

LINGUAL AND NON-LINGUAL SECRETS OF THE POPULARITY
OF THE NOVEL “WINTER SOLSTICE” BY R.PILCHER

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The paper attempts to explicate the worldwide popularity of the novel “Winter Solstice” written by the British writer Rosamunde Pilcher. It considers the significance of the novel for the authoress’ personal writing career as well as its relevance at the global scale. The study implies two approaches, namely, the initial focus on readers’ comprehension of the novel combined with the investigation of its structural and content constituents viewed linguistically. The literary analysis of the text of the novel correlates with some well-known concepts developed by national and foreign linguists in relation to the specific features of the modern English language. The paper enlists and illustrates writing techniques preferably used by the authoress of the novel, her ability to visualize the narration through highly detailed description in particular. The analysis of some figures of speech such as epithets, metaphors, allegory, similes, idioms as well as some specific uses of the English language morphology and syntax contributes to the identification of the authoress’s style. The results of the study gained through quantitative, descriptive and structural research methods, can be essential to better understanding of how the system of the English language works today. They can also help reveal the interaction between cognition and lexicon and grammar of modern English. Presumably, the main target audience of the paper can be those Ukrainians who practice reading fiction in English for both professional and individual purposes.

Key words: style, figures of speech, metaphor, simile, idiom.

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The popularity of the novels written by the British writer Rosamunde Pilcher is viewed differently by different groups of readers. Her multinational admirers, mostly female readers, are extremely emotional, joyful and thankful when sharing their personal appreciation of her books [4]. People from the professional writing circles are more reserved and skeptical as for R. Pilcher’s striking popularity and the quality of her sentimental prose. The journalists awarded her the title “queen of trash”[11]. This elderly lady who has never been taught writing professionally and never got any academic degree or certificate can naturally cause annoyance and criticism on the part of the professional writers. Nobody could ever anticipate that the housewife and the mother of four children, whose short stories went almost unnoticed in her native country would become a celebrity at the age of 63 when her first saga novel “The Shell Seekers” saw the light thanks to her new publisher from the US [8]. By now more than 70 million books by R. Pilcher have been published worldwide. Her paper and audio books are extremely popular in the USA, Brazil, the Great Britain, the Scandinavian countries and Russia. Her visits to Germany are widely discussed by the national mass media. ZDF, one of the most popular German TV channel got an exclusive right to film her books. As a result, a number of films based on her novels has been released. The information about the writer’s life story as well as her professional career presented in this article was retrieved mostly from the German segment of the Internet. In 2000 R. Pilcher publicly announced that she had made her decision to finish her writing career but even today the publishers do not show any intent to stop publishing her books in many countries and languages and their readers go on sharing their gratitude to the authoress for kindness, sincerity, warmth, comfort, affection, humor and optimism that her books irradiate. **The relevance of this study** comes from the worldwide

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readers' interest and attention to the novels by R. Pilcher as well as controversial views expressed by the literary experts.

The lion's share of the readers' appreciation and admiration undoubtedly belongs to R. Pilcher's novel "Winter Solstice" published first by Hodder and Stoughton Paperbacks in 2000 [10]. In 2002 it was translated into Russian and printed by Moscow publisher "Слово" with the title "В канун Рождества". All my attempts to find any information about the authoress and the novel itself at the Ukrainian sites were not a success. **The purpose of the study** is to specify the reasons for readers' appreciation of the novel (non-lingual factors) and to investigate the individual style and the language of its authoress. **The object of the study** is the novel "Winter Solstice" which is the most popular book by R. Pilcher, its **subject** being the analysis of its structure, contents and figurative peculiarities. The study was performed through structural, descriptive, quantitative and comparative **methods of research**.

Initially, R. Pilcher was not very positive about her American publisher's idea to write a story about Christmas. She felt rather tired after six years that had taken her to write her first novels. She had already gone through heavy burden of contract obligations, tasted success and publicity, made a profit. Aged 71, she could afford to travel a lot with her husband. The authoress informed her readers that she had no desire to continue her writing career and they accepted that decision of hers with regret and devotion. But the main characters of the future novel made her imagination work and the story appeared, though it was not a story about Christmas [6; 9].

Honestly, I came across "Winter Solstice" quite accidentally without any idea about R. Pilcher's books. Surprisingly, even not being a native speaker, I felt fascinated while reading "Winter Solstice" in the original and without any interference that might possibly come with translation. Admittedly, like many other readers around the world, I happened to be captivated by its simple but arresting plot and characters. At first my pure reader's interest was primary but gradually some transformation came together with the taste of the language which evidently added up a lot to the story. There appeared an idea to disclose somehow things felt but unseen and further determination to find out and to investigate what could be accessed through common literary and linguistic analysis tools. This approach mainly focused on the text of the novel seemed to be promising because of the abundance of figures of speech seen easily even at first sight.

R. Pilcher admitted that her first idea as for the novel plot was just to make a story about two aged and mature people who went through tragic hardships but then found friendly relations and a new love [5]. There are five main characters in the novel: Elfrida, an ex-actress of 62, who left London where she endured a personal drama, and took refuge in a village with her faithful dog and with a big hope to start a new life in the new surroundings; Oscar, a man of 65 who gave up his career of a sacral music player and who lives now in the same village with his wife and a teenager daughter; Carrie, Elfrida's niece aged 30 who came back to London from Austria where she broke with her beloved man; Lucy, Carrie's niece, a girl of 15 who is getting in the way of her mother towards a new marriage; Sam, a manager who came to London from the United States where his marriage got broken but who has an idea to reborn the business of his father once run profitably in Scotland. These five not very happy people driven to a small place in the north of Scotland by various personal reasons found themselves in the same old Estate House. But, as the title of the book goes, Christmas is coming, and one can easily believe that Christmas Eve is the time when wonderful changes might happen, dreams might come true and all suffering souls might be healed. The personal stories of these five intertwine and turn to become newly shaped at the place where waifs and strays can find piece, comfort, companionship and respect. R. Pilcher gives the names of the main characters to the chapters which come in the sequence guided only by her logic. Therefore, the same events are described by different characters. This format results in the particular focus on each character at a time. Such writing approach undoubtedly contributes to the novel's success.

Rosamunde Pilcher identifies herself as an elderly or family lady. Her tales are preferably about senior female characters. This is another specific feature of her novels. No wonder that Elfrida is in the center of the narration. Her name entitles the first chapter. Her personal story makes the leading topic which is combined with those of other characters. We first see Elfrida when she is leaving London in order to change her way of life completely with all her memories and her personal drama left in the past. It takes her quite a lot of time to adapt to her new surroundings: *Every now and then she escaped from the confines of Dibton, packing Horace into the passenger seat of her car and driving far out across country to some other country where she was not known, and where she and Horace could climb a sheep-grazed hill, or follow the path by some dark, flowing streams and find at the end of it a pub full of strangers where she could eat a sandwich and drink coffee and relish her precious solitude* [10, c.27]. But even in the new environments Elfrida is noticed for her extravagant appearance which is not very typical for women of her age and not much welcomed in the village. Looking attractive and even sexual has always been a part of her life and her personality. Even a short passage describing Elfrida's appearance and manners is very figurative: *Elfrida for all her sixty-two years, looked vital and energetic like a young girl. Her slenderness became her; the uncompromising blaze of suspect hair, the eccentric clothes, the slash of lipstick all declined a healthy denial of advancing years* [10, c.317]. She has never followed any norms or ideals being extremely vital, natural and in harmony with herself: *Elfrida was neither sanctimonious nor a lady with enormously high moral standards* [10, c.28]. Elfrida does not look her age and she does not behave her age. Carrie and Sam discuss her age metaphorically as if contrasting different parts of the day.

Oscar's and Elfrida's ... are happily settled for their twilight years.

I don't think of Elfrida as twilight. More high noon [10, c.588].

Despite her extravagant appearance Elfrida is very sensible, never loses her head and takes the life philosophically. No misfortunes can undermine her belief in kindness and positive approach to reality. She readily helps all seeking for help, be it a dog taken from a Dogs Home, her relatives trapped in the complicated family trouble (Carrie and Lucy) or some people she never met before but came across accidentally (Oscar, Sam). She characterizes herself in the following way: *I'm quite a sociable animal. I don't mean endless parties but I like making friends and getting to know people* [10, c.246]. She has very warm relations with her brother Jeffrey whose first marriage was not a success and who made his second try with his new family at his mid-age. *His own unhappy marriage was falling to bits, but Elfrida was always there, at the end of the telephone, ringing him up, ready with all sorts of advice, both good and bad, but most important, endlessly sympathetic* [10, c.48]. Elfrida is always hopeful and positive about future. Her decency, sincerity and readiness to help act like a magnet that attracts to her other people who respond her in the similar way. That is why Serena, Jeffrey's second wife says to Elfrida: *You've been the best. A lovely mixture of mother, sister and friend* [10, c.67-68]. Carrie tries to explain Lucy Elfrida's magnetism: *She's heaven... Your gran could never stand her because she was rather wild and louche and an actress, and always had lots of boyfriends and husbands... But I always loved her... and we made terrific friends* [10, c.171].

In the village of Dibton in Hampshire Elfrida feels solitary first but after eighteen months she finds a comfortable familiarity with the place and its inhabitants. Most often she communicates with Oscar and his 11-years old daughter Francesca who seems to be her father's late happiness. Though Elfrida never knew motherhood she has very warm relations with the girl. Oscar's drama when his wife and daughter died in a car accident becomes her personal tragedy and loss. One more calamity came into her life which had seemed to go smoothly and quietly: *She went out of the shop, got back into her car and sat there for a moment, feeling as though a day, her life, had been snapped into two pieces, could never be repaired and would never be the same again. She had moved... into a place of loss and unthinkable pain* [10, c.73].

After losing his dearest Oscar looks and feels so desperately lonely that Elfrida immediately agrees to accompany him on his trip to Scotland where there an estate, which

used to be his grandmother's property. Elfrida explains: *...I crashed into Oscar's life... He asked me to come to Scotland with him, and because he was a man on the verge of desperation I agreed* [10, c.325]. Elfrida's devotion and reliability, Oscar's gratitude for her support, their mutual attempts to solve the problems that arise in their new surroundings lead them to a new sort of their companionship and made their relations closer. Elfrida comments on the new situation quite ironically and philosophically: *It might have been a disaster but instead we have a relationship which I think is a comfort for both of us... He is a very attractive man, and for some reason he seems to find battered old me attractive too* [10, c.325]. Elfrida understands that Oscar's past will capture him for a long time but she is ready to share with him this long way to deliverance and recovery.: *Oscar's not out of the wood yet, by no means. He still has a long way to go. Some days he's so depressed that he scarcely speaks. But I've learned to leave him alone. He has to deal with his grief in his own way* [10, c.326]. *I am not, as yet, permanently part of his life. I am simply a sort of spare wheel to keep the car going until he's sorted himself out* [10, c.440].

Oscar's story gains more certainty and becomes as significant as Elfrida's after their decision to drive to Scotland together. Oscar is sick at heart and body. All he can feel is emptiness, despair and depression. *Grieving. He was still grieving... Grief was not a state of mind but a physical thing, a void, a deadening blanket of unbearable pain precluding all solace. His only protection, and one that he had built himself, was a palisade of non-communication... That deadening blanket, compounding of shock and terrible loss, had not only blinded and deafened him but imbued every bone in his body with a dreadful and pervasive fatigue* [10, c. 201-202]. Oscar is still unable to overcome his inner bitterness and mourning depression, to communicate other people as he has done earlier. He would like to get rid of his burden but he lacks vitality to do so. Elfrida who always stays around becomes his nurse, healer and savior with a hope for his social rebirth. Though silently, Oscar appreciates her efforts: *He had always despised self-pity and now, sitting huddled in the small wooden shelter, he fought it like a lion, striving to be positive, to count present blessings. First was the Estate House... a timely sanctuary to which he had fled. Second was Elfrida. Her companionship had saved his reason, and in her own uncomplicated way she had got him through the blackest times, comforting by simply accepting his limitations. When he was silent, she left him alone. When he felt compelled to talk, Elfrida listened* [10, c. 201-202]. Elfrida is trying to bring Oscar back to life, make him feel lust for life again. And she definitely succeeds in her efforts. Oscar's respect and gratefulness to her with time turns into unconcealed admiration: *They were all talking but Oscar, standing by the fireplace, saw Elfrida as she came through the door. Their eyes met, and for an instant it was as though it was just the two of them, alone in the brilliantly lighted room. Then he set down his glass and came across to take her hand. You look quite wonderful, he told her.*

[10, c. 624]. Lots of things happened before Oscar became able to express his outspoken gratitude to Elfrida:.. *one thing is truly certain, and that is you have helped me to start again, and it is you who have made a dark and painful time not only bearable and possible but even joyful as well. I think you carry joy around with you. We can't go back. Life, for both of us, can never be the same as it was, but it can be different. And you have proved to me that it can be good* [10, c.686].'

All the inmates of the Estate House felt feared that Lucy, Elfrida's great-niece, would remind Oscar his late daughter and therefore bring him back to heartbreaking memories and unbearable pang. But unexpectedly these two happen to go on as intimate friends. *Lucy swallowed her nervousness...She knew that he must be thinking of his own daughter, twelve years old and now dead. She knew that he must be comparing her with Francesca and was probably swamped by mixed emotions, including pain. And then he smiled at her, and took her hand between his own, and his clasp was warm and friendly and after that she wasn't nervous any longer* [10, c.307]. The youngest and the oldest are so careful about each other. There is mutual understanding, sympathy and support between them despite a big gap in age and life experience. Personally, I consider their dialogue about Francesca and what life is worth one of the most touching and moving parts of the novel:

Was she good at the piano?

Not very.

Was she good at lessons?

Not very.

What was she really good at?

Living' [10, c.653].

At first Lucy is horrified by Oscar's reaction. She never saw the adults suffering so badly: *Lucy did not know what to say. To her horror she saw Oscar's eyes fill with tears, his mouth tremble. ... She stared at him wondering what she could do to comfort, and saw him shake his head, denying his own weakness, somehow struggling for control of his unbearable emotion [10, c.654].* But Lucy overcomes her childish horror and replies in an adult-like manner as if she has grown up within their talk:

He said, Sorry.

It doesn't matter, Oscar. I don't mind. I understand.

Yes, I think you do. Death is part of living. I have to remember that, but from time to time the truth eludes me.

Living is important, isn't it? And remembering?

More important than anything else [10, c.654].

Lucy and Oscar understand each other deeply and seem to need each other. Here is one more dialogue when Lucy and Oscar are discussing coming Christmas. Both sound rather philosophically:

Lucy was silent for a moment. Then she said, Do you like Christmas?

Parts of it, Oscar told her sounding cautious.

I don't really like it much. There's such a build-up and then it's sort of ... disappointing.

Which proves that we should never expect too much [10, c.314].

Lucy has never been loved much. This lack of love made her trust her thoughts and feelings only her diary. Then her life changes crucially and she finds herself in the atmosphere of comfort in her mind and body, trust, sympathy, mutual respect and care, joy and happiness. Luckily, all her new companions make a decision not to send her back to London but to leave her at Corrydale where she feels wanted and happy, probably for the first time in her life.

Oscar, I don't know why you're so kind.

Because we love you. Perhaps we need you. Perhaps I'm being selfish, but I don't want to let you go. I need a young person about the place. I've got used to the sound of your voice, and footsteps on the stairs, and doors bursting open. And laughter. I shall hate it if you leave. Probably go into a decline [10, c.652].

Finally Lucy's uncertainty and anxiety are gone and relief and declaration of love come instead: *I've never been so happy or at home as I have here [10, c.655].*

The readers of the novel can see fantastically beautiful and well-off looking Carrie with Lucy's eyes: *She certainly looked rich, in her beautiful clothes and with her shining hair and her glamorous makeup... just as good as the attenuated models who posed in leather and fur between the glossy pages of Gran's favourite Vogue [10, c.173].*

Homeless and jobless, Carrie is still affected by her deep psychological drama. But she immediately plunges into the troubles of her young niece and decides to fly to the Scottish countryside together. It is here with Elfrida that she allows herself to share her feelings and emotions for the first time. *Bed and a hot-water bottle. Carrie could not remember how long it was since some other person had cherished her. Had said, You look tired. And How about a little rest? She had spent too many years being strong...She realized that she was tired of being strong. ...She was filled with grateful love to Elfrida [10, c.320-321].* Carrie is seeking for rest and peace so that she can leak her wounds in a company of sympathetic and supportive people. But suddenly she meets Sam who is struck by her beauty at first sight: *What he didn't expect was a tall dark girl in jeans and a thick pullover. A sensationally good-looking girl who would have turned heads on Fifth Avenue [10, c.386].*

Though Carrie looks reserved and self-controlled, she is totally seized by panic of a new romantic affair she might have with Sam. She is trying to drive out of her mind even an idea about romance. Carrie's memories about her break with a married man still hurt her. The sincere story told by Sam reminded Carrie her own drama and caused protest, anger, aggression and frustration on her part: *Sam, talking about his wife, his broken marriage and the end of his job in New York, had simply compounded her misery, and when he had come out with that terrible word 'rejected', she had turned on him in the sort of rage of which she had never believed herself capable, and the furious words had broken free, and it was only tears that stemmed the outburst. Sam had pulled her back and taken her into his arms and held her close, as he might have held an inconsolable child* [10, c.574]. Her first fit of temper is followed by her more controlled self-criticism. Slowly, she feels more relieved. *But life didn't stop at the end of the story. It moved on. Sam's embrace, his arms around her, the closeness that comforted her, but not melted her own coldness. She was not changed* [10, c.574]. It is a turning point of her recovery. Their trip to the destroyed woolen mill which is going to be Sam's future, changes Carrie's mind and thoughts about Sam. Now she finds him smart, very professional guided by his strong personal intentions and plans. She sees another Sam, a man, a personality who becomes dearer to her. *And an extraordinary thing happened, because all at once it was as though she had never seen him before, and now all she knew for certain was that her recognition of him was too late, because he would go away, and it would be all over, and she would probably never see him again* [10, c.588].

Sam was the last to join the company of inmates of the old but warm and comfortable Estate House. He found shelter in the Estate House on his way when driving on a nasty day. The House turned his life radically. Sam entered it determined to start a new life which will be under his complete control without any affection and losses. *No family ties, no wife, no children. Nothing that could not be abandoned. No reason. It was the opportunity for which he had subconsciously yearned ever since university. A new job, a new city, a new country. A new life.* [10, c.97-98] Although he took a long trip across the ocean, his bitter memories and dissatisfaction he hoped to leave in America do not release him. He is sure that his coming back to his roots is really what he needs to change his life for the better: *...he had had enough of New York. He wanted England. He wanted to go home. He wanted misty skies and temperate green fields and warm beer and red buses* [10, c.100]. In the quiet Scottish countryside he really found a new way of life and happened to be involved in the whirlpool of the unexpected situations and events. Sam gets on well with the other dwellers as if he has known them for ages. He readily and easily becomes a part of their small community: *She (Carrie) thought of him dealing, unasked with a number of not very exciting day-to-day tasks.... Uncomplaining, Sam had shoveled the snow, pushed trolleys around the supermarket, stocked up Oscar's wine cellar and brought home the Christmas tree* [10, c.582]. His presence makes everybody comfortable. The female part of the company find him really charming. Elfrida thinks he is very attractive and for Lucy he goes like a hero next to Carrie: *Elfrida, as well, was entranced by her visitor. But, then, she had never been able to resist the charms of an attractive man... As for Lucy, she had confined... that she thought Sam was almost as good-looking as Mel Gibson. He's gorgeous and he's comfortable* [10, c.584]. Sam immediately made friends with Oscar: *He was a man hard to dislike. He and Oscar had slipped at once into a companionable friendship that belied the years that lay between them* [10, c.583]. Certainly, Carrie seems to be the most careful observer of Sam. She likes his male determination and confidence. *Before her eyes he seemed to change. He grew in stature, spoke with confidence and authority as he described to her the devastation of the flood, explained the plans for the future, quoting figures that made her head reel.... Sam, back in his own world, was strangely transformed: no longer the amiable house guest of the last few days but a man in charge, a man to be reckoned with and, at the end of the day, a man you would not choose to cross.* [10, c. 584-585] Though at first Sam's attention to Carrie's was turned down with panic *...he was left with the sense of a strong door firmly shut between them and that nothing was going to persuade*

Carrie to open it [10, c.502], his staying around, his manners and his behavior made her change her attitude. The young people become much closer with a hope for their mutual future. They admit it indirectly in their dialogue:

I thought perhaps ... we could see each other again. ... Start over. Afresh. As though none of this time had ever happened.

Start over. Afresh. The two of them. Carrie said, I wouldn't want this time not to have happened.

I'm glad. It's been extraordinary, hasn't it? Magic. Like days stolen from another life, another world. When it is over, and I am gone, I shall wallow in nostalgia [10, c.590].

Two more things which accompany the main heroes every now and then, must be also mentioned. They are the Estate House which witnessed new warmth and new life and the severe and pathetic nature of Scotland. The first appeared to become a shelter for each of the five characters. It looks so solid and reliable that Elfrida associates it with a living being: *A family house. Elfrida lay in bed, and felt the house around her, like a shield, a carapace, a refuge. Filled with friends, it had become a home* [10, c.423]. Elfrida wants the house to be owned by Oscar. She shares her feelings: *It is so strong, so unpretentious, so ...adaptable. Can't you feel, like a heartbeat, keeping us all going, sheltering, taking care of us all?* [12, c.424]. *In a strange way I should like you to have this house. It has such dignity and solidity just right for the important head of the company* [10, c.451].

R.Pilcher shows the readers about the Estate House like an experienced guide. She takes us inside and makes follow Elfrida's detailed description: *The whole house was the same. The spaciousness, the handsome half-empty rooms, with their elaborate cornices and tall paneled doors. The shallow-stepped staircase, rising in flights to the attics, with its banister of polished Baltic pine, the old-fashioned, but perfectly recognizable kitchen; the bathrooms, panelled in white-painted tongue-and-groove, complete with original Victorian fittings, and lavatory cisterns whose chains handles had PULL written on them* [10, c.494].

Another powerful allegory presented in the novel is the nature of Scotland. One interesting fact should be mentioned. R.Pilcher was awarded a special prize by the British institution dealing with tourism as her novels promote Scotland. Lots of tourist want to see with their own eyes the places which the authoress presented in her books. The visitors are striving to add their personal visual experience to the verbal information that R. Pilcher's books provide them with. The characters of the novel as well as its readers are impressed by the pictures of the wild and powerful nature. We can see and hear Scotland, the area at the edge of the land beaten severely by the waves. The best manifestation of the R. Pilcher's descriptive talent can be tracked in the passages presenting waterside landscapes. They are full of epithets, metaphors, similes and other figures of speech. They can certainly be favored by careful and restless researchers. It is impossible to omit one more R. Pilcher's verbal masterpiece which lets us observe the view of the sea: *...she...watched the restless sea and felt mesmerized by its sheer size and magnificence. The colours of the water, the clearness were breathtaking: streaks of blue, green, turquoise, purple, all laced and streaked with white surf. A heavy swell was running, and breakers formed far out, moving in and gathering height and weight before finally crashing against the jagged, granite coastline, sending up great fountains of sizzling spray. Overhead the gulls wheeled, and out towards the horizon a small fishing-boat buttered its way through the turbulent water* [10, c.63-64].

The description of the dawn watched by Sam reminds a delicate lace carefully woven with words. They make an interplay of the light and colours. They go together and then apart and further reappear in new patterns as if watched in the kaleidoscope: *...when he looked again he saw that the faint shell pink had exploded into an aureole of red and yellow; vaporous streaks like flames. And over the shallow hills of the distant headland inched the first sliver of an orange sun. The curved rim of the dazzling light touched the shifting sea, smudged shadows on the undulations of the sands and drained darkness from the sky so that gradually it was no longer sapphire blue, but faded to the colour of acquamarines* [10, c.503]. Later we see the picture of a December afternoon with Carrie's

eyes. And again we can taste form, colour, state, emotions and mood all combined and presented verbally by the talented writer: *By now, at only four o'clock, the blue dusk had crept in, and a fine new moon, delicate as an eyelash, hung above them in the sapphire sky. The snowcapped hills became almost luminous in the strange half-light, and the ebbing tide was draining the firth, revealing sweeps of beach and sandbank. Curlews still few, skimming the shore, but other birds were silent, their songs finished for the day* [10, c.508-509].

The Corrydale is covered with snow but the snowfall is not going to stop. The life of the village seems to be under the snow's subordination and command. But nobody considers snowfall a disaster. The countryside people feel happy. White Christmas is important. Once again we are enchanted by white magic performed by R. Pilcher: *It was nearly eight o'clock, very dark, and snow was falling thickly, but there were street lamps all the way... All looked so transformed, so magical, that Elfrida was compelled to stop and gaze. She said, Oscar, I do wish I could paint* [10, c.409].

When commenting on her own successful writing career R. Pilcher once said: *"I believe ... that I have a good style"* [11]. The replies of her admirers typically contain the words and phrases like *"description"*, *"she paints the picture"*, *"she creates a gorgeous picture"*, *"intensely descriptive sections of her novel"*, and even a conclusion: *"Rosamunde Pilcher is well known for her beautifully descriptive books* [8]. R. Pilcher really has a talent to present her narration through so many details that it seems to become visualized and even materialized. If recorded, some parts of the text can sound like audioguide: the description of the house presented earlier, a variety of goods at the local shop, a list of presents for the inmates of the Estate House. But the list of food stuff and the menu of the festive party which Elfrida and Carries are compiling is far above:

Now. Are we going to have a Christmas feast?

Yes. I suppose. Christmas Day lunch or dinner?

Oh, dinner much more festive.

We'll never get a turkey into that little oven.

Then we'll have chickens. Two chickens.

Carrie wrote furiously. Chickens. Brussels sprouts. Potatoes. Cloves for bread sauce. Frozen peas. Carrots. Masses of fruit. Butter. French bread. Cranberry sauce. Cinnamon sticks. How about crackers? she asked.

Yes, we must have crackers.

And the wine?

Oscar will want to deal with that.

Smoked salmon?

My favourite.

And nuts and stuff. Mince-pies?

Could you buy them?... We can cheat and soak them inside with brandy. Christmas cake. I'll make that. Christmas pudding.

Should we have a cold ham?...

Brilliant. And a big pot of soup.

I'll make the soup.' For once, Elfrida felt competent and efficient. Soup was her specialty, chicken stock and any handy vegetable. She called it Garbage Broth.' And perhaps crisps and dips in case we decide to make a party [10, c.445-446].

The analysis of the text of the novel has proved that metaphors and similes are at the top of the list if compared with the other figures of speech used in the English fiction [2, c.121]. In "Winter Solstice" the patterns presenting the cognitive nominative metaphors, modeled as N+to be+N, are used both implicitly: *...autumn always depresses me. A sort of limbo between summer and Christmas* [12, c.38] and explicitly: *Debora was adamant* [10, c.99].

Presenting the nature and the weather like living beings, R. Pilcher turns mainly to the extended metaphors when depicting them. The wind, for example, has teeth and can breathe: *You must be exhausted, That's a long hike in the teeth of the wind* [10, c.204]...*and in the shelter of the house there was no breath of wind* [10, c.675]. In the description of the

dawn, the wind, the snow, the hills, the sun, the sky and the first spring flowers are made animated. *The thaw had melted the snow away from streets and fields, and only the hills still wore their white mantles, summits glittering in the light of the low sun, streaming down from a cloudless sky. A sun that, because there was no breath of wind, even managed to engender a faint warmth. Birds sang from leafless trees, and in the Estate House garden, a few early snowdrops pierced the rough, untended grass beneath the lilac bush* [10, c.659].

The cognitive approach to metaphors developed by G. Lakoff and M. Johnson can be also applied to R. Pilcher's style [7]. Some examples of spatial metaphors with the meaning of gladness and happiness (going up) can be taken from the text as illustrations: *Her heart leaped for joy* [10, c.7] and *Lucy's spirits rose* [10, c.307].

In the novel the similes vary in their patterns and models. They are typically identified by markers *as* and *like*. One can come across the examples of the trite adjective similes formed due to the model Adj+as+N: *white as a sheet, warm as a toast, solid as a rock, cold as charity*. But the writer's individual similes with the same model are used more commonly: *bright as a button up top, isolated as an Arctic explorer, dark as a purple bruise, if tiny as an ant, remote and prickly as a gorse bush, frozen as the winter landscape, delicate as an eyelash*. There are also the examples of the paraphrased and modified set expressions marked in the same way: *...we are snug as bugs* (originally *snug as a bug in a rug*) [10, c. 248] or *pretty as paint* (originally *pretty as a picture*) [10, c.305]. But the expressions of this kind are much fewer in number than the verbal patterns which match the model V+ like+N. They are more impressive if given in a broader context. Their list also includes some set expressions, for example: *She had been like a light in his life*. [10, c.46], *Sam took to the place like a duck to the water* [10, c.98] or *She'd probably feel like a fish out of water* [10, c.149]. But here the associations created by the R. Pilcher's imagination and creativity also dominate:

I was like a snail with its shell on the back [10, c.36].

...an elderly apple tree tapping like a ghost at her window [10, c.63].

She looked like a ball that has had all the air let out of it [10, c.152].

Her face began to crumple, like a baby [10, c.173].

In the tower of the church, the clock shone like a full moon [10, c.281].

Warming light blinking like a star [10, c.384].

...the twinkling Christmas fairy-lights shone like jewels [10, c.475].

This sort of simile can be found in the following idioms:

...right now she needed a broken leg like she needed a hole in the head [10, c.254].

...he always went through money like a hot knife through butter [10, c. 416].

They were at the Manse yesterday, and he and Oscar got on like a house on fire [10, c.446].

I. R. Galperin identified the extended simile as the most impressive and powerful figure of speech [2, c.121] R. Pilcher associates one of her characters who is very aged and incurably ill with a horse: *...Major Billicliffe was something of an old wreck, knock-kneed as a horse on its way to the knacker's yard* [10, c.196]. Sam says that the life in the Estate House reminds him a sea cruise for those who rescued from misfortunes and calamities: *I decided the other morning that life at the Estate House is a bit like being on a cruise with just a few other passengers, marvelously removed from all the stresses and strains of everyday life* [10, c.587]. The verbs *remind* and *resemble* are used for the same purpose: *...sometimes she (Gloria) reminded Elfrida a huntsman, blowing his horn for attention and whipping in his hounds* [10, c.30]. *Others, who had never particularly liked Sam, showed sign of snide amusement, resembling cats that had got at the cream* [10, c.99].

It should be emphasized that all above similes, though syntactically different, correlate with the classification of the English language similes developed in the works by A.N. Morokhovsky [3, c.176].

The epithets of the novel are really bright, impressive and emotional within and even off the context: *benign Indian summer warmth, voracious reading, helpless laughter, melting eyes, suffocating silence, ridiculous tears, cold and numbing silence*.

One more feature of the R. Pilcher's style and language can draw attention of a linguist. It deals with the specific morphology and syntax widely applied in the novel. R. Pilcher quite rarely modifies the verbs by the adverbs with the suffix *-ly*. At the same time we can see a wide range of the epithets expressed by the adverbs to modify the adjectives (model Adv.+Adj). These adverbial modifiers, usually called intensifiers [2], are derived from the adjectives by adding the suffix *-ly*. They can be of special interest for those who are interested in the stylistic resources of the English language professionally. These adverbial epithets vary in their emotional expressiveness. Quite few of the combinations of this kind have neutral intensifiers like *physically/emotionally crippled* or *unnaturally neat/tidy*. More emotional adverbial intensifiers, probably hyperbolic, are very typical for the very emotional style of R. Pilcher. This group includes : *enormously grand/comfortable/high/proud/heavy*, *extremely efficient*, *utterly untrue*, *perfectly hideous*, *truly certain*, *totally unpretentious*, *hugely helpful*, *endlessly sympathetic*, *tremendously hungry*. Finally, the following adverbial attributes belong to the most emotional group and in this way manifest the writer's individual style and unique writing talent.: *marvelously intriguing/secure*, *frightfully warm/comfortable/expensive/rich/ akin*, *blissfully peaceful*, *ridiculously hopeful and happy*, *wonderfully sophisticated/glamorous*, *wildly excited*, *brutally frank*, *bluntly honest*, *deathly pale*, *furiously indignant*, *astoundingly pure*, *dreadfully sad/tall*, *piercingly cold*, *blindingly white*. But most of all I was impressed by the following attributes: *housewifely eye*, *she felt headachy* and especially *feeling tremendously Christmassy*.

Phraseological expressions can also be found in the text of the novel quite frequently. They are worth special investigation while being analyzed by a non-native speaker/reader. They interconnect cognition and the language. The idea to refer the ideas and the concepts standing behind the English set expressions to those in the Ukrainian language seems to be very pragmatic and reasonable. It can help to test the ability of the Ukrainian reading community to understand the text read by them in English. Some of these idioms present no difficulties for our national audience as they have exact lexical equivalents in the Ukrainian language: *to carry somebody out feet first*- *винести наперед ногами*, *to take under one's wings* - *взяти під крило*, *to leak wounds* - *залізувати рани*, *to play a second fiddle* - *грати другу скрипку*, *to cast an eye on something* - *покласти око*, *to spring wings* - *розправити крила*, *to be on the verge of desperation* - *бути на межі відчаю*, *to tempt the providence* - *спокушати долю*, *to bite one's tongue*- *прикусити язика*, *to be chilled to the bone*-*змерзти до кісток*, *to prick up ears*- *наставити вуха*. *to jump out of skin*-*вистрибувати зі шкіри*. Another group of the English idioms can be easily guessed as they are slightly lexically different if compared with their Ukrainian equivalents. In the following pairs of examples the direct Ukrainian translation is given in the parenthesis : *to bite off more than one can chew*-*відкусити більше, ніж спроможний проковтнути (жувати)*, *to keep one's head above water*- *держатися на поверхні (держати голову над водою)*, *to give a finger to somebody*-*подати руку (подати палець)*, *to be over the moon*- *бути на сьомому небі (бути вище за луну)*, *to grab the chance/ opportunity*-*не втратити шанс/можливість (схотити шанс/ можливість)*, *to be on last legs*-*ледве триматися (бути/триматися на останніх ногах)*. To grasp the meaning of the less frequent idioms which are perfect examples of the figurative English the Ukrainian readers of the novel by R. Pilcher will have to address special dictionaries: *to go with the tide*, *to get short shrift*, *to be the pain in the neck*, *to live on a shoestring*, *to be at loose end*, *to know the ropes*, *to blow a fuse*, *to have a great crack*, *to bet a bottom dollar* [13].

The text of the novel also contains the English proverbs paraphrased by the authoress. When Elfrida says: *Sitting and chatting won't get the baby bathed* [10, c.272], she means the proverb *This isn't going to get the baby bathed*. Another phrase of hers *Too old a dog to learn new tricks* [10, c. 96] originally goes like *You can't teach an old dog new tricks* [13].

A big part of the tale is presented through dialogues. R. Pilcher is extremely good at them. But there are a lot of pages where the characters' thoughts and speculations are

described. This makes the writer turn to the syntax typical for interior monologues, the nominative sentences in particular [1]. This technique results in the empathetic effect on the readers. They share Oscar's grievance and anguish: *During his walk he had, as was his custom, observed sky, clouds, hills, birds...all with no reaction, no lift of the spirit, no marvel. No inspiration. No joy. It was a bit like looking at an indifferent painting, a huge landscape painstakingly executed but lacking the soul* [10, c.201]. And now we are haunted by painful memories together with Carrie: *It was Corrydale. The place. The sunlit snow, the aromatic scent of pine trees, the dark blue skies, the mountains on the far side of the glittering firth. The warmth of the low sun, the crunch of fresh snow underfoot, the dazzle, the pleasure of breathing pure cold air down into her lungs. Austria. Oberbeuren. And Andreas: here, now, walking beside her, talking incessantly, his voice always with that undertone of laughter. Andreas. Making plans, making love* [10, c.573].

Conclusions. The popularity of the novel "Winter Solstice" by R. Pilcher can be explained by a variety of reasons. By its simple and quite predictable plot with the positive main characters and happy end it can be referred to the category of so called "Christmas stories" which are definitely welcomed by the readers. Another reason lies in the fact that the writer tells the readers about the people and things that she knows very well, for example, the people of senior age or the Scottish landscapes. But the main factor that causes the striking popularity of the novel is the language used by the authoress when presenting the story. It is extremely figurative being very rich in both well-known or newly made by the writer epithets, metaphors, similes, idioms. The study also revealed the use of some specific morphological and syntactical models, related in particular to the modifiers, intensifiers, interior monologues, which contribute to the R. Pilcher individual writing style and to the success of the novel as a whole.

Once R. Pilcher defined her books as "Light reading for intelligent ladies" [6]. Even if she ironically flattered her readers, this definition can certainly enlarge the number of her audience.

МОВНІ І НЕ ЛИШЕ СЕКРЕТИ ПОПУЛЯРНОСТІ РОМАНУ Р. ПІЛЧЕР "WINTER SOLSTICE"

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У статті розглянуто феномен світової популярності роману сучасної британської письменниці Розамунди Пілчер "Winter Solstice" через його дослідження на двох рівнях, а саме шляхом первинного аналізу його читачького сприйняття з наступним вивченням структурно-системних складових його лінгвістичної основи. Розглядається роль та місце даного твору як у творчості Р.Пілчер, так і у світовій літературі. Літературний аналіз тексту роману співвіднесено з низкою концепцій вітчизняних та іноземних лінгвістів щодо специфіки сучасної англійської мови. У статті наведено пріоритетний набір виразових засобів художньої мови, використаних у романі. Визначені особливості авторського стилю шляхом аналізу застосування конкретних фігур мови: епітетів, метафори, порівняння, ідіом, алегорії. Вказані також деякі морфологічні та синтаксичні особливості тексту роману та їх роль у викладенні змісту.

Ключові слова: стиль, фігури мови, метафора, порівняння, ідіома.

ЯЗЫКОВЫЕ И НЕ ТОЛЬКО СЕКРЕТЫ ПОПУЛЯРНОСТИ РОМАНА Р.ПИЛЧЕР "WINTER SOLSTICE"

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В статье рассмотрен феномен мировой популярности романа современной британской писательницы Розамунды Пилчер "Winter Solstice" с помощью двухуровневого исследования, а

именно путем первичного анализа его читательского восприятия, с последующим выявлением структурно-системных составляющих лингвистической основы. Рассматривается роль и место данного произведения как в творчестве Р. Пилчер, так и в мировой литературе. Литературный анализ текста романа соотнесен с рядом концепций, разработанных отечественными и зарубежными лингвистами относительно специфики современного английского языка. В статье представлен приоритетный набор средств художественной выразительности, используемых автором. Определены особенности авторского стиля путем анализа использования конкретных фигур речи, в частности, эпитетов, метафоры, сравнения, идиом, аллегории. Указаны также некоторые морфологические и синтаксические особенности текста романа и их роль в изложении содержания.

Ключевые слова: стиль, фигуры речи, метафора, сравнение, идиома.

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