

Community Translation and Oral Performance of Some Praise Psalms within the Zulu Community

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Abstract

There is a strong history among the Zulu community of performing praise poetry, and a passion for composing and performing poetry continues among Zulu youth today. On the other hand, the current Zulu Bible is considered by many young people to be irrelevant or difficult to read and understand. With these two factors in mind, I conducted a study in which Zulu youth were invited to participate in basic training, after which they made their own translations of various praise psalms and then performed them before a community audience using song, rap, or spoken poetry. This paper looks at the process and benefits of inviting “ordinary speakers” to participate in the translation process, and of communicating the message through oral performance. The results are encouraging and suggest the methodology could be extended to other genres of biblical text and other language groups.

Keywords

Psalms, performance, Zulu, community translation, oral, spoken poetry, song, rap, izibongo

Introduction

Zulu is the most widely spoken of eleven official languages in the Republic of South Africa, with approximately ten million speakers. Although the Zulu community has had a Bible translation since 1883, current circumstances

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suggest the potential to experiment in Zulu Bible translation in order to meet specific needs and to take advantage of factors in the community. This article discusses factors underlying the need for experimental translations in Zulu and the potential “plus factors” contributing to such experimentation.

Why is there a need for experimental translations in Zulu?

The Zulu translation currently used in almost all Zulu churches¹ is that of 1959, which follows the formal-equivalence approach. Much of the vocabulary is archaic or difficult to read (using “deep Zulu,” which many of the post-1994² generation no longer read or write). Moreover, it is not designed for the ear, although the medium of presentation in most cases is through public reading in the church. Also, the poetic portions do not sound like poetry to the Zulu listener, so much so that a Zulu poet complained to Eugene Nida of the poor poetry in the Zulu translation of the book of Psalms. This poet requested permission to revise it, making the psalms more acceptable poetically. According to Nida, he did so “with great success,” making use of the tradition of Zulu *izibongo* (praise poetry).³ Nida concludes, “Some of the Zulu poets are extremely skilled in producing praise poems extemporaneously, for which they draw on a long tradition of poetic forms to praise guests and those who accomplish great exploits” (Nida 2003, 82).

This latter point highlights the great interest in poetry among Zulu people today. The tradition of performing oral praise poetry continues with designated “praise singers,” but there is also a passion for poetry and performance among “ordinary” Zulu youth. In most towns and townships of KwaZulu Natal, groups of ten to 200 young people meet weekly to perform their own poetry before their peers.⁴

With the need for more contemporary translation (especially of biblical poetry) and the availability of a pool of interested, poetically sensitive volunteers, a study was conducted to see if talented, previously untrained

¹ The Shembe church uses an older translation with an orthography that is no longer current.

² In 1994, a democratic government was elected, and children of all races and communities (including Zulu) were free to attend formerly white schools, which use English as their medium of instruction. These post-1994 Zulu children tend to speak “light Zulu” rather than the more complex “deep Zulu” of older and rural people.

³ Nida did not indicate the name of this poet, but it could have been Bethuel Blose Ndelu, a Lutheran schoolteacher and poet, who later became one of the translators on the 1986 Bible Society of South Africa revision (Eric Hermanson, personal correspondence, 2015).

⁴ The prevalence of such groups is even higher in the city of Durban. Informants mentioned that a monthly “Poets in Suits” event is held there at a smart hotel. Young interested people drive 180km for the evening, and pay the R120 entry fee, to listen to poetry being performed.

Zulu youth could translate and perform some praise psalms in a way more acceptable to their community than the current translation.

Who took part in this study?

It was expected that the main interest in this kind of experimental translation would be from young people, particularly those interested in poetry and/or music. Church leaders were approached and permission was given to invite members of the youth group or choir to participate. Also, the Tree of Life poetry group (which meets weekly in the Pietermaritzburg library) was invited. Most of those who came from this latter group considered themselves “poetry fans” rather than poets. Some students from a local theological college also participated, although their interest was more in the translation than the performance. In general, the participants showed that they were open to exploring new, lively, and creative ways of communicating a biblical message using contemporary media and indigenous forms.

Where did the study take place?

The study comprised four separate workshops, each meeting once a week for three weeks, with a fourth day (when possible) to prepare for the performance before an audience. The first workshop was held with young people from one of the churches in the Amawoti informal settlement near Durban, and lasted four consecutive days. The second workshop was held at the Anglican Cathedral in Pietermaritzburg and included both young and older participants (mainly those interested in music), the third with theological students, and the fourth at the university with members of the main poetry group in Pietermaritzburg.

There were various logistical difficulties in getting people together at the same place at the same time for three consecutive Saturdays (for all the groups except the first). Nevertheless, a core group of people was able to be present for most of the time, and to achieve some encouraging work.

What was included in the workshops?

The workshop began each day with some brief training in translation principles and features of poetry and orality. Various translations of a particular passage were discussed to consider the pros and cons of different approaches to translation. In particular, the literary-rhetorical (functional) approach of Ernst Wendland (2004) was followed. I had done the initial Hebrew analysis, and passed on the most important points to the participants.

Then examples of Zulu praise poetry (*izibongo*)⁵ were considered in order to verify typical features of Zulu poetics. It was noted that *izibongo* freely use parallelism, chiasm, repetition of words, alliteration and assonance, wordplay, tail-head linkages, metaphoric language, metonymy, and various other devices. Hebrew poetry was also studied, as the group looked at the poetic features in the “psalm of the day.” On the first day, the focus was on Ps 134, a short psalm of only three verses, which shows (in the Hebrew) repetition, chiasm, alliteration and assonance, interesting use of verb forms, and other features. The participants learned to use a Hebrew–English interlinear text in order to recognize repetitions of words. Fairly literal translations in English (and Zulu) helped them recognize features such as inclusio, parallelism, and chiasm.

The background to each psalm was given, locating it within the original context in order to understand its purpose. Then the exegesis of the psalm was discussed, with attention to key terms or ideas difficult to understand. Thereafter the participants made their own translations in Zulu, being encouraged to communicate not only the content of the psalm but also the literary beauty and rhetorical power.⁶ Once the translations were complete, I briefly checked for accuracy in comparison with the original, and then participants transformed their translations into performances, using song, rap, or spoken poetry. These were performed each day before their peers, and then at the end, some of the items were selected to be performed before a public audience. This consisted of the church congregation (in a Sunday service) or a group of friends and family.

The process was repeated on the second and third days of the workshop, focusing on Ps 93 and then Ps 145.1-7. These psalms were selected because they include interesting poetic features and are of manageable length. The participants showed a growing ease with the translation process, and their translations continued to yield many interesting and powerful observations, some of which are mentioned in the next section.

Benefits gained from this methodology

There are three dimensions of (relative) novelty to this methodology: involving the community (“ordinary speakers”) in the translation process, applying in practice the literary-rhetorical approach to translation of Ernst Wendland (2004), and using oral performance as the means of transmitting

⁵ *Izibongo* is used for both the singular and plural form, i.e., a particular praise poem or praise poetry in general.

⁶ An example is given in the Appendix.

and evaluating the translation. Each of these innovations shows various benefits, which are discussed below.

Advantages of community translation

Gerald West (2016a, 5, 7) contends that the early missionary translations of the Bible in Africa (in particular, that of Robert Moffatt into Setswana) were “controlled by the missionaries.” He claims that Moffatt did not offer the people “access to the Bible on its own terms (and theirs), he is translating ‘the message’ for them.” This is the case, West concludes, because Moffatt trusted “only himself to be the arbiter of how to render . . . a particular biblical verse.”

Although great strides have been made in Bible translation to move away from this kind of colonialist approach, the final form of the text is still often in the hands of an outside consultant, a non-mother-tongue speaker. And yet, local native speakers in southern Africa have a vast array of indigenous knowledge that can, and should, significantly contribute to the Bible translation. Not only do they have an innate sense of the appropriateness of particular words in different contexts, but their cultural knowledge, use of idiom, and understanding of different genres of communication are vital. An even more important reason for involving local people in a translation is the sense of ownership of and commitment to use the text that such involvement engenders. In my empirical study, this became very apparent from the participants’ responses to the questionnaires, and was confirmed in the interview data.

The workshops comprised participants who came with particular identities: church-members (either youth or choir members), theological students, or poets within the broader Christian community. However, all the participants seemed to benefit in the following ways:

Greater ownership of the local Scriptures. Young people today want and expect to interact with knowledge, and not simply be handed a final product.⁷ The sense of ownership resulting from making one’s own translation seems to be more valuable than having someone else’s translation, even if the latter is “more beautiful” in terms of its use of poetic devices.⁸ Although Bishop

⁷ The upcoming generation expects to be able to participate and share (Shirky 2010, 212–13). This suggests the viability of an online, interactive approach, whereby interested persons can explore the topic of “translating psalms” using online resources. See the notion of “crowd translation” in Reynolds (2016, 98).

⁸ This is in line with Shirky’s assertion: “Creating something personal, even of moderate quality, has a different kind of appeal than consuming something made by others, even something of high quality” (2010, 78).

Mbhele (a published Zulu poet) had created two aesthetically appealing versions of Pss 134 and 93, participants were not interested in performing his words, although they agreed that they were readily understood and “more poetic” than the traditional version. The process of working with the Scriptures in a new way is more meaningful and fulfilling to “experimental translators” than having a “perfect product.”⁹ It is clear that artists (wordsmiths, poets, musicians) do not show much interest in improving someone else’s translation (as per the “wiki” model), but prefer to create their own compositions from scratch. This was even the case with the majority of the musically gifted participants (as opposed to the verbally gifted participants).

From the perspective of the audience, the use of oral art forms in worship (such as song, dance, rhythm, movement, intonation, cyclicity) serves many valuable purposes. Van Niekerk and Pauw (2000, 5) note that such oral forms restore traditional identity, and “unite [people] again with their cosmos.” This is seen to have a positive religious impact. Public performance also enables a “community of interpretation and Scripture use” to become established, which will play a critical role in defining the limits of acceptability of the translation as well as extending its range of sociocultural applicability.

Greater engagement with the Scriptures. Participants revelled in the opportunity to study the biblical text and were interested to study further.¹⁰ Their responses on the questionnaires and interviews revealed that engagement with the biblical text resulted in greater understanding of the message of the Scriptures, and further revelation of its relevance.

Team ministry. Community translation and performance provide opportunity for creative members of the church to contribute in a significant way and support the preaching of the word. One pastor noted how the performance of Scripture “prepared the way for his preaching.” Clearly, if the performed text gives a message which is complementary to the preaching, it can significantly reinforce the impact of the ministry. Various forms of oral art can be combined in a church service to support the preaching ministry. Dorson notes that “a combination of stories, songs, dances, and poetry is a

⁹ West asks, “Do we need a better translation, or a better life?” (2016c). It seems that young people are more interested in having a meaningful, owned translation than a “perfect” one. This is in line, too, with the work of Shirky, who notes that there are times when the gains obtained by the process exceed those of having a perfect product (2010, 153–54).

¹⁰ West notes, “Exegesis offers important details to ordinary readers of the Bible that they do not usually have access to. Often the very details denied to them by the church (are) vital in their daily struggles to live full abundant lives” (2013, 311).

very pan-African characteristic of oral art” (1972, 41–42). Often the story provides a frame for the song, and the song repeats and emphasizes the main idea of the story. The song is the part everyone memorizes (Torrend 1921, 1–5),¹¹ and even a snatch of the song can bring the whole story to mind (Klem 1982, 128). Allied to this is the fact that utilising multimedia ministry in the life of the church allows for the discovery and development of new gifts. One singer noted at the end of the workshop, “I always knew I was a singer, but now I realise that I am also a poet.”

Insights gained. Including community members in the translation process also facilitates the release of interpretive insights or applications relevant to the local situation. For example, two Zulu poets brought a new interpretation to “stand by night” in Ps 134¹² that was closely related to the personal difficulties they were going through. Also, the metaphors chosen in Ps 93.3–4 were different in many cases from those used in the original; participants chose pictures that made more sense to them in their contexts. In one case this brought a new exegetical understanding: the enemy was described as being *like* a lion, but the LORD was *the* (royal) lion¹³ that has all power.

Some poets also effectively related their term for the divinity with key words in the poem. For example, in Ps 93, one poet used the divine name *Somandla* (Powerful one) and then repeated several times that the LORD has *amandla* (power). Another used the divine name *Simakade* (Eternal one), and repeated the word *kade* (forever) several times in relation to the LORD.

In Ps 145.2b, one poet used a “deep Zulu”¹⁴ word *ngizozigqaja* “I will boast about.” According to BDB, “boast” is a significant part of the meaning of *hll*, but no English version consulted conveys this aspect of the word. Thus the choice of word used in this translation included something important in the original meaning which was not included in many other (even published) translations.

It is clear that many significant lessons can come to light as people bring their own contexts and creativity into their understanding of the biblical text. Indeed, such extended interpretation is an essential part of the whole

¹¹ Tippet (1967) found that ladies in Fiji learned the catechism easily when it was chanted or sung to a regular rhythm. The transmission was completely oral.

¹² Two poets independently interpreted the Hebrew expression “standing by night” as meaning “persevering through difficulties.” In line with reception theory, they filled the gaps in the text with meaning from their own experience.

¹³ The Zulu word the poet used for the LORD was *ingonyama*, which is a term applied to the Zulu king. In contrast, the simile used for the enemy was *ibhubesi*, referring to a common lion.

¹⁴ See notes 2 and 16.

meaning of the biblical text. As West asserts, “The original languages have had their partial say, and so too have other translated Bible languages, but others remain, and so we must wait for a fuller understanding of what the Bible says” (2016b, 13). As the participants in this study brought their own interpretations through their own translations, the measure of the meaning of the text was more fully realised.

Thus it can be concluded that, with basic training, interested, formerly untrained participants are able to contribute significantly towards a better translation of a particular psalm.¹⁵

Application of the literary-rhetorical approach to Bible translation

Wendland’s (2004) model for literary-rhetorical translation provided the basis for my analysis of the Hebrew, and promoted the procedure of seeking for functional equivalence achieved by the poetic devices in the translations (relative to the functions achieved by the Hebrew poetic devices). The analysis showed that although Zulu poetry does not conform in several ways to Hebrew poetry, it is possible to achieve most, if not all, of the functions in the Zulu translations that were evident in the source text.

Although the literary-rhetorical approach does focus on matching up the functions of poetic devices in the source and receptor texts, one needs to ensure that this does not obscure an attention to the literary beauty and interesting poetic features in the Zulu. For example, the movement in the Zulu parallelism was often unexpected, and may operate in quite a different way to that of Hebrew. Perhaps the fact that the functions achieved by Zulu poetic devices may be different from those in the Hebrew highlights the need in appreciating poetry not to overanalyse, but to allow the play of picture-ideas and the rumble of rhythm to speak to the soul, rather than to understand the role of each constituent of the poem.

Nevertheless, the value of using Wendland’s model is clear. With relatively little training, Zulu poets were able to achieve beautiful and powerful renditions of psalms, characterised by a more poetic, singable translation (as a result of a sensitivity to the need for rhythm) and one that is more functionally equivalent to the Hebrew, providing aesthetic and emotive beauty and power (in addition to the information function). Relative to much previous translation of biblical poetry, this method does offer significant advantages in terms of aesthetic and emotive force.

¹⁵ The full data of the Zulu translations can be seen online at <http://researchspace.ukzn.ac.za/handle/10413/14223>.

As the study involved the translation of biblical text, a brief note is in order regarding the evaluation of the experimental translations. The traditional criteria of accuracy, naturalness, and clarity were applied to the translations, as well as three additional criteria (Wendland 2004, ch. 10) which are particularly relevant to literary-rhetorical translation: artistry, aurality, and acceptability (by the community). These criteria were considered to take priority over the traditional criteria, that is, the major goals were for the audience to find the text aesthetically engaging and rhetorically powerful, and for them to consider the text as being within the bounds of biblical translation. These ideas are in line with reception theory (Holub 1984, xiii; Soukup 1997, 103–4), which served as a critical basis for the study.

Advantages of oral performance

The study shows that oral communication is still very important in Zulu communities. This is evidenced by the strong support for poets' groups across South Africa. Clearly, there is a culture of poetry among young Africans (probably in the "under 30" age group) that presents an opportunity for those who seek to encourage young people to engage with the Scriptures.

Using the creative arts and oral performance to communicate a biblical message has the following advantages:

- The message of the church becomes more relevant and arresting to young people. Using the form of "oral art" speaks to them in their idiom, and thus attracts those who would not be interested to hear a more traditional message (read from the Bible or preached).
- The participants and the audience find it easy to memorize the words of the Scriptures, or at least the part which was repeated in the chorus (often the main point of the text).
- The songs and poetic items are perceived as being within the Zulu cultural idiom. This was because the language was natural (and current, i.e., "light")¹⁶ Zulu and presented in a form that communicated to their peers.¹⁷

¹⁶ This is not to deny the importance of "deep Zulu" words (with their metaphoric, metonymic, and emotional weight). However, once the text is understood in current language, a "deep Zulu" version is more likely to be appreciated.

¹⁷ One of the participants was singing her translation of Ps 134 in the taxi when a fellow-passenger commented to her on how much she liked the song, and "where did she learn it?"

- Through the performance before the church, a community of interpretation becomes established which will play a significant role in defining the limits of acceptability of the translation.
- The translation is more likely to become “something talked about and shared with friends” (Soukup 1997, 106). It was noted how all the young people in the audience jumped up once the performance began, and made video recordings on their phones of their peers performing. No doubt these performances would be shared with many others, and be a talking point.
- The type of translation done in this study encouraged participants to experiment and seek new ways of communicating,¹⁸ using music as well as nonverbal forms (humming, snapping fingers, gestures, etc.) to complement the words of the translation. Such an approach aims to produce a translation that will appeal to those interested in singing or performing Scripture. However, it was found that even those not very artistically inclined appreciated a fresh and lively way of presenting the Scripture message; this was particularly true of young people.

Future research

Possibility of an online platform for community poets?

Emerging from the study were two difficulties that mitigated against the effectiveness of the methodology, but on the other hand, two very important positive factors suggest the basic underlying tenets should not be abandoned. First, the two difficulties noted were the following:

- The audience was not adequately informed to judge the “fidelity” of the text
- There were logistical (physical) difficulties of time and place.

With regard to the first factor, the audience members often did not have a very detailed knowledge of the biblical content of the psalms under review, and thus were not able to discern if the texts were “translations” providing essentially the same content as the biblical text or simply “gospel songs.” Also, as the items were generally only performed once before audience members were asked for their responses, they had not had sufficient

¹⁸A participant remarked that she now planned to do some other psalm translations on her own, and teach them to her teenaged daughter and friends.

exposure to the texts and songs to be able to remember which lines they liked best, or which poetic features struck them particularly.

With respect to the logistical difficulty, although there are a number of talented and interested people willing and motivated to participate in community translation, they are geographically dispersed, with only a handful in any one church or group. Time issues also are a major concern, with few people being able to commit to any organised programme for such training and exploratory creative work together.

However, the two important positive factors that emerged from the study are that first, there are members of the community (wordsmiths, poets, musicians) who are talented and interested to use their creative skills to make a translation and/or performance of a psalm that speaks to them and their peers.¹⁹ And second, the history of praise poetry and the value given to poetry by a large number of Zulu youth are important factors contributing to, and strengthening, this natural poetic talent. It would be a shame to neglect the potential afforded by these situational realities.

A possible way to utilise the skills and energy of interested volunteers and avoid the logistical problems inherent in having physical meetings is to establish an online platform for community poets. The old way of running workshops for young people is no longer relevant for many of them.²⁰ Rather the use of online media is appropriate, in terms of time and geographical factors, to facilitate interactive involvement with others of a similar interest.²¹

The work of Clay Shirky (2010) highlights the importance of taking hold of the opportunity provided by advancing technology, more free time, and social need,²² to use the Internet for “crowd-sourcing.”²³ “The crowd” (whoever is interested) is given the opportunity to participate in a project. Shirky notes that “abundance [of involvement of people] brings a rapid fall in average quality, but over time experimentation pays off, diversity

¹⁹ Richard Schechner, “the pre-eminent philosopher of innovative theatre of modern times,” believed that people have a capacity to be creative (Malina 2011, 193). Julian Beck often said that “those of us who work in the arts have the task of releasing the sublime artist in everyone” (quoted in Malina 2011, 194).

²⁰ In this day and age, the media of choice among urban youth are electronic (online interaction through blogs and YouTube videos) rather than face-to-face.

²¹ Moreover, the Internet mimics the way people think and communicate orally, and thus is a viable tool for those in a predominantly oral community. See Foley’s *Pathways Project* online (<http://www.pathwaysproject.org/>) as well as Foley 2012.

²² “Social media rewards our intrinsic desires for membership and sharing” (Shirky 2010, 88).

²³ “Crowd-sourcing” (see Surowiecki 2005, ch. 4) has been shown to be worthwhile, particularly when the genre is poetry, and those with poetic gifts may not be professional translators.

expands the range of the possible, and the best work becomes better than what went before” (51). He continues, “As the group’s ability to learn and work together gets stronger, it attracts more participants. The newcomers who don’t become part of the core group often take the ideas out to the wider world” (103). The opportunity to increase the general understanding of the Bible through enabling more people to understand the process of Bible translation is before us. Not only do the participants benefit, but so too does the wider community.

Shirky (2010, 153–54) does acknowledge the criticism that the sharing of personal knowledge or skill by amateurs may not aggregate to the quality achieved by professionals. But, he claims, there are times when the gains obtained by the process exceed those of having a perfect product. Moreover, he notes that negotiating this issue “is not between radicals and traditionalists; instead it has to be with the citizens of the larger society” (211–12). The distinction between professional and amateur production is now blurred, and “change in the direction of more participation has already happened.” The upcoming generations of Zulu speakers are going to expect to be participants and not simply passive recipients of the finished product. As Shirky (2010, 212) concludes: “The opportunity before us is enormous; what we do with it will be determined largely by how well we are able to imagine and reward public creativity, participation, and sharing.”

Thus the idea is posited of an online “community Bible translation” site, where interested people could engage with the Scriptures through Bible translation into their own language. Initially the focus would be on Zulu, and the content would be psalms, with a particular psalm selected each month/week. Those interested would be offered “helps” (through hypertext)²⁴ providing training in Bible translation, poetics, exegetical issues in the particular psalm, and working with the Hebrew text. In this way, participants would extend their biblical understanding and background and have a greater sense of ownership of the Scriptures.

Participants would then be encouraged to make their own translation of the psalm. Perhaps a competition could be run, with an oversight group giving some feedback on each translation, as well as inviting all members to interact with the postings (and video performances) of other members.²⁵ This could lead to lively debate on the use of particular words (enabling younger members to learn some of the “deep” words of the language).²⁶ The

²⁴ Foley claims that hypertext enables readers to “blaze their own pathways through the rich thicket of receptional possibilities that await them” (2004, 105).

²⁵ This is similar to the site Faithwriters.com.

²⁶ One would need to consider if a back-translation into English would be expected of postings, to enable others (including experts) from other languages to interact.

problem of having an informed audience (to set the boundaries of acceptability) would be resolved in that the audience members would also (probably) be participants who had studied the text in order to make their own translations. Thus they would be well informed and able to assess the validity of others' work.

Although such translations would not be definitive in the sense of a published text, they would achieve many benefits for the participants, and could also provide a stock of alternative renderings for the official Bible translators to peruse.

Conclusion

This study set out to determine if it is possible to work with formerly untrained members of the Zulu community to produce translations and performances of some biblical psalms that are accessible and acceptable to the community and sufficiently accurate with respect to the source text. Applying principles of poetics and translation, the participants created poems which were highly accessible and acceptable to the audience. The poems were considered to be more understandable and to use a more relevant medium (song, rap, and spoken poetry) than the published psalms (which many of the respondents had never read or heard). It is indeed true, as Eugene Nida observed, that "some of the Zulu poets are extremely skilled in producing praise poems" (2003, 82), and this is a resource that can be well utilised in Zulu Bible translation.

Many young Zulu people today do not read the Scriptures. However, many are interested in using the arts to communicate an important message, or to hear a message, and thus new ways of interacting with the Scriptures must be found. Creative approaches to Bible translation offer such an opportunity. This study has opened the door in several ways to further research in community translation and in the value of performance translation as a key element in the life of the church.²⁷ More specifically, the study has also shown the opportunity to expose many people to the beauty, emotional power, and rhetorical force of the Psalms through their "hands-on" involvement. It is clear that many young Zulu-speakers today would be open to an artistic communication of the Psalms, and would value the experience of engaging with the text themselves and making it their own.

There is no reason why this methodology could not also be successful with other genres of biblical poetry (e.g., psalms of lament) or in other

²⁷ Performance criticism is now an established area of study, and its intersection with Bible translation offers much to the local church. The Society of Biblical Literature has a section focusing particularly in this area.

languages, be they written or oral. The essential task is to be able to trawl through the receptor language's cultural heritage to understand the features of indigenous poetry and the forms of indigenous communication, and to utilise these in the translation and transmission of a psalm. Given the significant potential benefits, it is worth taking the risk and experimenting. The wind is blowing—let us lean out and catch the current!

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- . 2016c. "On the Necessity of Retranslation." Paper presented at Nida School of Translation Studies, May/June, Misano, Italy.

Appendix

The following is the translation of Ps 134 by one of the workshop participants.

	Text	Comment
1a. <i>Nakani</i>	<i>nidumise</i> (let you) praise	
Focus	<i>uSimakade</i> the LORD,	assonance (-a) on stressed syllables
1b. <i>nina</i>	<i>nonke</i> all	
you	<i>zinceku</i> servants	alliteration (z- , n-)
		of the LORD
1c. <i>nina</i>	<i>enibambelele</i> you who hold on	
you	<i>kuSimakade</i> to the LORD	assonance (-a), allit. (k-)
	<i>kunzima</i> in difficulties	
2a. <i>Phakamise!ani</i>	<i>izandla</i> hands	
Lift up	assonance (-a)	
2b. <i>nidumise</i>	<i>uSimakade</i> (Let you) praise	
	the LORD	assonance (-ise) cf. 3a
3a. <i>Makamibusise</i>	<i>uSimakade</i> May he yet bless you	
	the LORD,	
3b. <i>uSimakade</i>	<i>owenze</i> who made	
the LORD	<i>umhlaba</i> earth	
	and heaven.	
	<i>nezulu</i> and heaven.	

This poem is fully analysed in Dickie (2017, 258) but some of the oral art elements are the following:

- Assonance (especially in stressed syllables, as in 1a) and the alliteration patterns serve as mnemonic aids.
- Inclusio (□ in 1a and 2b) unites the contents of vv. 1 and 2.
- Tail-head linkage (□ in 3a, 3b) provides aesthetic pleasure and serves as a mnemonic device.