# Lecture 5 SYNTAGMATIC SEMASIOLOGY:

# SEMANTIC FIGURES OF CO-OCCURRENCE

SEMINAR OUTLINE

* Syntagmatic semasiology
* Figures of identity
* Figures of contrast
* Figures of inequality

# Syntagmatic semasiology

Syntagmatic semasiology is the branch of stylistic semasiology which deals with semantic relationships expressed at the length of a whole text. It studies *semantic figures of co-occurrence*, i.e. types of names used for linear arrangement of meanings. The three classes of figures of co-occurrence are figures of identity, figures of contrast, figures of inequality.

# Figures of identity

Figures of identity include such semantic figure of co- occurrence as simile. **Simile** is an explicit comparison of two objects belonging to different classes (*She sings like a nightingale*; BUT: *She sings like a professional soloist* – logical comparison). Types of simile: trite simile (*as strong as a horse, as free as air, as uncertain as the weather*); disguised simile (*She seemed nothing more than a doll*).

# Figures of contrast

Figures of contrast include oxymoron and antithesis. **Oxymoron** is a combination of two words with the opposite meanings (*a gorgeous mess, low skyscraper, eloquent silence, strangely familiar, to cry silently*). **Antithesis** is a confrontation of ideas in different sentences or parts of one sentence (*A saint abroad and a devil at home*). Types of antithesis: morphological (*overworked and underpaid*), lexical proper (*That’s one small step for a man, one giant leap for mankind*), developed (*It was the best of times, it was the worst of times. It was the age of*

*wisdom, it was the age of foolishness. It was the epoch of belief, it was the epoch of incredulity. It was the season of Light, it was the season of Darkness* (exposition to “The Tale of Two Cities” by Ch. Dickens)).

# Figures of inequality

Figures of inequality include pun, zeugma, semantically false chain, decomposition of phraseological units. **Pun** (play upon words) is based on the interaction of two well-known meanings of a word or phrase: two meanings of a polysemantic word (*One swallow does not make a summer*; *Maths teachers have lots of problems*), two meanings of homonyms (*Time wounds all heels* (decomposition of the original proverb: Time heals all wounds)), two meanings of paronyms (*Coffee every Thirst-day morning!*). In **zeugma** a verb is syntactically related to two different subjects or objects and has a different sense in relation to each (*Time and her aunt moved slowly*; *He lost his temper and his digestion in India*). **Semantically false chain** is similar to zeugma, but comprises more than two components (*My grandfather was English, military and long- nosed*). **Decomposition of phraseological units** (proverbs, set expressions, quotations) implies their non-standard usage, when their original structure is changed, the figurative meaning of the expression is lost, the components of the unit are perceived in their original literal meanings, which provides a humorous effect (*It was raining cats and dogs, and two kittens and a puppy landed on my window-sill*).