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## THE TRANSLATION OF HYPERBOLIC EXPRESSIONS FROM ENGLISH INTO INDONESIAN : A CASE STUDY IN HOLY BIBLE

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### ABSTRACT

This research deals with the translation of hyperbolic expressions from English into Indonesian. The researchers used English as a source language and Indonesian as target language. The objective of the study is to find out how English hyperbolic expressions are translated into Indonesian. In conducting this research, the researchers followed these procedures. Firstly, the researchers formulated the problem. Secondly, the researchers built theoretical framework. Thirdly, the researchers collected the data and classified the data based on kinds of hyperbole. Lastly, the researchers examined the data in Indonesian whether hyperbole in English are translated into hyperbole in Indonesian or not. After analyzing the data, the researchers came into a conclusion that English hyperboles are translated into Indonesian in some ways: (i) hyperboles are translated with hyperboles by maintaining the original words in source language (find the proper word equivalents), (ii) hyperboles are translated with hyperboles but the original word in source language are not maintained but are substituted with new word in target language, and (iii) hyperboles are translated non-figuratively. As the result, the writer finds that all of the data are translated into hyperbole.

**Keywords:** *Translation, hyperbolic expressions, bible, kind of hyperbole, figurative language*

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### 1. INTRODUCTION

Language cannot be separated from human life because it has great importance in communication. We use language as a tool of communication in our daily interaction to convey or express our ideas, feelings, and attitudes. A speaker will use language in conversation to greet his interlocutor, interact, and express his feelings to his hearer. Without language someone will have difficulty expressing his/her ideas and the hearer will have difficulty understanding the speaker. It means that language holds a vital function to connect or relate a speaker with a hearer.

Through communication a speaker conveys his/her ideas with utterances, expressions, or statements in order to be understood by the hearer. When the hearer can understand the speaker's ideas, it means the hearer gets the point and grasps the meaning. But when the hearer

fails to understand the speaker it will create communication error or misunderstanding. However, to convey ideas is not as easy as we think. It is important to analyze how the speaker utters his idea by the way he is conveying it. The ideas can be uttered in a literal way or it can be in a figurative way. In communicating, the hearer tends to have more difficulty to understand figurative meaning rather than literal meaning.

To find out about how ideas or expressions are conveyed in different languages we can see them by looking into the translation of ideas from one language into another. As we see a translator must translate the ideas in terms of meaning rather than lexical or literal forms. Hence the result of the translation of the source language may be different from form the target language. In the process, to earn for an adequate or acceptable translation, a translator must



understand the ideas and proportions and then change them into its equivalents using the grammatical rules of the target language. According to Catford (1969) translation is "the replacement of textual material in one language by equivalent textual material in another language". Thus, the essence of translation is a process that involves the relationship between two or more languages which then transfers the meaning of the source language to the target language with the accuracy of the message, readability, and acceptability so that it leads to a good translation.

Word in the original, substituting a hyperbole expression figuratively, or not translating it into hyperbole at all. Meanwhile, the author takes data samples from the Holy Bible using both Old Testament and New Testament containing hyperbolic expressions, where the language in the Holy Bible is common and standardized.

Figurative language is a language that has a different meaning from its literal words and cannot be translated literally. Figurative language could be found in many areas such as song lyrics and literary works like poetry.

One of the figurative expressions is hyperbole. According to (Reaske, 1966:34) "Hyperbole is a figure of speech which employs exaggeration. Sometimes it is used for comic purposes and also serious purpose. Hyperbole can produce a very dramatic emphasize something. It attempts to exaggerate something, make it more dramatic or tragic and no one would believe that it is true.

Meaning is regarded as figurative if an expression needs to be interpreted based on the context of language and it is regarded as literal if the speaker's words are interpreted as what they are. We can express an idea figuratively by using a variety of expressions such as metonymy, irony, personification, hyperbole, etc. In other words, one can speak figuratively by using a variety of expressions.

There are many languages in the

world, and translation plays an important role among different users. The translation is an effort to deliver the message from the source language into the receptor language. There are some aspects that must be considered by a translator to have the appropriate meaning.

Meanwhile, translating a figurative meaning is always difficult because it has a complicated process. The process of translating figurative language must consider many aspects of translation because the result of the translation may be figurative or not figurative depending on the context of the target language. In this case, the researcher raises a theme related to figurative language which is very unique and different from other translations in general. The figurative language in this case is "hyperbole". This study tried to see how hyperboles in English are translated into the target language, that is Indonesian.

## **2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

### **2.1 Translation**

There are many definitions of translation. Translation (or the practice of translation) is a set of actions performed by the translator while rendering the source (or original) text (ST) into another language. By dictionary definition, translation consists of changing from one state or form to another, to turn into one's own or another's language (The Meriam-Webster Dictionary 1974).

[Nida, Taber, 1969: 12] point out that translation is a process of reproducing in the receptor language the closest natural equivalent of the source-language message, first in terms of meaning and secondly in terms of style. Concerning this statement, it can be obviously seen that meaning of a source language text must be replaced by the closest natural equivalent in the target language. In line with this, the style which is closely related to choice of words and sense of expressing ideas becomes very important in the rendering of a source language into the target language,



Therefore, the translator should not only master the language but also be competent in finding the closest natural equivalent of target language lexical items. It means that the translator must be able to produce a stylistically natural Target Language, which necessarily involves changes of the form.

Translation is the replacement of a representation of a text in one language by a representation of another equivalent text in a second language. (Hartmann & Stock 1972: 713). According to Catford (1965) translation is "The replacement of textual material in one language (Source Language) by equivalent textual material in another language (Target Language). It means translation is the replacement of language text, the language resources appropriate to the target language. Translation is basically a change of form (Larson, 1984:3). Translation consists of changing from one state or form to another language which are spoken or written. These forms are referred to the surface structure of a language. The forms from which translation is made be called the source language and the form into which it is to be changed be called the Receptor Language.

From the explanation above it can be said that translation is reproducing the meaning of the source text in the closest natural equivalent of the receptor. When we speak of the form of a language, we are referring to the actual words, phrases, clauses, sentences, paragraphs, etc., which are spoken or written. These forms are referred to as the surface structure of a language. It is the structural part of the language which is actually seen in print or heard in speech. In translation the form of the source language is replaced by the form of the receptor (target language).

## **2.2 Kinds of Translation**

Translation can be divided into two kinds, they are literal translation and idiomatic translation.

### **2.2.1 Literal Translation (Form-Based Translation)**

The literal translation is also known as form-based translation which attempt to follow the form of the source language. If a word for word, primary for primary meaning translations has functional equivalent, any other translation is wrong. No translation is ever too literal or too close to the original -the criteria are irrelevant (Newmark, 1988:137). In the wider sense, all translators must be as literal, i.e. as close to the original as possible. In the narrower 'word for word' sense, literal translation is only useful as a preliminary technique for discovering an acceptable translation.

### **2.2.2 Idiomatic Translation (Meaning-Based Translation)**

Larson (1984:15) says meaning-based translation is an effort to communicate the meaning of source language text in the natural forms of the receptor language, which is called Idiomatic Translation. Idiomatic translation uses the natural forms of the receptor language both in the grammatical constructions and in the choice of lexical items. Based on Larson's statement on idiomatic translation, the use of meaning-based in the translating process does not sound like a translation, it sounds like it was written originally in the receptor language.

## **2.3 Figurative Language (Hyperbole)**

Language is an important thing in human life. It also plays an important role in human communication. Language is a system of arbitrary vocal symbols used for human communication. There are two kinds of language. They are literal language and figurative language. Fadaee (2011) said that the language that uses figures of speech is called figurative language (p.19). Figurative language is a way of saying something different from the literal meaning in order to give



a sense of beauty and emphasis the importance of what is conveyed. It means that it involves any use of language where the intended meaning differs from the actual literal meaning of the words themselves. In other words, figurative language is used to make text language more aesthetic and more interesting, so it can attract the attention of readers.

Basically, there are many kinds of figurative language. One of them is Hyperbole. Hyperbole is part of the figurative language with other kinds of figurative language such as Metaphor, Simile, Personification, Irony, Idiom, etc. In this research, the researchers only discuss hyperbole as the focus of the research.

Hyperbole is a statement that exaggerates something. According to Henkemans (2013), hyperbole is a rhetorical trope by means of which statements are made that are obviously exaggerated and thus untrue or unwarranted (p. 1). It means hyperbole is a language style in expressing something exaggeratedly even beyond of human logic. While Kennedy (1979:496) affirms hyperbole is emphasizing a point with a statement containing exaggeration. It can be ridiculous or funny.

Hyperboles can be added to fiction to add color and depth to a character. Hyperbole is a figure of speech that it is intentional exaggeration or overstating, often for emphasis or vivid description. Hyperboles can be added to fiction to add color and depth to a character. Exaggeration is a statement that represents something as better or worse than it really is. A speaker expresses hyperbolic expressions by expressing sentences or words that are excessive and abnormal from reality. It's used to highlight points and add emphasis to a feeling, an idea, an action, or a feature.

### **2.3.1 Kinds of Hyperbole**

Christodoulidou (2011) describes two

kinds of hyperbole, they are overstatements of number or quantity and impossible description(p. 145).

#### **2.3.1.1 Overstatements of Number or Quantity**

The speaker tends to overstate numbers of times and years, such as hundreds, or thousand. With these expressions, the speaker emphasizes her/his exaggerating points and intensifies contrasting situations. Some examples are as follows:

- (1) I have loved you for a thousand years.
- (2) I told you a hundred times.

#### **2.3.1.2 Impossible Description**

According to Torode (1996: 33), "impossible descriptions" are like fantasies that are produced in a manner designed to show that they are not possible descriptions of the actual object or event and so must be treated rhetorically or figuratively. In here, the speaker makes a hyperbolic description of a situation which serves as an impossible description. Impossible description can be stated with exceeding manner, reality, feeling, condition, etc. Some examples are as follows:

- (3) It's so hot today. It feels like sleeping beside the sun.
- (4) : I am so hungry. I could eat everything in front of me.

### **2.4 The Strategies in Translating Hyperbole**

As discussed previously, hyperbole is part of the figurative language. Inside hyperbole, there is cultural content that should be translated. This will raise the possibility that there will be untranslatability conditions. It is because the translator does not only consider both languages but also both cultures. Related to the translation difficulties due to culture, Maluku & Morina (2013) said that words encoding cultural information are difficult to translate since they involve cultural knowledge and cultural background (p.



165). In line with them, Larson cited in Retnomurti (2016) said that one of the most difficult problems in translating is found in the differences between cultures (p. 193). Basically, they have special connotations, and different cultures have different focuses

The source language and the target language have different aspects, so there are strategies or techniques involved in the translation process in order to achieve the equivalence of translated works. So, the translator should apply an appropriate translation technique or strategy to produce a good translation. To overcome this phenomenon, Larson (1998) proposed three strategies in translating figurative language as follows (p. 124):

#### **2.4.1 Retaining the word in the original, but to add the sense of the word.**

This should be used if there seems to be a component of emotions or impact which might otherwise be lost. For example:

(1) Moses read in the Synagogue

(2) He drank three cups

Sentence (1) might be translated 'the law (book) written by Moses is read in the Synagogue'. 'Moses' here means the law (book) that was written by Moses not 'Moses' which is understood as a prophet. Sentence (2) might be translated 'he drank three cups of tea' in which the adding of 'cups of tea' as a complement to the sentence. The result of translation keeps the word in original of source language, but adding sense of the word.

#### **2.4.2. Substituting a figurative expression of the target language for the figurative expression of the source language.**

Sometimes translators use this strategy when they do not find an equivalent meaning in the target language. In Aguaruna of Peru, pan, meaning

"bread," would not carry the figurative sense of "food," but yujumak, which means "manioc," would. In one language, tongue may be used with a figurative meaning of "speech," in another language lips may have this figurative sense. In Aguaruna, mouth has a figurative sense of "speech." There will also be times in the translation when there is no figurative expression in the source language, but the best translation will be the use of a figurative expression in the receptor language. For example, 'he gave them strict orders' might well be translated in Mbembe (Nigeria) with the figurative expression 'he pulled their ears'. It is important that the same meaning is retained.

#### **2.4.3 The sense of the word may be translated non-figuratively.**

It means that the intended meaning may be made plain, so that there is no longer a figurative sense in the target language translation. 'The kettle is boiling' would then be translated 'the water is boiling'. 'He has a good head' would be translated 'he has a good brain' or 'he is very intelligent'. 'The arm of the law' would be 'the authority of the law': the result of translation is not to translate sense of the word figuratively, instead non-figuratively.

### **3. THE ANALYSIS**

This research deals with the analysis of the translation of hyperbole. After classifying the data the writer then explains the data based on the ways they are translated theoretically. In translating figurative language, in this case is hyperbolic expressions there are three ways as Larson (1998) proposed: First, retaining the word in the original but to add the sense of the word, second, substituting a figurative expression of the target language for the figurative expression of the source language, and the last is translating the sense of the word non- figuratively.

#### **3.1 Overstatements of Number or**





## Quantity

Overstatement, actually, is an exaggeration for the sake of effect or emphasis, i.e., it magnifies and upscales reality, and, naturally up scaling produces, a difference with reality. In this case, overstatements about numbers or quantity are expressed by mentioning a very large number of real facts such as: thousand, hundreds, million, whole, everyone, etc, or vice versa, which is a very small number which is excessive from the reality such as: one second, nothing, no one, etc. This type of hyperbole also tends to compare the amount of an object

(1a) And what He has seen and heard, that He testifies, and no one receives His testimony.

John 3:32

(1b) Ia memberi kesaksian tentang apa yang dilihat-Nya dan yang didengar-Nya, tetapi tak seorang pun yang menerima kesaksian-Nya itu (Yohanes 3:32). Sentence (1a) is hyperbole as it contains an overstatement of number and quantity as in the phrase 'no one receives.' It is hyperbole because the phrase 'no one' states the absence or equal to zero meaning not even one person. In fact, it is impossible to say no one receives which means zero. At least one or two people still heard to His testimony at that time. So the sentence is actually expresses about people's indifference who do not receive His testimony at all.

The translation of the hyperbole expression in sentence (1a) is also hyperbole that is (1b) 'tak seorang pun menerima kesaksian-Nya itu'. It contains the same meaning as in sentence (1a) 'no one receives His testimony'. Sentence (1b) expresses that no people listen to His testimony. It retains the hyperbole of sentence (1a). But there is a little difference in the use of conjunction. In the source language 'and' is translated into

'tetapi' in target language.

(2a) The Lord your God has multiplied you, and here you are today, as the stars of heaven in multitude. (Deuteronomy 1:10). Its translation is (2b) Tuhan, Allahmu, telah membuat kamu banyak dan sesungguhnya, sekarang kamu sudah seperti bintang-bintang di langit banyaknya. Ulangan 1:10

The phrase *as the stars of heaven in multitude* is hyperbole because its an illogical comparison. Moses expressed this statement using hyperbole which compares Abraham's seeds as much as the stars of heaven in multitude. He said and

to assure the Israelites that they would multiply and crowd. The sentence contains an overstatement of number or quantity of people because people cannot be compared to the stars. This sentence is generally understood to be unreasonable because stars are things that cannot be counted while people can.

When we look at the translation of (2a) we find that the sentence is translated also into hyperbole as 'seperti bintang-bintang di langit banyaknya' in (2b) is a proper translation of the source language (2a) 'as the stars of heaven in multitude'. Both sentences has the same ideas which emphasize about how great Abraham seed's. The sentence (2b) retains the hyperbole of source language (2a) and has clear meaning.

Here is another example: (3a) And the whole city was gathered together at the door. Mark 1:33 Its translation is: (3b) Maka berkerumunlah seluruh penduduk kota itu di depan pintu. Markus 1:33

In sentence (3a) we see that the sentence expresses a large of people who was gathered at the door. The sentence is containing a hyperbolic expression. 'The whole city' in (3a) includes the whole or in other words without exception, so that children, adults, men, and women are included in its depth. This is an overstatement of number or quantity because in reality, not everyone gathers at the door, it's only hundreds of people and



not 'the whole city'. The sentence is an overstatement about how many people want to come to see Jesus.

The translation of sentence (3a) is also hyperbole as the sentence '*maka berkerumunlah seluruh penduduk kota itu di depan pintu*' in (3b) is a proper translation of sentence (3a). Both sentences express the same ideas that say a crowd of people wants to see Jesus which is delivered in hyperbolic way. The translation in the sentence (3b) retains the hyperbole in sentence (3a) and it has clear meaning. (4a) Then I said, 'I shall die in my nest, And multiply my days as the sand. Job 29:18(4b) Pikirku: Bersama-sama dengan saranku aku akan binasa, dan memperbanyak hari- hariku seperti burung feniks. Ayub 29:18

Sentence (4b) is hyperbole because there is an overstatement of number or quantity in it. It is said that he will multiply his day as the sand that means he will be immortal. In reality, there is no creature on earth that really live in eternity, everything will die and disappear. Human only live at least seventy up to eighty years and no one will ever could be extending its life to as much as sand or in other words live in eternity. The sentence is containing hyperbolic expression that expresses his desire to achieve a long life and die in his nest.

Indonesian translation of sentence (4a) is also hyperbole. In its translation, there is still hyperbolic expression that is (4b) 'dan memperbanyak hari-hariku seperti burung feniks'. The meaning of sentence (4b) expresses the Immortality which the object in the sentence is compared to the feniks. There is a difference between sentence (4a) and (4b). In sentence (4a) the object is compared to the sand, while in sentence (4b) the object is compared to the feniks (a bird symbol of immortal). Both sentences have similarity in meaning but have difference in lexicon. The translation of sentence (4b) is not retaining the original word of sentence (4a), instead substituting the

figurative expression of the target language for the figurative expression of source language.

(5a) You see that you are accomplishing nothing. Look, the world has gone after Him.

John 12:19

(5b) Kamu lihat sendiri, bahwa kamu sama sekali tidak berhasil, lihatlah, seluruh dunia datang mengikuti Dia. Yohanes 12:19

Sentence (5a) is containing hyperbole that is 'the world has gone after Him.' It expresses a large of people who followed Jesus. If it is taken literally, 'the world' means all of the creatures in the earth and everything in it followed Jesus. In fact, only a few people in large numbers followed Jesus. So hyperbolic expression is used to makes a dramatic effect to the hearer at that time.

If it is compared to its translation in sentence (5b), we find that 'lihatlah seluruh dunia datang mengikuti Dia' is also containing hyperbolic expression. So the phrase 'the world' in (5a) and its Indonesian translation 'seluruh dunia' in (5b) are actually express how many people followed Jesus at the time. The sentence (5b) retains the hyperbole of sentence (5a) and the use of hyperbolic expression is meant to makes a dramatic effect.

The researcher found that all the data are translated into hyperbole. The most frequently strategy used in translated the data are by maintain the original word of source language (95% of the data) and only 5% of the data are translated by not maintain the original word but substitute it with other word in target language.

### 3.2 Impossible Description

To understand the meaning of impossible description of hyperbole we must use our imagination and fantasy and not take it literally. Everything that is included in this type of hyperbole is an exaggerated description of objects or events that are not real, related to fantasy or to something that does not really exist



and only exists in the mind or thoughts.

(22a) Though you grind a fool in a mortar with a pestle along with crushed grain, Yet his foolishness will not depart from him. (Proverbs 27:22)

(22b) Sekalipun engkau menumbuk orang bodoh dalam lesung, dengan alu bersama-sama gandum, kebodohnya tidak akan lenyap dari padanya. Amsal 27:22

Sentence (22a) is containing hyperbolic expression. It expresses an excessive statement about the foolishness of a person in an unusual way. It said that even grinding a fool in mortal with a pestle along with crushed grain the foolishness of the person will not depart from him. In fact, there is no person who is really living in a foolishness, a person will learn and improve his life and becomes a great person. Moreover, it is impossible to grind a person in a mortal with pestle, because in reality mortar can only grind objects that fit in it such as spices or other foodstuffs. The sentence must be taken figuratively and it is impossible to take it literally.

Indonesian translation of sentence (22a) is also hyperbole. Its translation is (22b) 'Sekalipun engkau menumbuk orang bodoh dalam lesung, dengan alu bersama-sama gandum, kebodohnya tidak akan lenyap dari padanya'. It expresses the same idea as in sentence (22a). The phrase (22b) 'menumbuk orang bodoh dengan lesung' is a proper translation of the phrase 'grind a fool in a mortal with a pestle' in sentence (22a). The sentence (22b) retains the hyperbole in sentence (22a). The translation is standard in Indonesia and has clear meaning.

Another example is (23a) All night I make my bed swim; I drench my couch with my tears. (Psalm 6:6). Its translation is (23b) Setiap malam aku mengenangi tempat tidurku, dengan air mataku aku membanjiri ranjangku. (Mazmur 6:6). Sentence (23a) is hyperbole. The sentence expresses an excessive description of David who makes his bed swim and drench his couch with his tears. He used

hyperbolic expression to make a dramatic effect in order to express his great sadness. In reality, the tear of a person is not really much and will not drench anything including couch. Sentence (23a) must be taken figuratively not literally.

The translation of sentence (23a) is also hyperbole. The sentence (23b) 'aku mengenangi tempat tidurku, dengan air mataku aku membanjiri ranjangku' is containing hyperbolic expression as in the source language. If it is translated into Indonesian, the sentence (23b) retains the hyperbole of sentence (23a) and it has proper translation in Indonesian.

(24a) For our iniquities have risen higher than our heads, and our guilt has grown up to the heavens. Ezra 9:6

(24b) Karena dosa kami telah menumpuk mengatasi kepala kami dan kesalahan kami telah membubung ke langit. Ezra 9:6

Sentence (24a) is hyperbole. It expresses the greatness of inequities that have risen higher than heads, and the guilt that grown up to heavens. Sentence (24a) describes amazingly how great inequities and guilt until it grown up to the heavens. Inequities and guilt in reality are the object that cannot be seen, it cannot be measured by people but God can. So if Ezra said that his inequities and guilts have risen and grown up to heavens, it just simply goes to show how great it is and it cannot be taken literally.

The translation of sentence (24a) is also hyperbole. The sentence 'dosa kami telah menumpuk mengatasi kepala kami dan kesalahan kami telah membubung ke langit' as in (24b) expresses the same meaning as in sentence (24a). The core of sentence (24b) is the description of how great inequities and guilt are. So if sentence (24a) is translated into Indonesian, it makes no many differences and retains the hyperbole of the sentence.

Other expels are: (25a) If your right eye causes you to sin, pluck it out and cast it from you. Matthew 5:29 (25b) Maka jika matamu yang kanan menyesatkan engkau,





cungkillah dan buanglah itu. Matius 5:29 (26a) And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and cast it from you. Matthew 5:30 (26b) Dan jika tanganmu yang kanan menyesatkan engkau, penggallah dan buanglah itu. Matius 5:30

Sentence (25a) and (26a) are having the same form and meaning. Both of sentences are containing hyperbolic expressions because the sentences contain commands to do the impossible. Sentence (25a) teach us that we must pluck out our right eye and cast it from us if it causes us to sin, while sentence (26a) teach us to cut off our right hand if it is causes us to sin. Both sentences contain an excessive order to do something if we make a sin. The sentences are intended for us so that we always do good and do not mean to hurt ourselves. Both sentences must be taken figuratively.

The translation of sentences (25a) and (26a) are also hyperbole. Because if we look at Indonesian translation, those sentences are still intended to do impossible orders. Sentence (25b) 'cungkillah dan buanglah itu' is an excessive order as in sentence (25a), and sentence (26b) 'penggallah dan buanglah itu' is also an excessive order as in sentence (26a). Both sentences contains an impossible things that human cannot achieve, and they can not be taken literally. Sentences (25b) and (26b) retain the hyperbole of source language.

The researchers found that all the data are translated into hyperbole. The most frequently strategy used in translating the data are by maintain the original word of source language (97% of the data) and only 3% of the data are translated by not maintaining the original word but substituting it by other word in target language.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

In conducting this research, the researchers have analyzed 51 sentences containing hyperbolic expression. The researchers took the data from Old

Testament and New Testament. The researchers compare the data with its Indonesian translation and look whether the data are translated into hyperbole.

The researchers find out that all the data are translated into hyperbole and no data is translated into non hyperbole. The 49 data or 96% of the data are translated by maintain the original word of source language. The other two data or 4% of the data are translated by not maintaining the original words but substituting them with other words in target language, and no data or 0% is translated into non hyperbole.

The researchers conclude that the most of hyperboles are translated into the target language by using hyperboles. Yet, the translation of hyperboles are rarely done by maintaining the literal words of the sourcelanguage.

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