

Horia Hulban

EDITOR

STYLE IN LANGUAGE, DISCOURSES AND LITERATURE

V



Perspectives of the English Language Series

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IAȘI 2009**

**STYLE IN LANGUAGE,
DISCOURSES
AND LITERATURE**

VOLUME V

**PERSPECTIVES OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE
SERIES 5**

EDITOR: *Horia HULBAN*

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**STYLE IN LANGUAGE, DISCOURSES AND LITERATURE
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PERSPECTIVES OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE SERIES 5

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STYLE IN LANGUAGE

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HYPERBOLE: A WAY OF SEEING THE WORLD

Horia HULBAN

The phrase **figure of speech** has been for long a trite expression. By it people usually mean the use of simile, metaphor, hyperbole, oxymoron, and personification, that is a lexical unit in which the literal meaning of a word or of a phrase is replaced by another meaning, having more or less to do with the original one. In spite of the fact that the figures of speech are treated independently, as if they were autonomous, and demarcation lines are arbitrarily drawn between and among them, they are closely related. The same figure of speech can be sensed by the keen observer as being, for example a **comparison** and a **metaphor**, or a **metaphor**, a **personification** and a **hyperbole** simultaneously, the stress falling every time on a different element, every combination having its idiosyncrasies. At the same time, the way in which we sense the expressive force of a figure of speech differs. They cover a large range of degrees of expressiveness, from those which are considered so trite and worn out that are regarded to be **dead**, or those which still glitter something from the brilliance of the earlier times, to those which are considered fresh and interesting enough to be paid attention, or those which arrest our attention, flash and stimulate our imagination, establishing daring connections and inflaming the spirit.

One of the figures of speech that most often are connected to metaphor is **hyperbole**. It is also one of the most expressive ones, though those that are linguistic cliché are abundant. This might be surprising for a figure of speech that is considered to represent an extravagant exaggeration used for its shocking effect or the strong impression aimed at. In the process of language evolution not all discoveries prove to be equally efficient, and those that were efficient at a certain stage of language evolution appear trite after a long use, which may go many centuries back. Nevertheless, all of them accumulate a great amount of language experience, establishing certain linguistic patterns that, when followed, can obtain a certain effect with minimum effort. The better established the pattern, the less efficient it is with respect to its expressive capacity. Rule breaking is the unspoken law of achieving the maximum surprise. When the impossible is shown as possible, as it is the case with the most eloquent hyperbole, the maximum effect is achieved, regardless the connotations. The kind of association involved usually associates two things, which makes hyperbole very similar to metaphor, in a large number of cases being a special kind of metaphor, or a metaphor created with a specific purpose. This does not imply that hyperbole cannot exist outside the concept of metaphor, but it points out that the metaphorical type is the most efficient, expressiveness being due to two factors: the intention of exaggeration, common to all hyperboles, and the brilliance of unexpected associations, which characterise the best metaphors.

When one talks of hyperbole, one must take into account the imaginary semantic axis of a person's appreciation. When we use a hyperbole, we implicitly express an assessment of the true worth or value of persons or things and ideas and the parameters of their dimensions. Paradoxically, this "true worth" is not an objective, but a subjective evaluation, according to the speaker's belief, and it is this very subjectivity that gives force to any hyperbole. All trite phrases, including hyperbole, reflect a common viewpoint, which is

connected to today's common-sense, and so they all go on the line of the expected, which implies the lack of surprise, being gradually turned into cliché. The original, subjective creations do not take care of any restrictions imposed by common sense, which permit a rather restricted jump up or down on the imaginary axis towards the top or to the bottom of one's expectations, or in achieving positive or negative values of any assessment. This does not mean that trite expressions are not useful or important. A language needs every possible lexical means that is able to express all its nuances. They go from the negative to the positive ones on the imaginary axis of expressiveness, via the zone of total lack of involvement, which represents what we accept to be the common thing, the habitual, as belonging to the daily routine of our existence. The hyperbole begins at the point when the dimensions of the referent appear to the speaker as better or worse, as more or less intense than expected, and this degree which is different from the normal is expressed in language by words and phrases which are extremely common. They enter certain set expressions that are not far from cliché or which are the very cliché within the field of hyperbole. If I am impressed, for example, by the number of people supporting somebody, I might say that he has *a crowd* or *a host of supporters* and if I consider that the sum of money I have to pay for something is high, I might say that it is *a good deal of money*. Something may be considered *a drop in the ocean*, *a great deal of criticism / pain*, *a huge quantity of*, *a lot of trouble*, *a tiny token of love*, *a total loss*, *a unique situation*, *a veritable wonder*, *a very important announcement*, *a very special guest*, *a whole new life*, *a world wide problem*, *somebody's biggest problem*. About half of these examples are not metaphors and some are **dead metaphors**, that usually are not regarded as metaphors any longer, losing their original expressive force. Nevertheless they are still capable to express that something is regarded as being higher or lower than the expectations of the speaker, forming the lowest layer of hyperbole as a figure of speech. They are usually neglected by researchers, being considered insignificant. They do not add beauty to a message we want to convey, nor do they raise any emotions in the listener. But they become very interesting if we want to see how language works and we try to understand the process of language evolution from simple to complex, the way in which it became more and more sophisticated and expressive. Such a study has a great deal to offer and the linguist has to use a host of espionage agents to discover its secrets.

Language uses a rather large set of key words and phrases to do this¹:

1. simple adjectives, e.g.,

ample: *ample expression / figure / girth / margin / money for / plan / proportions / sum*

astronomical: *astronomical cost / price / problem / purposes / salaries*

big: *a big heart / lie / moment / talk, be in big trouble / of a big help, big bucks ("money"), deserve very big apology for, get a big hand ("be applauded"), have a big laugh, live a big moment;*

considerable: *a considerable amount of / political operator / growth;*

evil: *evil days / empire / genius / man;*

eternal: *eternal brotherhood / crisis / devotion / force / glory / happiness / life / love / pleasure / punishment / quarrel / strife / struggle / torture / truths / youth;*

excessive: *excessive coverage / deficit / drinking / enthusiasm / fees / gaiety / government deficits / growth / heat / indulgence / moisture / price / rigour / self-preoccupation / tip / use of;*

exhausted: *exhausted country / from working / man / swimmer / with work;*

¹ Hulban, Horia, *Dicționar englez-român de expresii și locuțiuni*, Polirom, Iași. 2007.

exhaustive: *exhaustive definition / description / list;*
exorbitant: *exorbitant claims / desire / prices / profits / rate of ... per cent / rates*
expeditious: *expeditious journey / means / method;*
extraordinary; *extraordinary circumstances / event / expenses / experience / gift / growth rates / item / tolerance / woman;*
extravagant: *extravagant claim / demand / enthusiasm / price;*
extreme: *extreme case / fighting / games / hostility / humility / limit / moods of depression / old age / poverty / precaution / pride / refinement / sensibility / shyness / situation / sport;*
fabulous: *fabulous farm / holiday / hospitality / monster / wealth;*
fadeless: *fadeless brightness / colours / fragrance / memories / vigour;*
fanatical: *fanatical fighter / regime / sect / supporters;*
fantastic: *fantastic combination / devotion / goals / imagination / plan / scheme;*
far: *far future / right leader / sight;*
faraway: *faraway look / places / village;*
fascinating: *fascinating behaviour / building / hysteria / information / man / personality / sport / world;*
faultless: *faultless character / memory / player / speech / structure / tennis player;*
fearful: *fearful drinker / memory / night / sight / weapon;*
fearless: *fearless demeanour / sailor;*
fecund: *fecund genius / mind / mother / plant / results / tree / woman;*
feeble: *feeble attempt / child / mind / person / response / voice;*
feral: *feral conduct / hostility / inhabitant / teeth;*
ferocious: *ferocious appetite / beast / countenance / fire / nature / slaughter / tiger;*
fervent: *fervent admirer / desire / gratefulness / preacher / wish;*
fervid: *fervid friendship / love / loyalty / speaker;*
fierce: *fierce competition / countenance / criticism / defence / fighting / hermit / land / outburst / struggle / tiger / tribe;*
fiery: *fiery horse / look / love / personality / speech;*
flagrant: *flagrant breech / criminal / error / offence / violation / violation of law;*
flawless: *flawless character / forgery / plea / plot / report / speech;*
giant: *giant corporation / bomber / canon / conglomerate / conspiracy / corporation / mind / mistake / press / pretence / sections / tentacles;*
gigantic: *gigantic creature / error;*
glorious: *glorious epoch / past / reign / season / sunrise / victory / welcome / beautiful woman;*
grand: *grand entrance / dress / gesture / scale / statesman;*
grandiose: *grandiose building / monument / speech / style;*
great: *great achievements / adventure / aid / asset / blow / changes / festival / command of a language / deal / deal of money / designer / dinner / eater / fête / illusionist / intelligence / leaps forward / legs / minds / misfortunes / nation / officer / pains / phenomenon / piece of folly / pleasure / point / popularity / privilege / proportion / prosperity / psychic strength / rewards / smile / spectacle / speech / steps forward / stir / straits / success rate / tact / untruth / voice / volatility in the market / wedding festival / world;*
greedy: *greedy desire / hands;*
gross: *gross chicane / dereliction of duty / error / human rights violations / inefficiency / injustice / miscalculation / misconduct / negligence / overcharge / violations of human rights;*

hard: *hard bargain / blow / boss / case to crack / drinker / facts / feelings / fight / heart / hearted / hit / illness / lie men / line / liner / money / nose / nut to crack / rock / sell / times;*

heartfelt: *heartfelt emotions / lament / laugh / sympathy / tears / thanks / welcome;*

hearty: *hearty cheers / laugh / sympathy / welcome;*

heavy: *heavy beard / burden / dose / drinking / duty / fighting / handed treatment / heart / load of / loss of life / losses / person / price / purse / rain / rainfalls / sea / smoker / snow showers / snowfall / storm / suffering / taxation / traffic / tropical rains / user / words;*

hellish: *hellish noise / place;*

heroic: *heroic act / age / death / deed / job / times;*

hideous: *hideous countenance / crime;*

high: *high alert / calibre candidates / day / degree of / esteem / excellence / fidelity / flyer / level public service / liver / lustre / moral authority / patriotism / public / roller;*

historic: *historic agreement / day / deal / decision / elections / flight / goal / mission / moment / space mission / struggles / victory / voyage;*

horrible: *horrible cruelty / death / deeds / dress / lies / mask / mistake / name / régime / sight / things / voice / weather / wound;*

hot: *hot argument / emotions / favourite / from the press / laboratory / money / news / subject / temper / topic among / under the collar;*

huge: *a huge number of refugees / pile of debts / quantity of / leap / movement of people / parking / party / pavilion / popularity / potential / quantity / relief / set back / size / traffic / withdraw, cause huge damage, have a huge achievement / appetite / economic potential, huge expenses / explosions / investments / possibilities of expansion / prices;*

immense: *immense fun / pain / profit / similitude;*

impeccable: *impeccable conductor / explanation / logic / record / sources / statue / taste;*

impenetrable: *impenetrable atmosphere / darkness / domain / fence / forest / helmet / jungle / maze / ocean / resistance / rock / wall;*

imperceptible: *imperceptible music / noise / sound / subtlety / thing / weight;*

impertinent: *impertinent fact / question / remark;*

impossible: *impossible man / situation / things / wife, to do something impossible;*

impregnable: *impregnable barrier / defence / entrenchment / virtue / will;*

impressive: *impressive collection / construction / criminal record / person / shots / skills / style / translation effort;*

inaccessible: *inaccessible exhibition / house / mountain / museum / path;*

indispensable: *indispensable condition / evidence / part / person / tool;*

inevitable: *inevitable damage / end / invasion / war;*

inexpugnable: *inexpugnable division / firmness / thesis;*

infinite: *infinite capacity for / despair / in number / love / number of / passion / resources / set of sentences / vigour;*

inordinate: *inordinate demands / expectations / passion / pride / snobbery;*

intense: *intense attention / belief / blue / cold / colour / emotion / feeling / heat / light / negotiations / political criticism;*

intensive: *intensive adjectives / aid / build-up / care / care beds / care unit / care ward / compound / courses / efforts / negotiations / programs / search;*

invincible: *invincible agent / argument, Invincible Armada, invincible fastness / fleet;*

irreversible: *irreversible forms / process / relation / succession;*

keen: *keen cold / gardener / hunger / interest in / interpretation / judge / memory / mind / wit;*

key: key area / argument / attribute / building / concepts / difference / election / element / factor / issues / mover / officer / people / personal / player / position / post / question / role / scene / statement / talks / terms / to a mystery / of a problem / weapon / witness / word;

leading: leading expert / exponent / killer / member of / place / politicians / producer / role / soprano / spirit of the movement;

long: long goal, live a long way from, long good-byes / journey ahead,

lordly: lordly attitude / cognisant style / gift / reward;

luxuriant: luxuriant beard / hair / imagination / lodgings / estate / hotel / spa / resort / style of living;

magnificent: magnificent building / collection / entrance / forms / generosity / hall / magnolia tree / mines / ruler / sculptures;

marathon: marathon conversation / hearings / talks;

massive: massive acceleration / amount of / blizzard / bombardment / building / cut / damage / demonstration / dose / economic impact / emigration of / fire power / floods / haemorrhage / heart attack / helicopter / infection / investments / land slides / majority in favour / market / miscalculation / police hunt / police operation / profits / psychic trauma / reconstruction operation / restructuring / restructuring process / retaliation / security operations / strike against / trauma;

maximum: maximum amount of information / burn / card / communication / consternation / depth / distance / independence / mintage / number of letters / of precaution / penalty / realisation / risk / security / security prison;

megalithic: megalithic cemeteries / complex / wonder;

miniature: miniature camera / copy / effects / painting / statue / train;

monstrous: monstrous alliance / audience / body / career / creature / cruelty / face / falsehood / injustice / nature / plans / production / beast;

monumental: monumental architecture / building / change / chest-of-drawers / dictionary / statue;

perfect: perfect as a circle, perfect balance / beauty / beguiler / body / calmness / choice / clone / competition / condition / content / cop / counterfeit / day / democracy / ending / evening / example / fidelity / gentleman / health / hunter / job / landing / love / lover / mask / match / mechanism / night / pair / peace / physical condition / piece of art / place / plan / rhyme / score / similitude / sister / soldiers / solution / symmetry / synonyms / team / teeth / union / weapon / wedding gift / wife / woman;

tiny: a tiny share of the vote / token of one's love, make a tiny suggestion, the only tiny hope;

true: a true connoisseur / pioneer, true love;

The adjectives included in this list belong to the group of intensifying adjectives, some of them having a positive value and others a negative one. In spite of this fact, in some phrases a 0-degree of intensity is felt, being turned into dead metaphors. Even among them there can be distinguished two subgroups. The former is made of linguistic metaphors that do not replace names, but are the names themselves, e.g. *maximum card*, *miniature sheet*, both of them denoting specific philatelic items, while in *miniature camera / copy / effects / painting / statue / train* there is implied a very small scale dimension, an idea which reveals the original hyperbolic approach. *Extreme fighting / games / sports* suggest life risks and have lost their original subjective use, becoming the very names of these activities, while *extreme case / hostility / humility / limit / moods of depression / old age / poverty / precaution / pride / refinement / sensibility / shyness / situation*, no matter how worn out appear to the hearer, still reflect the idea of excess proper to a hyperbole. *Fadeless* in *fadeless brightness / colours* has

a very little expressive force, while in *fadeless fragrance / memories / vigour* the speaker evidently is not free from a personal positive appreciation. *Fecund* in *fecund mother / plant / tree / woman* is nowadays a simple appreciation of biologic fecundity, far from expressing an attitude of the speaker, but obviously in *fecund genius / mind* there is expressed admiration, which gives life to hyperbole. The same happens with *ferocious beast / tiger* Vs *ferocious appetite / countenance / fire / nature / slaughter*, which still betray that we are impressed by how savagely fierce or cruel they are. Some other times most phrases used with the intensifying adjectives retain the rather powerful feeling that inspired them, e. g., *glorious epoch / past / reign / season / sunrise / victory / welcome / beautiful woman, evil days / empire / genius / man, fabulous holiday / hospitality / monster / wealth*, or *hellish noise / place*.

2. compound adjectives:

Such examples are offered by:

age-long rival, all-embracing experience / matter, all-or-none law, all-or-nothing matter / response, all-out offensive / strike, all-time high / low, all-over dirt, anti-Clinton crusade, breath-taking scenery, clear-cut distinction between, e-commerce giant, end the court-room war, ever-changing emphases, ever-growing role, ever-increasing quantities, first-rate education / products, have a 24-carat ambition, head-over-ears in debt / love, high-profile bankers / event / show, high-purity material, high-speed train, high-spirited horse / tomboy, high-tech equipment / hardware / weaponry, high-toned orders, hurry-up program, life-long friendship, long-range damage / goals / interest / irreparable damage, long-term commitment / prospect / vision, long-winded quotation, massive re-structuring process, mini-ice age, money-hungry publisher, never-ending elections, the blue-rinse brigade, the green-eyed monster;

All-time high / low, all-out offensive / strike, clear-cut distinction between, e-commerce giant, first-rate education / products, high-speed train, and many others are rather standardised and have a - 0 or near 0-degree of expressiveness. On the contrary, *all-or-nothing matter, anti-Clinton crusade, breath-taking scenery, end the court-room war, have a 24-carat ambition, mini-ice age, the green-eyed monster ("the dollar")* are still felt as hyperboles and most of them are hyperbolic metaphors.

3. nouns, e.g.,

army: *army of agents / desires / doctors / grass hoppers / insects / labour officials / refugees / robots / unemployed / workmen;*

deal: *a great deal of anger / criticism / pain;*

explosion: *explosion of cultural events / epidemic / hostilities / laughter / violence;*

feeling: *(introducing both negative and positive hyperboles): feeling of a danger / abandonment / admiration for / aggression / being lost / disappointment / displeasure / dissatisfaction / enjoyment / fear / gratitude / grief / hope / hostility towards / inadequacy / inferiority / insecurity / joy / loneliness / love / nostalgia / originality / pain / panic / pity / pleasure / power / pressure / relief / sadness / safety / shame / sorrow / strangeness / tension / unworthiness / anxiety / guilt / inadequacy / unreality;*

fervour: *fervour of a social reformer / devotion;*

fit: *fit of despair / devotion / energy / enthusiasm / fury / idleness;*
flood: *flood of letters / news / requests / speculations / video-cassettes / words;*
giant: *aviation / commerce / diamond / economic giant;*
greed: *greed for love / money / more food / more power;*
heap: *heap of dirt / bodies / time;*
heart: *heart of gold / stone / the globe / the matter;*
heaven: *a match made in heaven, heaven for criminals / in a house / on earth, holiday heaven;*
height: *at its height, the height of beauty / one's career / glory, at the highest standard, dismayed at the height of, the height of debate / rudeness / the battle;*
host: *a host of book reviews / chairs / children / concerns / friends / monuments / other things / stars;*
hunger: *hunger for a good meal / explanation / fame / greatness / justice / news / the truth;*
invasion: *invasion of bees / of occultism / of somebody's belief / wild bees / privacy;*
king: *king of beasts / beggars / carnival / dance / diamonds / the slopes / thieves, pirate king;*
queen: *beauty queen, queen of ball / the ocean liners;*
prince: *merchant prince, prince of powder;*
princess: *princess of the catwalk;*
land: *land of complete freedom / dreams / fairies / free men, Land of the Covenant;*
lust: *lust for fame / life / money;*
mountain: *mountain of debts / hardships / evidence / whipped cream;*

If we take a look at the nouns listed here, we can notice that they denote the idea of a great number of things or participants, e. g., *army, deal, heap, host, invasion*, a violent release of energy, e. g., *explosion, fit*, natural elements implying great dimensions or force, e.g., *flood, land, mountain*, abstract nouns involving the idea of remarkably or supernaturally large, e.g., *giant, heaven, height*, persons of outstanding rank, e. g., *king, queen, prince, princess*, an element found at the core of one's behaviour, e.g. *heart*, and sensations, such as *feeling, hunger, lust*, which are regularly associated to a high degree of intensity. The high intensity force of these nouns is usually transferred to the phrase taken as a whole. The collocations also maintain most of their original freshness as metaphors and the hyperbolic intentions of the user under the form of positive or negative connotations. To these examples can be added tens of other nouns which have more or less the same basic characteristics. While *invasion of bees* is a mere hyperbole, *an invasion of occultism / of somebody's belief / privacy* are powerful metaphors. While in *hunger for a good meal* the hyperbole is easily felt, but the metaphor is compromised by the belonging of *hunger* and *a good meal* to the same semantic field, in *hunger for explanation / fame / greatness / justice / news / the truth* the metaphors are fresh and can still arrest our attention. Other phrases function only as metaphors, e.g., *king of beasts / beggars / carnival / dance / diamonds / the slopes / thieves, pirate king, beauty queen, queen of ball / the ocean liners, merchant prince, prince of powder, princess of the catwalk;*

4. adverbs, e.g.,

absolutely: *absolutely certain that / free from / impossible / necessary / no danger / nothing / sure of / terrifying / unbelievable / wrong;*
always: *always broken / hanging on to somebody's skirts / on the go / on the line of duty / on the road / ready / right / the same / together / unhappy / welcome;*

dearly: *cost somebody dearly, love dearly, pay dearly for something;*

extremely: *extremely accessible / careful / competitive nature / dangerous / lucky / unhealthy;*

far: *far apart / away gleaming light / beyond / gone in drink / in years / sighted eye / too strong;*

hard: *follow hard after / behind / upon, look hard at somebody, run somebody hard, think / try hard;*

hugely: *amuse / enjoy oneself hugely;*

madly: *madly in love with somebody;*

painfully: *painfully high / obvious;*

passionately: *passionately committed;*

perfectly: *perfectly good dinner;*

The hyperbolic intention is present in all these examples but only some of them function as metaphors, e.g. *always on the line of duty, far gone in drink / in years, look hard at somebody, run somebody hard, think hard, madly in love with somebody.*

5. adverbials:

with all: *aches all over, all alone in this world, all along, all along the line, all important / over the country / over the place like a madwoman's custard ("in a mess"), / all too briefly / eagerly / late / obviously / often / prone to / quickly / soon, be all in vain / all worn out / all work;*

every: *every day, happen every day / every day of one's life, every cent of it, love every bit of it;*

for ever: *be a joy for ever / brothers for ever, change one's life for ever, for ever and ever, love somebody for ever;*

in (Adj. +) Noun: *in front of the entire world, in full conviction / high dudgeon / esteem / feather / forest / power / spirits, in poll after poll across Europe, in sore need, / times of extreme danger / urgent need of aid / very serious trouble;*

in a / an : *in a great many instances / jiffy / matter of seconds / maze / sorry case / trice / twinkling of an eye / word / an access of despair / entirely new way / evil hour;*

in no: *in no case / point / respect / time;*

in the: *in the depth of despair / flower of manhood / gravy / heat of the moment / height of the season / most concise form / narrowest sense / twinkling of an eye / whole world / wildest dreams;*

more than: *be more than capable / nothing more than an illusion, love somebody more than life, love to dance more than anything;*

to the death: *fight to the death;*

to the end: *all the way to the end, fight to the end, love somebody to the end, to the end of the world;*

to the last: *conscientious to the last, fight to the last bullet / drop of one's blood / soldier, plan to the last detail;*

with all one's heart: *love with all one's heart;*

with ardour: *love somebody with ardour;*

without doubt: *love without doubt;*

6. determiners:

all: *all areas of international policy / aspects of life / lies / one's life / sides / societies and civilisations / somebody's problems / the help one can get / the time / the walks of life / the way to the end;*

any: *any day of the week / student / week / wish, at any cost / given moment / price / rate;*

every: *every man / minute / minute now / nationality imaginable / one of us / one who / respect / tenant of the building / time / week every condition of*

7. pronouns:

all: *all are losers, all at once, all by the book, all gratitude, all of them athirst for, all will be forgiven, all without distinction;*

any, anything: *any will do, anything else / for a quiet life, anything, any time;*

every: *in every condition of life / respect, know somebody's every thought, make every concession one can, make every efforts to do something, make every possible appealing efforts, mean every word, work every time;*

everybody: *everybody gets a chance / has a flaw / except me;*

All these pronouns are used in emphatic contexts that are more or less bent towards hyperbole. They usually go unnoticed and very seldom have a stylistic effect, depending on the context in which they are used.

8. verbs:

exhaust: (introducing negative hyperboles): *exhaust a nation / all possibilities of investigation / somebody's patience / the soil / the spirit;*

face: (introducing mostly negative hyperboles): *face a dramatic water crisis / an uphill battle / difficult choices / financial ruin / the worst fear;*

fall: (usually introducing negative hyperboles): *fall from the sky / in love with a place / into a deep friendship / on deaf ears / on evil days / on hard times / upon hard times;*

feel: (usually introducing negative hyperboles): *feel disgust for / empty inside / every nerve in one's body / excluded / exhausted / heaps better / hopeless / horrible / humbled in dust / humiliated / immune / important / increasingly threatened / inferior to somebody / lonely as hell / lost / lousy / miserable / nothing for somebody / on top of the world / pain all in every limb / pain all over the body / prostrate / repugnance at something / repugnance for criminals / ridiculous / rotten / so good / useless / very low / queer / worn out;*

fight: (usually introducing negative hyperboles): *fight a costly campaign against / devastating battle;*

fill: *fill every second with work / somebody with dismay / exaltation / dread / delusion / illusion after another;*

find: *find a perfect choice / match / a safe place / sincere admirer in / everlasting happiness / hard to believe / in somebody an outstanding example / intolerable / it hard to swallow / one's mission in life / oneself in very hot water indeed / somebody angry as hell / armed to the teeth;*

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