

## THE ROLE OF PARAPROSDOKIANS IN THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE

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### Анотація

*Дана робота розкриває суть поняття парaproсдокіан, розглядає його основні риси, визначає його функції та встановлює його місце в дискурсі англійської мови.*

**Ключові слова:** парaproсдокіан, англійська мова, риси парaproсдокіанів, функції парaproсдокіанів

### Abstract

*The paper explains the notion of paraproсdokians, studies their features, defines their functions in the language and states their role in the English language discourse.*

**Keywords:** paraproсdokian, the English language, paraproсdokians' features, paraproсdokians' functions

Figurative language is broadly defined as language that uses words or expressions deviating from their original, basic meaning. In contrast to literal language which maintains a consistent meaning regardless of the context, figurative language (or non-literal language) uses words and expressions in their non-literal meaning which depends on the context in which they are used. The English language as no other language of the world is rich in different ways of stylistic figures of speech such as metaphor, allegory, simile, hyperbole, synecdoche, etc. Stylistic elements make people's saying (both oral and written) more interesting and lively and help them to get and keep the reader's / listener's attention.

Britannica defines figures of speech as 'any intentional deviation from literal statement or common usage that emphasizes, clarifies, or embellishes both written and spoken language.' Forming an integral part of language, figures of speech are found in oral literatures as well as in polished poetry and prose and in everyday speech. [3]

Paraproсdokian is a figure of speech in which the latter part of a sentence, phrase, or larger discourse is surprising or unexpected in a way that causes the reader or listener to reframe or reinterpret the first part. In a way, paraproсdokians are linguistic brain scramblers. The unexpected ending to a phrase or sentence causes readers to reinterpret the opening phrase or sentence of a text, producing a surprising shift in meaning. Often, it is used to create comic effect. [4] Indeed, they serve a rhetorical function of illustrating and amplifying an idea or giving force to an argument in religious, political and philosophical discourses.

The term 'paraproсdokian' comes from the Greek 'παρά', meaning 'against' and 'προσδοκία, meaning 'expectation'. It should be noted that the term 'proсdokia' ('expectation') occurs with the preposition 'para' in Greek rhetorical writers of the 1st century BC and the 1st and 2nd centuries AD, with the meaning 'contrary to expectation' or 'unexpectedly.' However, Canadian linguist and etymology author William Gordon Casselman argues that, while the word is now in wide circulation, 'paraproсdokian' (or 'paraproсdokia') is not a term of classical (or medieval) Greek or Latin rhetoric, but a modern neologism, citing the fact that the word does not yet appear in the Oxford English Dictionary as evidence of its late coinage. Other sources attribute the term directly to the German philosopher Gustav Gerber of that time period. [4] For the first time, the word appeared in print as early as 1891 in a humorous article in Punch.

As to its general features, paraproсdokian is characterized in the first place by its double meaning. Some paraproсdokians do not only change the meaning of an early phrase, but they also play on the double meaning

of a particular word (e.g. ‘Your argument is sound. Just sound, lots of sound’). Its unexpected or surprised shift in meaning appears at the end of a stanza, sentence, or paragraph (e.g. ‘You’re never too old to learn something stupid’). A paraprosdokian is a U-turn for the reader that results in surprise (e.g. ‘War does not determine who is right ... only who is left.’, Bertrand Russell). The unexpected ending is used to create humorous and comic effects. It causes the readers to reinterpret or rethink the opening part of a phrase. Sometimes it is used to provide dramatic effect, while at other times, it produces an anti-climax, which it is a very popular use among satirists and comedians.

Paraprosdokian is employed in poetry, prose, and films, as well as in music. They can be found in the works and sayings of writers, politicians, journalists. For example, Charles Dickens began ‘A Tale of Two Cities’ with a string of paraprosdokians:

‘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, it was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair, we had everything before us, we had nothing before us, we were all going direct to heaven, we were all going direct the other way . . .’

We can trace paraprosdokians in the works and sayings of many other writers, poets, scientists and statesmen: ‘If you have tears, prepare to shed them now.’, ‘Hell is empty, and all the devils are here.’, ‘Poor and content is rich, and rich enough’. (Shakespeare); ‘When angry, count to four, when very angry, swear.’ (Mark Twain); ‘One should forgive one’s enemies, but not before they are hanged.’ (Heinrich Heine); ‘The difference between stupidity and genius is that genius has its limits.’ (Albert Einstein); ‘If I agreed with you, we’d both be wrong’, ‘You can always count on the Americans to do the right thing – after they have tried everything else’ (Winston Churchill); ‘Some cause happiness wherever they go. Others, whenever they go.’ (Oscar Wilde).

Paraprosdokians make speech more precise, interesting and rich attracting at the same time attention to the problematic issues or making laugh at some facts of life.

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