

# ‘To Take Up a Parable’: The History of Translating a Biblical Idiom

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## Abstract

The following study examines the history of the translation of a Biblical Hebrew phrase in Greek, Aramaic, and Latin—a phrase which shaped the English idiom “to take up a parable, proverb, or song.” As early as Greek and Aramaic Bible translations, the phrase נִסְּ מִשְׁלַל was translated word-for-word in the target language, even though the verb used in the target language did not previously attest the specific sense of “speech performance.” This same translational strategy persists in modern translations of this idiom, preventing scholars from understanding the idiom as it was used by biblical authors. The study compares the Biblical Hebrew phrase to a similar Ugaritic phrase, showing how it should be understood to express the voicing of speech rather than the initiating of speech. The study concludes by offering an English translation which more closely reflects the metaphor for voice-activation employed by the Biblical Hebrew phrase.

## Keywords

Calques – translation – Biblical Hebrew – meta-discourse – speech performance – proverb – parable – lament

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### Introduction: To *Take Up* a Parable?

The Biblical Hebrew idiom introducing Balaam's performed speech in Num 23-24, *wayyíśśo' mšolo*, has experienced curious life in Bible translations, both ancient and modern. Conventionally the phrase is translated into English word-for-word in variations of the following: "And he took up his parable."<sup>1</sup> This study argues that the Biblical Hebrew verb *NŠ'*, when used to indicate speech performance, has been rendered word-for-word into the target language in both ancient and modern translations even though such a sense of the verb in the target languages is not attested prior to its use in the translation. The Biblical Hebrew phrase is rendered word-for-word in Greek, Aramaic, and Latin translations, as well as in modern English and German translations.

Even the earliest attestations of the English phrases "to take up a parable" and "to raise one's voice" are, according to the *OED*, translations of biblical passages where the Hebrew is *NŠ' mšol* and *NŠ' qol*.<sup>2</sup> The earliest citation of the transitive use of "to raise (one's voice)" in the *OED* is from the Wycliffe translations of the Bible (c. 1395), specifically a translation of Ps 93:3; here, the Hebrew reads *noš'u nhōrot qolom*, which Wycliffe renders, "The flodis han reisd her vois."<sup>3</sup> Further, the transitive use of the verb "to lift (one's body part or voice)" in gestures or verbal expressions in the English language are labeled by the *OED* "Hebraisms," a result of the very translation strategy this study examines for these phrases.<sup>4</sup> These English Bible translations—presumably a perpetuation

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- 1 English translation from *KJV*. See below for full examination of modern English and German translations of this phrase and its parallels in the biblical text. The definition of the Biblical Hebrew term *mšol* is an intractable problem for biblical scholarship; an examination of the complications involved in the translation of the term is beyond the scope of the present study. For a full examination of the problem, see my 2015 University of Chicago dissertation, "Proverbs and the Limits of Poetry."
  - 2 Generally, the transitive use of the verb "to lift (one's body part or voice)" in gestures or verbal expressions in the English language may result from these calques of the Hebrew, either directly or by way of the Septuagint or Vulgate. See *OED* "lift, v." entry 5., which is described as attested "In various phrases chiefly Hebraisms, or in Hebrew manner," listing five subcategories of use, (a) "to lift (up) one's eyes"; (b) "to lift (up) the hand(s) . . . in prayer . . . taking an oath . . . in hostility against (a person)"; (c) "to lift up one's head . . . used in the Bible"; (d) "to lift up one's heart . . . exalt oneself (with pride); (e) "to lift (up) a cry, one's voice."
  - 3 See *OED* "raise, v." entry 21. "trans. To make (one's voice) heard, to begin to speak; to speak out."
  - 4 See above note on the *OED* entry for "lift."

of word-for-word translations of Hebrew *NŠ'* in the Greek and Latin—may have shaped the English language such that the phrases “to take up in song” and “to raise one’s voice” are now conventional.<sup>5</sup>

An examination of ancient and modern translations of the verb *NŠ'* with respect to speech performance (*māšal*, conventionally “proverb or parable,” *qinā*, conventionally “lament,” and *maššō'*, a cognate noun) shows that lexicography is locked in a circular definition for this phrase and thus fails to explain the idiom as it was understood by biblical authors. The study moves beyond the status quo by comparing the Biblical Hebrew phrase *NŠ' māšal* and related idioms *NŠ' qinā* and *NŠ' maššō'* to a similar Ugaritic phrase introducing represented speech performance, *yšu gh wysh*, “he lifted his voice and cried aloud.” The Ugaritic phrase serves a similar function in narrative poetry as the Biblical Hebrew phrase *NŠ' māšal*: in both cases, the phrase is used by a frame speaker to introduce discourse performed by a speaker in the text.

The study will propose a new English translation of the verb *NŠ'* in the phrase *NŠ' māšal*, *qinā*, and *maššō'*: “to speak out.” In English, the phrase “to raise or lift one’s voice” is widely attested, and may pose no problems for those seeking to translate the Hebrew with the proposed sense of “voicing” rather than “initiating” speech performance. However, the transitive usage of the English verbs “to raise” or “to lift” with respect to speech (as in, “to raise one’s voice”), may itself have been influenced by word-for-word translation of the Biblical Hebrew phrase. The translation proposed here, “to speak out,” reflects the metaphor at work in the Biblical Hebrew use of the verb *NŠ'* in expressing speech performance without resorting to word-for-word translations. The verb in the phrase *NŠ' māšal*—just as in the phrase *NŠ' qol*—expresses speech performance through an image of the speaker’s voice moving toward the audience.

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5 English did have the sense of “to take up (in laughter)” prior to exposure to post-classical Latin translations of the Bible. See *OED* “take, v.” 90r, c. 1400, *Brut* 131: “The Kyng his hondes lifte vp an hye, and a grete laughter toke op.” The phrase “to take up (discourse),” however, has attested use in direct relation to the liturgical performance of biblical poetry: *OED* “take, v.” 90r (b), 1637, *Ann. Cullen* 39: “To read in the kirk and take up the psalm every Sabbath.” Thus, the usage of “to take up (discourse)” in English may have been influenced through English rendering of Vulgate, and then Authorized Version, both of which may be, in turn, a word-for-word rendering of the Biblical Hebrew idiom in question. See *OED* “parable, n.,” phrases, “to take up (one’s) parable,” which is cited as an English word-for-word translation of Vulgate *adsumptaue parabola sua*, Num 23:7.

### The Phrase $\text{N}\acute{\text{S}}' \text{m}\acute{\text{o}}\check{\text{s}}\text{v}\text{l}$ in Biblical Hebrew

The phrase  $\text{N}\acute{\text{S}}' \text{m}\acute{\text{o}}\check{\text{s}}\text{v}\text{l}$  belongs to the language register of the frame speaker. The phrase can and should be considered alongside similar usages of the verb  $\text{N}\acute{\text{S}}'$  to designate the expression of other performances, such as *qinw* and *maššw'*.<sup>6</sup> The phrase  $\text{N}\acute{\text{S}}' \text{m}\acute{\text{o}}\check{\text{s}}\text{v}\text{l}$  occurs most frequently in the voice of the narrator introducing the *māšvāl* performances of Balaam; it occurs elsewhere a handful of times in prophetic units and twice introducing whole sections of Job's speech. The phrase  $\text{N}\acute{\text{S}}' \text{m}\acute{\text{o}}\check{\text{s}}\text{v}\text{l}$  is always followed by the verb 'MR, marking quoted speech. Sometimes this quoted speech is described by the frame speaker as having taken place by the time of the telling, as in the case of Balaam's four *māšvāl* discourses. In other cases, the quoted *māšvāl* is anticipated future discourse, as in the *māšvāl* over the king of Babylon in Isaiah 14, or the anticipated *māšvāl* the speaker quotes in his *hoy* performance in Micah 2. The related phrase  $\text{N}\acute{\text{S}}' \text{qinw}$  occurs exclusively in prophetic units.<sup>7</sup> The phrase  $\text{N}\acute{\text{S}}' \text{qinw}$  also introduces a quotation, with but a single exception, and, in all but a single case, marks this quotation with the verb 'MR following the phrase.<sup>8</sup>

When describing the performance of speech,  $\text{N}\acute{\text{S}}'$  is used only to describe the performance of specifically *māšvāl*, *qinw*, and *maššw'*. It is never used in the biblical materials to designate a performance of *šir*, conventionally translated "song," or *hidw*, usually translated "riddle." An examination of early translations of the biblical text uncovers a shared strategy to render the idiom word-for-word, indicating that the phrase  $\text{N}\acute{\text{S}}' \text{m}\acute{\text{o}}\check{\text{s}}\text{v}\text{l}$  had already in these translations lost its original sense. It is possible that the phrase had lost productive usage by the time of its usage in producing the biblical literary materials, since it is used for a narrow set of verbal expressions.

When we compare this to the usage of the phrase  $\text{N}\acute{\text{S}}' \text{qol}$ , we see that this phrase also attests a narrow range of usage: it is for the most part used in the formula  $\text{N}\acute{\text{S}}' \text{qol} \text{BKY}$  to describe non-linguistic, vocal expressions of emotion (weeping). A comparison of the Biblical Hebrew usage to a Ugaritic phrase will show that the verb  $\text{N}\acute{\text{S}}'$  is used to indicate a specific range of the activation of the human faculty of voice, expressing this through a metaphor of movement.

6 Deut 1:12; 2 Ki 9:25; Jer 17:21.

7 Jer 7:29; Ezek 19:1; 27:2; 27:19; 27:32; 28:12; 32:2; Amos 5:1. The Targum translates the phrase here as  $\text{N}\acute{\text{T}}\text{L } 'i\check{y}\acute{a}'$  (always definite); LXX consistently translates the phrase as *lambanō thrēnon*.

8 Jer 7:29 uses the phrase to discuss the activity of performing *qinw* without citing a specific *qinw* performance: *š'i 'al špoyim qinw ki m'as yhw'h*. Amos 5:1 uses the formula to introduce a quotation of *qinw* without using the verb 'MR.

**The Idiom in Ancient Translation**

A comparison of translations demonstrate similar strategies in rendering the verb NŠ’ in the target language. The Septuagint consistently renders Biblical Hebrew NŠ’ in expressions of speech performance with the verb *lambanō*:<sup>9</sup>

	MT	LXX
Num 23-24	<i>wayyíśśō’ mšōlo</i>	<i>kai analabōn tēn parabolēn</i>
Is 14:4	<i>wnōśō’tō hammōšōl hazze</i>	<i>kai lēmpsē ton thrēnon touton</i>
Mic 2:4	<i>yíśśō’ ’ālekem mōšōl</i>	<i>lēmphthēsetai eph’ hymas parabolē</i>
Hab 2:6	<i>’ōlyw mōšōl yíśśō’u</i>	<i>parabolēn kat’ autou lēmpsontai</i>
Jer 7:29	<i>uś’i . . . qinō</i>	<i>kai analabe . . . thrēnon</i>
Ezek 19:1	<i>w’attō śō’ qinō</i>	<i>kai su labe thrēnon</i>
Ezek 26:17	<i>wnōś’u ’ōlayk qinō</i>	<i>kai lēmpsontai epi se thrēnon</i>
Ezek 27:2	<i>śō’al šor qinō</i>	<i>labe epi Sor thrēnon</i>
Ezek 27:32	<i>wnōś’u . . . qinō</i>	<i>kai lēmpsontai . . . thrēnon</i>
Ezek 28:12	<i>śō’ qinō</i>	<i>labe thrēnon</i>
Ezek 32:2	<i>śō’ qinō</i>	<i>labe thrēnon</i>
Amos 5:1	<i>’ōnoki noše’ . . . qinō</i>	<i>egō lambanō . . . thrēnon</i>
2 Ki 9:25	<i>nōśō’ . . . ’et hammaśśō’ hazze</i>	<i>elaben . . . to lēmma touto legōn</i>

FIGURE 1 NŠ’ mōšōl, qinō, and maśśō’ in MT and its corresponding phrase in LXX.

9 Or the compound *ana-labanō* as in Num 23-24 or Jer 7:29. The Septuagint consistently translates NŠ’ *mōšōl*, *qinō*, and *maśśō’* with the verb *lambanō* or *ana-labanō*, with only two exceptions. Job 27:1 and 29:1, which introduce their subsequent discourse with the phrase *ś’et mšōlo*, are translated by the Septuagint as *eipen tō proimiōi*, with the verb *eipōn*, “to say,” a verb frequently used to mark quoted speech. Muraoka, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the Septuagint* (2009) 194. The two occurrences in Job are the only instances in which the phrase is expressed with the verb as an infinitive, which is governed by the verb *wayyosep*; it is unclear if and how this can account for the distinct translation by the Septuagint.

Notably, neither *lambanō* nor *ana-lambanō* are used prior to their use in the Septuagint to express speech performance.<sup>10</sup> The primary (active) sense of the verb *lambanō* in Classical Greek is “to take,” both concretely with one’s hands and abstractly, as in “taking in” sensory information.<sup>11</sup> The second sense of the verb is passive, “to be seized,” that is, what would map onto English “to receive,” notably attesting a sense “to receive in marriage,” as well as “to conceive feelings.”<sup>12</sup> Thus we may conclude that the Septuagint is, in fact, producing a word-for-word translation of the Biblical Hebrew phrase by translating the phrase not as a single idiom but in parts.

In Biblical Hebrew, the phrases נָשָׂא *māšal* or נָשָׂא *qinā* designate the action of utterance. Without a term for a discursive unit like *māšal* or *qinā*, the verb נָשָׂא does not mean “to utter,” but designates the action of movement, both horizontal and vertical: “carrying” and “lifting.”<sup>13</sup> The Septuagint has translated נָשָׂא as *lambanō*, since this verb both maps onto the general sense of Biblical Hebrew נָשָׂא, yet also has a passive sense that designates “receiving,” and “conceiving feelings.”<sup>14</sup>

Aramaic translations also provide a word-for-word translation into the target language without interpreting the sense of the phrase. Targum translates the phrases נָשָׂא *māšal*, נָשָׂא *qinā*, and נָשָׂא *maššāw* with the verb נָטַל:

10 As Muraoka indicates, *ibid.* See 7. in the entry for *ana-lambanō*, which he defines as “to start off uttering,” (42); see 10. in the entry for *lambanō*, which he defines as “to pronounce, utter,” (424). Note, however, that Early Greek poetry attests a usage of this term for “taking (to mind).” See Pindar, *Nemean* 10.22: *kai palaismatōn labe phrontid[a]*, “and take wrestling to mind,” in the context of being inspired in performance on the lyre.

11 Liddell-Scott 1026.

12 *Ibid.* 1027.

13 HALOT 724; Clines, *Dictionary of Classical Hebrew* (2001) 759.

14 See also use of *lambanō* as “receive spirit,” *Odyssey* 1.455-462, where the goddess Circe says to Odysseus “Come, eat food and drink wine, until once more you get spirit in your breast [*thumon eni stēthessi labēte*].”

	MT	Targum
Num 23-24	<i>wayyiššō’ mšōlo</i>	<i>unṭal matleh</i>
Is 14:4	<i>wnōšō’to hammōšōl hazze</i>	<i>wṭiṭol matlā’ hāden</i>
Mic 2:4	<i>yīššō’ ālekem mōšōl</i>	<i>yīṭol ālekon mtal</i>
Hab 2:6	<i>‘ōlyw mōšōl yīššō’u</i>	<i>‘ālohi matlā’ yīṭlun</i>
Job 27:1; 29:1	<i>š’et mšōlo</i>	<i>lmṭl mtlyh</i>
Jer 7:29	<i>uš’i... qinō</i>	<i>wṭuli... ‘ilyā’</i>
Ezek 19:1	<i>w’atto šō’ qinō</i>	<i>w’at ṭol ‘ilyā’</i>
Ezek 26:17	<i>wnōšū ‘ōlayk qinō</i>	<i>wyṭlun ‘ālak ‘ilyā’</i>
Ezek 27:2	<i>šō’ ‘al šor qinō</i>	<i>ṭol ‘al šor ‘ilyā’</i>
Ezek 27:32	<i>wnōšū... qinō</i>	<i>wyṭlun... ‘ilyā’</i>
Ezek 28:12	<i>šō’ qinō</i>	<i>ṭol ‘ilyā’</i>
Ezek 32:2	<i>šō’ qinō</i>	<i>ṭol ‘ilyā’</i>
Amos 5:1	<i>‘ōnoki nošē’... qinō</i>	<i>‘ānā’ nāṭel... ‘ilyā’</i>
2 Ki 9:25	<i>nōšō’... ‘et hammaššō’ hazze</i>	<i>maṭal nbu’tā’ hāden</i>

FIGURE 2 NŠ’ mōšōl, qinō, and maššō’ in MT and its corresponding phrase in Targum.

The primary sense of NṬL in Aramaic is “to move, carry off.”<sup>15</sup> In Biblical Hebrew, NṬL designates similar activities as does NŠ’, meaning “to move” or “to lift,”<sup>16</sup> and in the figurative sense of “to burden,”<sup>17</sup> yet never in the sense of speaking or performing verbally. Likewise in its better attested usage in Aramaic, the verb only corresponds to Biblical Hebrew NŠ’ insofar as it designates carrying/lifting, both figuratively and concretely.<sup>18</sup> In Aramaic, the use of NṬL in the G stem with the sense of “to lift up discourse” does not occur except in translations of the Biblical Hebrew phrase NŠ’ *mōšōl*, *qinō*, and *maššō’*.

We may further support the argument that Aramaic translations render the Biblical Hebrew phrase as calques by comparing these translations to its translations of NŠ’ *qol*, since both formulations refer to vocal performances. Targum generally does not translate NŠ’ *qol* with NṬL, but rather RYM (C stem), “to

15 Jastrow 899-900. *BDB* lists the Biblical Hebrew usage of the verb as a “rare synon[ym]” of NŠ’ (5190) and Ben Yehudah (3630) defines its Hebrew usage as corresponding to English “impose.”

16 Is 40:15; 63:9.

17 With the preposition ‘al: Lam 3:28; 2 Sam 24:12.

18 Jastrow 899-900; Sokoloff, *Dictionary of Jewish Babylonian Aramaic* (2002) 744-745; Sokoloff, *A Dictionary of Jewish Palestinian Aramaic* (2002) 348.

elevate.”<sup>19</sup> For the majority of these cases, the formula is not merely *NŠ’ qol*, but rather *NŠ’ qol* בִּקְי, that is, “lifting the voice in weeping.”<sup>20</sup> Similarly, the Septuagint does *not* render *NŠ’ qol* בִּקְי, “lifting the voice in weeping,” as it renders *NŠ’ mōšōl*, *qinō*, and *maššō’*. “Lifting the voice in weeping” is rendered with the verbs *ana-boaō* and *boaō*, “to cry aloud,” or with *ep-airō* and *airō*, “to lift.” By contrast, speech performance is rendered with *lambanō* or *ana-lambanō*. Thus, it seems that in both Aramaic and Greek translations, *NŠ’ qol* is rendered distinctly from *NŠ’ mōšōl*, *qinō*, and *maššō’*.

A variety of Aramaic verbs are used to convey the different contexts in which the verb *NŠ’* is used in Biblical Hebrew to express literal or figurative movement. For example, *NŠ’ ‘ayin*, which expresses the action of gazing, “to lift (one’s) eyes,” is rendered in Aramaic rather consistently as ZQP *‘ayn*.<sup>21</sup> The verb ZQP is used in Aramaic to designate lifting of the body or parts of the body.<sup>22</sup> In short, Aramaic translates *NŠ’ qol* and *NŠ’ ‘ayin* with verbs designating vertical movement, RWM and ZQP. By contrast the phrases *NŠ’ mōšōl*, *qinō*, and *maššō’* are translated with NṬL—a verb designating horizontal movement—whose sense in Aramaic does not extend to speech performance.

Likewise, the Vulgate consistently translates *NŠ’* in the phrase *NŠ’ mōšōl* using the verb *as-sūmo*, which does not have the sense of “verbal expression” before its use in translating scripture.<sup>23</sup> The verb means “to take,” and by extension, “to assume,” and also “to join a syllogism to the minor proposition,” but

19 Gen 21:16; 27:38; 29:11; Judg 2:4; 9:7; 21:2; 1 Sam 11:14; 24:17; 30:4; 2 Sam 3:32; 13:36; Is 24:14; 52:8; Job 2:12. The three exceptions to this are found in Ruth (1:9, 14), which translates *NŠ’* as NṬL and Ps 93:3, where the translator uses ZQP.

20 Gen 21:16; 27:38; 29:11; Num 14:1; Judg 2:4; 21:2; 1 Sam 11:4; 24:17; 30:4; 2 Sam 3:32; 13:36; Job 2:12; Ruth 1:9; 1:14. Interestingly, the phrase *NŠ’ bkīy* is once attested in Jer 9:9, *‘al hehōrim ‘ēššō’ bkīy*, and the Targum renders the following: *‘al ṭrayā’ ‘ānā’ mrim qāli bāke*, “On the mountains I raise my voice, weeping.” Namely, the Targum has corrected the phrasing of the source text so that it conforms to the pattern of *NŠ’ qol* בִּקְי. Targum does this not only by adding the “voice” element, but also by vocalizing *bkīy* to reflect a G ms active participle of BKY, not a substantive as attested in the MT.

21 For example, Gen 13:10, 14; 18:2; 22:4, 13; 24:63, 64; 31:10, 12; 33:5; 37:25; 39:7; 43:29; Ex 14:10; Num 24:2 (in the same passage where *NŠ’ mōšōl* is translated in Aramaic NṬL *mtal*); Deut 3:27; 4:19; Josh 5:13; Judg 19:17; 1 Sam 6:13; 2 Sam 13:34; 18:24; 2 Ki 19:22 = Is 37:23; Is 40:26; 49:18; 51:6; Jer 13:20. Jastrow 408-410.

22 Jastrow 410.

23 Lewis & Short, “Of discourse, *to take up, begin* (eccl. Lat., after the Hebrew),” citing here Vulgate translation of passages attesting the Biblical Hebrew phrase in question, Num 23:18; Job 27:1; etc., 182.



Biblical Hebrew	Targum
NS’ <i>mōšōl</i>	NṬL <i>mtal</i>
NS’ <i>qinō</i>	NṬL <i>’ilyā’</i>
NS’ <i>maššō’</i>	NṬL <i>nbu’tā’</i>
NS’ <i>qol</i>	RWM (C) <i>qāl</i>
NS’ <i>bkiy</i>	RWM (C) <i>qāl</i>
NS’ <i>’ayin</i>	ZQP <i>’ayn</i>

FIGURE 3 Aramaic Rendering of NS’ of Performance and Gestures.

does not designate speech performance.<sup>24</sup> Like the Aramaic and Greek translations, the Vulgate uses different verbs to express NS’ *qol*, not *as-sūmo*, but *lĕvo* or *ē-lĕvo*, “to raise high.”<sup>25</sup>

In sum, early translations prefer to translate the phrase NS’ *mōšōl*, *qinō*, and *maššō’* with terms that convey the sense of “carry” or “take” in the target language, translating Biblical Hebrew NS’, but not the contextual sense of the phrase, which would be “to perform speech.” The same Biblical Hebrew verb, in other formulations for verbal performance and physical gestures, NS’ *qol* and NS’ *’ayin*, is consistently translated with verbs distinct from those used for NS’ *mōšōl*, *qinō*, and *maššō’*, though this distinction seems to relate more to translating both NS’ *qol* and NS’ *’ayin* to extant metaphors in the target language for “raising the voice” and “lifting the eyes.” Neither the Greek, Aramaic, nor the Latin translations examined here ever translate the phrase using previously attested terms for speech performance, even though the context of the phrase in Biblical Hebrew clearly marks this kind of activity.

### The Idiom in Modern Translation

Many modern translations and commentaries perpetuate the word-for-word translation model of the Septuagint and Targum for NS’ *mōšōl*.<sup>26</sup> Those translations that diverge from the translation of NS’ as “to take up, lift” are highlighted.

24 For this sense, see for example the use of the verb in Cicero, *Epistulae ad Familiares* 1.9.17 with the sense of “assuming.”

25 Lewis & Short, “Of the voice, to *lift up, raise* (late Lat.): *vocem*,” also here citing its usage only in Vulgate, Judg 2:4, 637.

26 The following list is not meant to be an exhaustive comparison of translations available, rather a sample of the varieties of translations, so as to illustrate the translation strategies as they diverge from the early word-for-word translation type.

KJV (1611)	“And he took up his parable.”
Gray <sup>a</sup> (1903)	“And he took up his discourse.”
Noth <sup>b</sup> (1966)	“Da hob er seinen Spruch an.”
	“And [he] took up his discourse.”
NIV (1978)	“Then [he] <b>uttered</b> his parable.”
NRSV (1989)	“Then [he] <b>uttered</b> his oracle.”
Milgrom <sup>c</sup> (1990)	“He took up his theme.”
Levine <sup>d</sup> (2000)	“In a <b>raised voice he recited</b> his balanced verse.”
Seebass <sup>e</sup> (2007)	“Er hob seinen Spruch.”

<sup>a</sup> Gray, *Numbers* (1903).

<sup>b</sup> Noth, *Numeri* (1966). English translation in 1968.

<sup>c</sup> Same as *JPS*. Milgrom, *Numbers* (1990).

<sup>d</sup> Levine, *Numbers 21-36* (2000).

<sup>e</sup> Seebass, *Numeri* (2007).

FIGURE 4 Modern English and German Translations of *NŠ' mōšōl*: *Num 23-24*.

KJV	“That thou shalt take up this proverb.”
Gray <sup>a</sup> (1912)	“Thou shalt <b>utter</b> this taunt-song.”
Duhm <sup>b</sup> (1968)	“Da wirst du <b>erheben</b> dies Spruchlied.”
Kaiser <sup>c</sup> (1973)	“Wirst du dieses Spottlied . . . <b>anstimmen</b> .”
NIV	“You will take up this taunt.”
NRSV	“You will take up this taunt.”
JPS (1985)	“You shall <b>recite</b> this song of scorn.”
Blenkinsopp <sup>d</sup> (2000)	“You will <b>intone</b> this oracular poem.”

<sup>a</sup> Gray, *Isaiah* (1912).

<sup>b</sup> Duhm, *Das Buch Jesaja* (1968).

<sup>c</sup> Kaiser, *Jesaja* (1973). Same translation of this verse found in Wildberger, *Jesaja* (1989).

<sup>d</sup> Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah* (2000).

FIGURE 5 Modern English and German Translations of *NŠ' mōšōl*: *Is 14:4*.

As seen in the above figures, the Authorized Version stays close to a word-for-word translation of Biblical Hebrew *NŠ' mōšōl*, translating the phrase consistently—with the exception of its occurrence in Job—as “to take up a parable.”<sup>27</sup> A few recent translations and commentaries translate the phrase idiomatically as designating speech performance.

27 Because the phrase *NŠ' mōšōl* in Job 27:1 and 29:1 is preceded by the verb *YSP*, “to add,” some translations do not translate *NŠ'* at all. For versions of the translation “He continued his parable,” see: KJV; Tur-Sinai, *Job* (1957); NIV.

KJV	“Shall one take up a parable against you.”
Smith et al. <sup>a</sup> (1911)	“A taunt-song will be raised concerning you.”
Weiser <sup>b</sup> (1974)	“Wird man über euch einen Spruch anheben.”
NIV	“Men will <b>ridicule</b> you.”
Wolff <sup>c</sup> (1982)	“Da hebt man bei euch einen Spruch an.”
NRSV	“They shall take up a taunt song against you.”
JPS	“One shall <b>recite</b> a poem about you.”
Andersen and Freedman (2000) <sup>d</sup>	“He will raise against you a proverb.”

<sup>a</sup> Smith, Ward, and Bewer, *Micah, Zephaniah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Obadiah and Joel* (1911).  
<sup>b</sup> Weiser, *Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadja, Jona, Micha* (1974).  
<sup>c</sup> Wolff, *Dodekapropheton 4* (1982).  
<sup>d</sup> Andersen and Freedman, *Micah* (2000).

FIGURE 6 Modern English and German Translations of NS’ mōšōl: Mic 2:4.

KJV	“Shall . . . take up a parable against him”
Smith et al.	“Shall . . . take up a parable against him.”
NIV	“[They] will . . . <b>taunt</b> him with ridicule”
NRSV	“[They] shall . . . <b>taunt</b> such people”
JPS	“[They] shall <b>pronounce</b> a satire against him”
Andersen <sup>a</sup> (2001)	“Will . . . raise a proverb against him.”

<sup>a</sup> Andersen, *Habakkuk* (2001).

FIGURE 7 Modern English and German Translations of NS’ mōšōl: Hab 2:6.

Already in the *International Critical Commentary* series there is a departure from the word-for-word translation strategy of this phrase. Although Gray in his 1903 commentary of Numbers translates, “And he took up his discourse,” in his 1912 commentary of Isaiah, he translates the Biblical Hebrew phrase “Thou shalt **utter** this taunt-song.”<sup>28</sup> He points to the other occurrences of the phrase and explains that the idiom is literally translated “Thou shalt take up,” but this means, “on the lips, and so [we translate] *utter*.”<sup>29</sup>

Recently, Blenkinsopp translated the phrase in Is 14:4, “You will intone this oracular poem,” without comment as to why NS’ mōšōl is to be translated

28 Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah* (2000) 245.

29 Ibid. 247.

idiomatically as “intone.”<sup>30</sup> The most divergent of the modern translations of this phrase listed here is found in Levine, both for his translation of *wayyīššāʿ* as “In a raised voice, he recited,” as well as his translation of *mšʿlō* as “balanced verse.”<sup>31</sup> On translating the phrase in question he notes,

Idiomatic *wayyīššāʿ ʿet mešālo* . . . recalls *wayyīššāʿ qôlô wayyiqrāʾ* “He raised his voice, calling out,” (Judg 9:7), or *wayyīššāʿ ʿet qôlô wayyēbk* “He raised his voice in weeping” (Gen 29:11). Ugaritic orations are often introduced similarly: *yšū/tšū gh wy/tšh* “He/she raised his/her voice, and cried out.”<sup>32</sup>

Levine connects this to the phrase in Is 14:4 as well, and considers the connection to the cognate noun *maššāʿ*, which he translates as a “prophetic pronouncement.”<sup>33</sup>

The most significant difference between ancient and modern translations of this phrase seems to be that a few modern translations consider the phrase in context. Modern translations that go against the traditional “take up” translation of *NŠʿ* seem to have considered how the phrase functions in the discourse, and have recognized the fact that *NŠʿ mšʿl* marks the introduction of a performance activity. Because this phrase is used almost exclusively in marking a performance that is subsequently represented in the text, biblical translation should move beyond calques and identify the metaphor engaged in the phrase, so as to improve an understanding of Biblical Hebrew’s own terminology for discourse.<sup>34</sup>

30 Ibid. 285.

31 Levine, *Numbers* (2000) 167.

32 Ibid.

33 Ibid.

34 It should also be noted that Biblical Hebrew lexicography groups the phrase *NŠʿ mšʿl* alongside other uses of the verb *NŠʿ* to designate speech performance, that is, with *qinō* and *maššāʿ*. See BDB 669, 6: “lift up (+ vb. of saying. . .) oft. of formal and solemn utterance.” This grouping corresponds to the systematic translation of *NŠʿ mšʿl*, *qinō*, and *maššāʿ* with the same verb in early Bible translations (*lambanō* in Greek; NTL in Aramaic) and the distinct translation of *NŠʿ qol* in these same translations (in Greek, *ana-boaō* and *boaō*, or *ep-airō* and *airō*, but never *lambanō*; in Aramaic, RWM in the C-stem). HALOT likewise groups together *mšʿl*, *qinō*, and *maššāʿ*, along with *zimirō* (Ps 81:3), *tpillo* (Is 37:4), and *ʿlō* (1 Ki 8:31), even going so far as to include *šem* (Ex 20:7; Deut 5:11), *šemaʿ* (Ex 23:1), and *herpō* (Ps 15:3). Likewise, in the entry for *mšʿl*, *The Dictionary of Classical Hebrew* glosses the phrase *NŠʿ mšʿl* as literally “to raise” and figuratively “to declaim,” and assigns the phrase *NŠʿ qol* its own category, subsuming also various occurrences of the formula with the direct object *qol* elided (“ih”); in this same dictionary, however, the idiom *NŠʿ*

“To Raise (One’s Voice In) *Mashal*”

Already in 1862 Graf had suggested in his study of Jeremiah that the phrase *NŠ’ mōšal* and the verb *NŠ’* when governing terms of discourse meant “to speak out,” and the object *qol* was implied.<sup>35</sup> In an essay written between 1942 and 1943, Cassuto connected *NŠ’ mōšal* to the phrase *NŠ’ qol*, noting that a version of the idiom occurs in Ugaritic poetry “to cite the utterance of its heroes,” a comparison which we will consider shortly.<sup>36</sup> Cassuto imagined the lived context out of which such an idiom would emerge, suggesting that “When the speaker stands far away from his listeners . . . he needs to raise his voice,” referring specifically to the narration of Jotham’s speech performance in Judg 9:7.<sup>37</sup> He pointed to the frequent use of the phrase with *BKY* to express weeping, as well as its use in expressing joy when paired with *RNN*, a verb whose meaning is not “to rejoice” as in emotional expression, but concretely “to cry aloud.”<sup>38</sup> The phrase designates activity broader than simply weeping; it designates activation of the voice. The brilliance of Cassuto’s argument that *NŠ’ mōšal* should be considered as semantically identical to *NŠ’ qol* lies in his citation of Is 42:11. Here, he sees the use of the verb *NŠ’* in the first poetic unit to be elliptical for the full phrase, *NŠ’ qol*:

Is 42:11

*yīš’u midbār w’ōrōyūw*  
*yōronnu yōšbe sela’*

*ḥāšerim tešeb qedār*  
*meroš ḥōrim yišwōḥu*

Let the desert and its cities *NŠ’*,  
Let Sela’s inhabitants cry out,

the hamlets where Kedar resides.  
shout from the top of the  
mountains.

*mōšal*, *qinō*, etc., has its own separate section (“ii”), which is glossed as “to lift, take up, i.e., utter, compose.” Clines, *Dictionary of Classical Hebrew* (2001) 538.

35 Graf, *Der Prophet Jeremia* (1862) 315. Graf’s suggestion is not followed in subsequent studies, and de Boer’s 1948 article, “An Inquiry into the Meaning of the Term *Maššā*,” rejects the argument that *qol* is elided in favor of understanding the verb indicating “to speak” without an object, *Oudtestamentische Studiën* 5 (1948) 197-214.

36 Cassuto, *Biblical and Oriental Studies* (1975a) 24. The study was written between 1942 and 1943.

37 Ibid.

38 BDB 7442. The particular emotion motivating and expressed in the cry—joy, distress, or neither—does not seem central to the semantics of *RNN*, rather it marks the activity of utilizing the voice.

If the precise sense of *yis'u* is unclear in the first couplet, it is disambiguated in the second, where the activity is further described as *yaronnu*, "Let [them] cry out," and *yiswahu*, "Let them shout." In this text, the verb *NŠ'* designates activation of the voice without *qol*.<sup>39</sup> Here, as elsewhere, we find *qol* elided from the phrase in poetry, where syntax and use of stereotyped phrases follow distinct rules; the conventions of this language register permit and even necessitate the division of such phrases and the ellipsis of one of their members.<sup>40</sup>

The language register of the frame speaker who announces that a discourse like *māšal* or *qinā* is to follow in the written text is *not* patterned in this way: ellipsis is not a regular feature of the register of frame speakers in Biblical Hebrew. Nevertheless, the fact that the sense of *NŠ'* without *qol* is sufficiently meaningful to designate the activation of the voice, leads us to posit a sense of *NŠ' māšal*, in comparison with the sense of *NŠ' qol*, as a stereotyped phrase with the term *qol* effectively elided from its formulation. Thus, we translate *NŠ' māšal* not as "to lift up a *māšal*," but rather "to activate (the voice) in a *māšal*-performance." One can activate the voice in non-verbal spontaneous or ritualized expressions of emotion (joy, sadness), in formalized speech performance (*māšal*, *qinā*), or in formal or informal effective speech performance directed at others (*tpillō*, *'alō*, *šema'*, *herpō*).<sup>41</sup>

An examination of translations of these phrases demonstrates that early renderings into Greek, Aramaic, and Latin consistently distinguish between *NŠ'* when this verb describes the performance of *māšal*, *qinā*, or *maššō'* and *NŠ'* when it describes the use of one's voice explicitly, with the term *qol*.<sup>42</sup> The tendency in these translations is to translate *NŠ'* into the target language without reference to the action implied by its governance of specifically a discourse type like *māšal*. This may be because the idiom had already fallen out of use by the time of the earliest of these translations and its sense was lost. Indeed

39 Likewise, Is 42:2, the "stereotyped phrase" *NŠ' qol* is broken up over the two halves of the poetic unit, so that *yisšō'* (parallel to *yašmia' qolo* in the second half) occurs without *qol*.

40 Berlin, *Dynamics of Biblical Parallelism* (2008), 16.

41 Ben Yehudah lists a similarly suggestive category following his entry of *NŠ' qol*: *וַיִּשָׂא בְלִבָּד, בְּלִי הַשֵּׁם קוֹל, בְּמִשְׁמָוּ*, that is, *NŠ'* alone, without *qol* but with that sense, elided. In this category he includes Is 42:2 and Ps 93:3, discussed below. He then groups together *qinā*, *rinnā*, *tpillō*, "and (other) similar (types)," but only discusses *māšal* in a separate section following *zīmrō*. 3847-8. See Levine's sympathetic translation, quoted above.

42 Interestingly, in our two examples where *qol* was elided, the Septuagint translates *NŠ'* with none of the verbs we saw for *NŠ' māšal* (*ana-lambanō*; *lambanō*) or *NŠ' qol* (*ana-boaō* and *boaō*, or *ep-airō* and *airō*), but rather *euphranthēti*, "rejoice," for *yis'u* in Is 42:11, and *anēsei*, "send forth," for *yisšō'* in Is 42:2. Likewise, Targum gives *yšabah*, "praise," for *yis'u* in Is 42:11 and *yakle*, "cry out," for *yisšō'* in Is 42:2.

the verb *NŠ’* is never used in Mishnaic Hebrew to indicate the activation of bodily organs, voice or otherwise, and although it occurs here and there in the Qumran non-biblical literary materials, its use is limited either to biblical quotations or in imitation of biblical poetic language.<sup>43</sup>

### A Ugaritic Parallel to the Biblical Hebrew Idiom

As Cassuto had already suggested, the Ugaritic formula, *yšū gh wyšh*, is an interesting parallel to *NŠ’ mōšōl* and its related phrases. Cassuto understood the biblical formulation as the evolved descendent of the Ugaritic formula. There is, however, little evidence to support a diachronic argument along those lines, since the use of the phrase in both Ugaritic and Biblical Hebrew seems rather formulaic.

Del Olmo Lete contends that the Ugaritic phrase is used specifically in literary compositions that make use of a command and fulfillment scheme to indicate the transmission of a message in the fulfillment section.<sup>44</sup> According to del Olmo Lete, this formula precedes the message and indicates its transmission.<sup>45</sup> Although the formula frequently appears in the fulfillment section of Ugaritic narrative, introducing a *tḥm*, “message,” the formula is neither the way narrative regularly expresses the transmission of a *tḥm*<sup>46</sup> nor is the formula used exclusively for the fulfillment of the transmission of a *tḥm*.<sup>47</sup> Del Olmo Lete’s explanation that the formula is used in Ugaritic to convey messages in a command-fulfillment narrative pattern is inadequate: other verbal expressions

43 *NŠ’ mōšōl* occurs twice in the Qumran non-biblical materials as quotations, once in 4Q175 1:9, which is a composition that draws heavily from the biblical materials; in this case the phrase is a quote from the frame speaker introducing Balaam’s *mōšōl* and some of the performance in Num 24:15-17. The second occurrence is found in 1QpHab 8:6, quoting Hab 2:6. *NŠ’ qinō* occurs once in Hodayot (1QHa 17:4) with the verb governing the prepositional phrase parallel to *bqynh, bqwl ’nhh*, elided in the third colon: *mšbry mwt wš’wl ’l yšw’y. ’ršy bqynh tš’wm[ttv] bqwl ’nhh*, “the breakers of death and Sheol are upon my divan / my couch lifts (its voice) in a *qinō* // my bed, the voice of sighing ///.” *NŠ’ qol* is used once in 4Q377 f2i:8 in a fragmentary context.

44 *Mitos y Leyendas de Canaan* (1981) 55.

45 KTU 1.1 II 17; 1.2 III 15; 1.3 III 35-36; 1.4 II 21; 1.4 V 25-26; 1.4 VII 22; 1.5 II 16-17, 21 (?); 1.5 IV 5; 1.5 VI 22; 1.6 I 39; 1.6 II 11-12; 1.6 III 17; 1.6 IV 9; 1.6 V 10-11; 1.14 VI 2, 38-39; 1.15 III 27; 1.16 VI 15-16, 40-41; 1.17 VI 16, 53; 1.18 I 23; 1.18 IV 6-7; 1.19 II 40, 47-48; 1.19 III 11-12, 16, 25-26, 30, 42, 51; 1.19 IV 2-3, 19-20.

46 See KTU 1.1 III 5; 1.2 I 17, 33; 1.3 III 12-13; 1.3 IV 7; 1.3 VI 24; 1.4 VIII 31-32; 1.5 I 11-12.

47 See the usage of the formula in *Aqhat*: KTU 1.19 III 1, 12, 16, 26, 30, 42, 51; IV 2-3.

exist to introduce direct speech in Ugaritic narrative, both transmission of the message of another as well as the introduction of the direct speech of a character. What can be said about the Ugaritic use of the formula, which seems to line up with the evidence in Biblical Hebrew for *NŠ' qol*, is that the phrase *yšu gh wysḥ*, “he *NŠ'* his voice and exclaims,” is used exclusively by frame speakers in the text to indicate that a character will perform speech. The phrase is not used in quoted direct speech.

### Expressions of Activating the Voice in Biblical Hebrew

In addition to marking vocal expressions of sadness and joy, Biblical Hebrew does use *NŠ' qol* to describe speaking loudly, as in Judg 9:7. However this phrase is used by a frame speaker to situate Jotham’s speech performance atop Mount Gerizim, so the phrase may not necessarily mark the volume of the voice (being loud) as much as it marks the projection of the voice, how distantly the sound carries:

*wayyaggidu lyotəm wayyelek wayyaʿāmod broš har grizim wayyiššoʿ qolo  
wayyiqroʿ wayyoʿmer ləhem  
šimʿu ʿelay baʿāle škem  
wyišmaʿ ʿālekem ʿēlohim*

When they told Jotham, he went and stood at the top of Mount Gerizim, he *NŠ'* his voice, called out, and said to them:

Listen to me, citizens of Shechem,  
so that God will listen to you!

In the preceding passage, the phrase *NŠ' qol* is used by the narrator, not by the character speaking (Jotham). Moreover, the phrase is used alongside ʾMR and marks a quotation of direct speech, much like *NŠ' mošol* and *qinō*.

In direct speech, however, *NŠ' qol* is *not* the idiom used to describe the raising of one’s voice. That function is served by the verb RWM (C-stem) with *qol* as the direct object.<sup>48</sup> This is unlike the use of the phrase *NŠ' qol* in the preceding example of Jotham atop Mount Gerizim in Judg 9:7. Likewise for the phrase

48 See Gen 39:15, where Potiphar’s wife’s direct speech is reported and she describes her own vocal performance (without marking a quotation or speech) with the phrase RWM *qol*: *wayhi kšəmʿo ki hārimoti qoli wʿeqroʿ*, “When he heard me raise my voice and cry out.” See also Gen 39:18, again Potiphar’s wife; 2 Ki 19:22, Yahweh’s message to King Hezekiah,



RWM *qol* in 2 Ki 19:22 and Is 37:23, in Yahweh’s message to King Hezekiah, as told through the voice of the prophet Isaiah, who says, *w’al mi h’arimotw qol wattiššw’ m’rom ‘enekw ’el qdoš yišr’el*, “Against whom have you raised (your) voice and directed your gaze skywards? Against the Holy one of Israel.” The phrase does not mark quotation or describe a specific vocal performance. In Is 13:2 the phrase refers to non-linguistic physical gestures of announcement. However, when used in direct speech in Is 40:9, the phrase may in fact refer not only to loudness, but also to verbal performance.<sup>49</sup> The sample set is small, and may not be able to indicate for us whether or not RWM *qol* refers to specifically verbal performance.

A more productive explanation for both *yšu gh wyšh* in Ugaritic narrative poetry and NŠ’ *qol* in Biblical Hebrew narrative prose, is that these idioms belong generally to the register of the frame speaker to denote performance. Neither formula is used in the represented register of direct speech, but rather in the register of the frame speaker, in descriptions of the activity of performed speech, formal or informal.

Biblical Hebrew lexicography tends to separate the use of NŠ’ to describe specific speech performance, like *mōšal*, from NŠ’ to describe the activation of the voice. But since nearly all formulations of NŠ’ as vocal actions are restricted to the narrator’s descriptions of a character’s activation of the vocal faculty—either in formal speech (with meta-discursive terms *mōšal*, *qinw*, *maššw’*, *’lw*) or in a non-verbal activity (weeping, shouts of joy)—they should be considered together.

### “To Speak Out in *Mashal*”

The translation history of the idiom under examination—the fact that the phrase was rendered word-for-word so consistently—demonstrates the failure of translation to capture the sense of the source language. Since the translation “to take up a parable” and “to raise one’s voice” entered English usage as a result of this very failure, its perpetuation may seem inevitable. Yet, if we compare the phrase NŠ’ *mōšal* to other related phrases in Biblical Hebrew and Ugaritic, we may be able to explain the phrase as it functions semantically and

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as told through the voice of the prophet Isaiah; Is 13:2; 37:23; 40:9; 58:1, in Isaiah’s quoted discourse; Job 38:34, which is Yahweh speaking to Job.

49 In Is 40:9 the poetic unit concludes with a quotation of anticipated speech: *h’arimi bakkoah qolek . . . h’arimi ’al tirw’i ’imri l’ore yhudw hinne ’elohetekem*, “Raise your voice with strength . . . raise (it), do not fear, say to the cities of Judea, ‘Here comes your God!’”

contextually without resorting to a calque. The phrase NŠ' *məšəl* should be understood as related to NŠ' *qol*, and elliptical for the "voice" element. The verb NŠ', since it means something like "to carry forth," is a metaphor of movement for how the human voice is projected in performance.

If the construction NŠ' *məšəl* is understood as in fact communicating NŠ' *qol məšəl*, "to emit one's voice in *məšəl*-type-performance," we can understand the hypothetical construct phrase *qol məšəl* as an adverbial genitive of effect.<sup>50</sup> We may compare this to other formulations where *qol* is in construct with the performance-type, for *qol* in the genitive relationship is one where *qol* as the construct term enables or effects the genitive term, such as weeping.<sup>51</sup> In the following phrases, the possessive suffix is not on the construct, causing element (voice, sound capacity) but on the *performance-type* element, as in Ps 6:9b, *ki šəma' yhw h qol biki*, "For Yahweh hears the voice (causing) my weeping," in Ezek 26:13, *whišbatti hāmon širəyik*, "I will cease the sound (causing) your singing,"<sup>52</sup> and in Ps 66:19b, *hiqšib bqol tpilloti*, "He listened to the voice (causing) my prayer." The *məšəl* outside of the frame of Proverbs, like the *šir* and the *tpillo* in staged contexts, is a performance event, not a literary type.<sup>53</sup> In these cases, the pronominal suffix thus refers to the agent of the action, and so NŠ' with reference to performance such as *məšəl* or *qinə* can be understood as regularly elliptical for *qol*, as in "he uttered (the voice of his) *məšəl*-type performance," and on analogy to Ps 6:9b, *qol biki*, "the voice of my weeping."

The idiom is used by frame speakers to describe speech performance. In English, the phrase "to speak out," effectively designates speech performance

50 I.e., "the voice that causes *məšəl*-performance," on analogy to other constructions expressing this syntactical relationship, such as Is 11:2, *ruah həkmo ubino*, "the spirit that causes wisdom and understanding," or Is 53:5, *musar šlomenu*, "the punishment that brought us peace," as described in Waltke and O'Connor, *Syntax* (1990) §9.5.2c.

51 The relationship can be expressed likewise in a prepositional phrase, as is attested in Gen 45:2, *wayyitten 'et qolo bibki*, "He gave (forth) his voice in weeping," and in this case, it is the direct object, *qol*, marked with a possessive suffix, and not the adjunct, *bibki*, which expressing "weeping" as a circumstance of "giving (forth) his voice." See Waltke and O'Connor, *Syntax* (1990) §11.2.5d.

52 The mp form of the suffixed noun can be explained as a plural of "actions," such as *znunim*, "fornication," *kippurim*, "atonement," or more specifically, as "the multiplicity of the acts making up the total action," see Joüon and Muraoka, *Grammar* (2006) §136i.

53 Thus, *məšəl* or *šir* is not to be understood as uttered content but the performance itself, so "*šir*-type-performance," which maps easily (if not necessarily accurately) onto English "singing," "*tpillo*-type-performance," which maps onto "prayer" (its action, not just the discursive content), and correspondingly, "*məšəl*-type-performance," which does not map neatly onto any performance term in our culture.

without resorting to phrases such as “to raise one’s voice,” that may have been shaped by the very translation strategy examined in this study. Moreover, “to speak out” translates the sense of the metaphor for speech performance employed by Biblical Hebrew *NŠ’*.

Nevertheless, questions persist. Why is one *mōšōl* introduced by a frame speaker with this formula and another not? Why are the *mōšōl* performances of Balaam in Num 23-24, the future *mōšōl* over the king of Babylon in Is 14 and of the audience in Mic 2, and of two whole chapters of Job introduced by speakers with *NŠ’*, but all the others with either the cognate *MŠL* or simply *’MR*, “to utter”? Is there something particular about these performances that warrant such specialized introduction? Specifically, is there a formal or functional connection between *mōšōl* performance and *qinō* performance that can elucidate their use in this phrase? Perhaps the selection and use of the idiom over *’MR* or *MŠL* is a matter of long-standing convention in ancient Israelite literary production. The data set is not representative of the entire ancient Israelite literary tradition, and the phrase occurs infrequently in comparison to other phrases for introducing direct speech, so these questions may remain unanswered.