Він...йому...безсмертне антропоморфне уособлення смертності...він...Похмурого Женця...Смертю...Смерть... Смерть...дід...спостерігача...Він...Смерть...нього...Смерть...його...він...Смерть ...Смерть ...він ...він ...Смерті ...Смерть ...пане, ...пане, ...Я ...Я ...пане... Смерть ...Смерть ...Пане? ...пане? ...Я ... Пане?... Пане?...Я ...Я... пане? ...Смерть... невизначна фігур ...ту особу ...він, ...сину мій... Ти ...Я ...Я ...співрозмовника... Я ...ти ...я ...ти ...ти ...синку ...Я ...Незнайомець... він... Смерть... нього ...господарем ...Я ...Смерть...”. (Любарська О. *Музика душі* 2022, с. 140)*

In the coreferential chain presented above, one can observe a significant reliance on pronouns, indicating that pronominalization is a primary method of maintaining referential cohesion. This technique ensures continuity of reference and strengthens the coherence of the discourse. At the same time, synonymous nominal substitutions expand the descriptive range and enrich the portrayal of the character, adding stylistic expressiveness to what might otherwise be a monotonous characterisation.

The coreferential chain in the translated literary discourse differs primarily in its reduced use of pronominalization and its greater reliance on nouns as referential markers. This shift is justified by the grammatical and lexical conventions of Ukrainian, where excessive use of pronouns tends to diminish informativeness and weaken the referential load of the nominal carrier, owing to the exophoric nature of pronouns. The tendency toward synonymous equivalents expressed through nouns accounts for the greater stylistic variety of the coreferential nominal chain in the Ukrainian version of the text.

III. CONCLUSIONS

The primary goal of a translator when adapting foreign discourse is to focus on authenticity and the original referential links. To create a target text that feels natural and professional, the translator must have a deep understanding of established norms, styles, and modes of expression. Historical, cultural, and political details often act as the "anchors" for these references in both the source and target languages. These connections are essential for textual cohesion, ensuring the story makes sense while carrying subtle layers of meaning.

The study of reference and coreference through the lens of formal-semantic relations between syntactic units and their functional properties reveals the associative colouring of referential perception. Figurative comparisons are more characteristic of English, where adjectives often form the basis of comparison, whereas Ukrainian favours fixed expressions with verbal foundations. The objects of comparison may be identical, similar, or entirely different.

In Terry Pratchett's novels, the main strategies for adapting proper names are calquing, domestication, and localisation.

The prevailing tendency in translating stylistically loaded units is to search for equivalents among established expressions in the target language that correspond to the meaning of the original phrase. Literal translation of such expressions is inadvisable, since it cannot convey figurative meaning and deprives the reader of the intended stylistic effect. When translating humorous remarks and jokes, the translator should replicate the author's style—for example, by employing paraphrase or wordplay—and adapt the meaning of the segment in light of its preceding context and anticipated impact on subsequent discourse. In cases where no fixed stylistic equivalent exists, the translator must create an expressive substitute that matches the stylistic and informational level of the passage.

An analysis of Terry Pratchett's *Soul Music* illustrates how coreferential participants are identified and how they shape the organisation of the narrative. Coreference emerges as a fundamental principle of text construction in syncretic discourse, uniting polysemous and multifaceted elements within the appropriate context. Coreferential chains built around proper names are the longest and most informative, and intertextual analysis of such chains provides insights into characterisation, narrative significance, and stylistic techniques. Comparative analysis shows that the translated discourse differs from the original primarily in its reduced use of pronominalization and its greater reliance on nouns as referential markers – a shift justified by the grammatical and lexical conventions of Ukrainian.

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ДИНАМІКА РЕФЕРЕНЦІЇ: ЗНАЧЕННЯ, КОНТЕКСТ, ІНТЕРПРЕТАЦІЯ

Наталя ДЯЧУК

У представленому дослідженні комплексно розглядається феномен референції як фундаментальний механізм текстової когезії та потужний інструмент створення стилістичного ефекту в художньому дискурсі. Особливий акцент зроблено на дослідженні динаміки референтних відношень у процесі міжмовного перенесення. Референція, що трактується як ментальна та мовленнєва операція встановлення зв'язку між лінгвістичними одиницями та об'єктами позамовної дійсності, забезпечує повторне згадування персонажів чи понять без надмірної тавтології. Водночас кореференція виступає архітектонікою нарративу, формуючи ланцюги взаємопов'язаних виразів, які забезпечують структурну цілісність твору та глибинну характеристику образів. Динамічний аспект референції простежується через трансформацію її функцій залежно від комунікативного контексту, специфіки жанру фентезі та етнокультурних чинників.

У роботі детально висвітлюються лінгвоперекладацькі труднощі, що виникають під час прономіналізації, застосування синонімічних заміни та адаптації стилістично навантажених одиниць. Особливу увагу приділено специфіці відтворення гумору, багатощарової гри слів та культурно маркованих висловів у романі Террі Пратчетта «Soul Music». Встановлено, що збереження референтних зв'язків у такому насиченому тексті вимагає від перекладача гнучкого застосування стратегій калькування, доместикації, форенізації та локалізації. Порівняльний аналіз англійського оригіналу та українського перекладу свідчить про суттєві розбіжності в реалізації референції: український дискурс тяжіє до еліпсису займенників та розширення номінативних варіантів, що диктується граматичними нормами та стилістичними традиціями мови. Дослідження підкреслює, що динаміка референції охоплює не лише семантичний, а й інтерпретаційний рівень, де референтні структури зміцують смислові акценти відповідно до очікувань цільової аудиторії. У підсумку доведено, що еквівалентність перекладу залежить від філігранного балансу між семантичною точністю та культурною релевантністю, що робить референцію багатовимірним феноменом, який об'єднує значення, контекст і естетичну виразність літературного тексту.

Ключові слова: когезія тексту, кореферентні ланцюги, художній дискурс, міжконтекстуальний аналіз, культурна локалізація