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An Insider Evaluation of the Translation Process in use in the

BSL Bible Translation Project: Explorations in

Textuality, Intermediality and Sacrament

Thesis submitted in accordance with the requirements of the University of Chester for the degree of Doctor of Professional Studies in Practical Theology

By Tracey Ann Raistrick

December, 2013

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An Insider Evaluation of the Translation Process in use in the BSL Bible Translation Project: Explorations in Textuality, Intermediality and Sacrament

Tracey Ann Raistrick

Abstract

This thesis is a critical account of a qualitative, evaluative study into the translation processes and practices in use within the BSL Bible Translation Project, undertaken as a collaborative doctoral studentship funded by the AHRC/ESRC[1]. It has proceeded collaboratively, valuing the stories, knowledge and experiences of the participants. The data-set presented herein was generated by means of participant observation and interviews with Project Team members. It was analysed in its digital, visual form using an inductive, thematic approach, and is presented with minimal commentary (Chapters 4 and 5). Following this presentation, the data-set is further reflected upon in order to shed light upon existing understandings of sign language text composition strategies, team translation praxis, intermediality and sacrament (Chapters 6, 7 and 8). The evidence presented in this thesis represents a new source of data and offers valuable insights into translation and exegetical practice in its own right and, I will argue, as a means of human flourishing.

This thesis problematizes previous descriptions of Signed Languages as 'picture-languages', identifying two ways in which such descriptions have been unhelpful, even inaccurate. Firstly, that this nomenclature, with its association with picture-books and pre-linguistic skills, has contributed to the persistence of perceptions of d/Deaf people as being linguistically less-able than their non-Deaf peers and secondly, that such descriptions are deficient because they fail to fully capture the complex nature of Signed Languages. This thesis argues for a re-engagement with the inherently cinematographic nature of Signed Languages and explores ways in which this would yield benefits in the fields of Deaf

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[1] This studentship constitutes a collaborative endeavour in a number of respects. From its inception it was formulated as a collaboration between two universities (University of Manchester and University of Chester) and a third sector organisation, the BSL Bible Translation Project. This collaborative instinct has also strongly influenced the way in which the research has been undertaken; see chapter 3 for more details.

education, the teaching of Signed Languages to second-language learners, and the training of interpreters and translators.

This thesis will also argue that the translation practices of the BSL Bible Translation Project constitute a clear example of Deaf people engaging in metalinguistic reflection on their own language-use. That is, that the data provide clear evidence of literate thought, specifically of Signed Language literacy in action, and is further evidence in support of the growing confidence and agency within the Deaf Community with regards to the status and the rich linguistic and material properties of BSL, including its suitability as a mediator of the sacred.

This thesis will go on to offer reflections on what the data have to tell us about the nature of Biblical texts; both through how they are produced, and the nature of those texts as artefacts and bearers of religious meanings. Engaging with existing understandings of sacrament and incarnation, including the possibility that the act of Bible reading and translation can be said to constitute a sacramental activity, it argues that this is particularly so when such reading and 'speaking' of the text occurs through Signed Language.

Summary of Portfolio

In October 2007, I embarked upon this research, exploring my own practice and that of my new colleagues within the BSL Bible Translation Project, seeking to uncover tacit knowledge, and to investigate both the rationale for and the implications of methods currently in use. Following a review of the literature (CD1, TH8002), I identified that such an exploration had not previously been undertaken and that, while some writers had explored d/Deaf peoples' relationships to the Bible from a pastoral perspective, Signed Language Bible translation in the UK remained largely unexplored academically.

In my reflection on practice (CD1, TH8004) and publishable article (CD1, TH8003) I reflected at length on the inherent epistemological and methodological issues arising from bi-lingual research contexts. As a junior researcher in the field I was keen to not work presumptively and, therefore, sought to find and utilise research methods which were academically rigorous and were attentive and responsive to the many political and ontological features inherent in working with a language-using group who have suffered oppression and marginalisation. The choice of data-capture and analysis methods was also framed by a desire to give epistemological privilege to the language of the project (British Sign Language) and to the constituency to whom that language belongs; the Deaf community. Developing a method to facilitate that choice resulted in the need to acquire a whole additional range of skills and sensitivities.

Following these reflections a research proposal was created (CD1, TH8005). This proposed that a formative evaluation be undertaken in collaboration with members of the Project Team. This aimed to: describe and document the evolution of the translation process, as practiced by the Project Team; explore our experience of translating through a visual-spatial language (BSL); and evaluate, from the perspective of the participants, the effectiveness of the translation process. The goals for this evaluation were two-fold: firstly, to provide opportunities for team members to reflect on practice and formulate revisions where necessary; and secondly, to generate data for consideration by translators, theologians and Biblical scholars beyond the project.

Acknowledgements

Many people have journeyed with me over the course of this research study. I am truly grateful for their love, support and wisdom. I particularly wish to express my gratitude to:

- My colleagues, past and present, at the BSL Bible Translation Project Team for their hospitality, honesty and help.

- Fellow-students in the DProf consortium, and in particular those whom I have had the privilege of studying alongside at the University of Chester.

- Fellow-researchers at the SORD Research Group, University of Manchester.

- Supervisors, Professor Elaine Graham and Professor Alys Young, whose wisdom has helped me to turn this work into something worthwhile.

- Members of the Women's Research group, Manchester.

- My family: Steve, Heather, Rachel, Kathryn, Joan (Mum) and Debbie.

Thank you for your encouragement and example, for believing (when I didn't), and for all the hugs and cups of tea along the way.

Definitions & Abbreviations

Abbreviations relating to Sign Language:

BSL. British Sign Language: The natural language of Deaf people with its own syntax and grammar. BSL has no written form. An English 'gloss' can give a limited sense of what has been signed, indicated in the text by the use of capitals, e.g. BOOK-CROSS-ON-FRONT.

SSE. Sign Supported English: An artificial system of signs borrowed from BSL produced in English grammatical order.

Abbreviations specifically relating to this thesis:

BSLBTP Team or Project Team: The BSL Bible Translation Project Team, i.e. trustees, advisors and translators. Many other people support this team but would be defined as outside the core Project Team itself and, therefore, outside the purview of this research.

Translation Team: A specific team of people convened to undertake translation work. Typically, this would have two Deaf and two non-Deaf translators (the Translation Team) who would be assisted by a Biblical Scholar.

A note on the use of language:

Deaf (with a capital 'D') refers to the heterogeneous community of culturally Deaf people, many of whom would consider BSL to be their first or preferred language.

deaf (with a lower-case 'd') refers to anyone with a significant hearing loss who does not necessarily identify themselves as culturally Deaf.

d/Deaf is either used when the status of the person (as Deaf of deaf) is uncertain, of when I want to refer to all d/Deaf people.

'hearing' or non-Deaf refers to those people who use speech and hearing as their primary means of communication.

Bible references and quotes:

All bible references and quotes are from the NRSV (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998) unless otherwise noted.

Digital Content Copyright:

Enclosed DVD, *BSL Bible - Mark 1:1-3:6* is copyright ©BSL Bible Translation Project, 2011.

Section 1 Introductory Material

Chapter 1: Initial Contexts

1.1 Opening Thoughts

Almighty God,

who wonderfully created us in your own image

and yet more wonderfully restored us in your Son Jesus Christ:

grant that, as he came to share our human nature,

so we may be partakers of his divine glory;

who is alive and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,

one God now and forever. Amen

('The Promise of his Glory', Church House Publishing and Mowbray,

1991, in *Celebrating Common Prayer*, 1992, p. 306)

"And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth." (John 1:14, NRSV 1989)

Christianity is widely perceived as a religion of the book. A central tenet of Christian belief, however, is that God has not only communicated to us through spoken and written words (and through the created world) but has come in-person in Jesus Christ "who became human for our sake and adopted a bodily identity that continues into his present existence" (Brown, 2007, p. 427). This coming together of word and flesh is a feature that echoes across much of practical and pastoral theology through studies of ministries in their embodied form, such as pastoral care, preaching and liturgical studies.

Notions of incarnational, embodied ministry find unique expression in the context of Christian ministry in Signed Languages within the Deaf community and, specifically, in Signed Language Bible translation. Such Signed Language Bible texts rely for their form upon the material properties of the human body, rather than paper, ink or computer screen. Signed Language Bible texts are carried by human bodies, and in the case of this particular translation, specifically Deaf bodies.

This thesis explores how members of the BSL Bible Translation Project Team understand their hermeneutical and translation practices as they seek to create an en-fleshed text which can effectively mediate the sacred. It also seeks to explore the relationship(s) between the speaking of God himself (*logos*), a book, specifically the Bible (*biblios*), and being an icon of God (*theomorphus*).

By way of introduction to this thesis, and in order to begin to contextualise this research, this opening chapter proceeds by employing the metaphor of journey or trajectory. Specifically, it explores four converging journeys, those of: the Biblical text(s); the language of this Bible version – British Sign Language (BSL); the BSL Bible Translation Project; and the journey of the researcher.

1.2 The Bible: a Text on a Journey?

Because this thesis explores the creation of a new Bible version, it is worth beginning with the question 'what is a Bible?' Although the events and teachings recorded in the Bible were carried for many years in some form of oral tradition, for many centuries now, from the advent of the codex through to that of the printing press, a Bible has been in the form of a book.   This is reflected in one of the BSL signs used for Bible; BOOK-CROSS-ON-FRONT.

The literature review undertaken as part of stage one of this doctoral process (CD1, TH8002) explores the nature of the Bible, highlighting the way in which it is a collection of works written by many different people, in very different contexts. "The canon of the New Testament, and therefore the two-testament Bible as we know it, was closed in the fourth century, having been written, edited and collated over a period of many centuries in Hebrew, Aramaic & Greek (Comfort 2000:60; Jenkins 1987/2004:11, 12)" (CD1, TH8002, p. 9). Since that time, it has been translated into many languages and adapted into plays and dramatized readings. With the advent of digital and web-based technologies, the notion of 'book' is changing and, therefore, new forms of Bible have been emerging, such as CD-ROM, and hypertext versions.

In her exploration of translation practice in the adaptation of plays, Geraldine Brodie employed the notion of an *originarry* rather than an *original* text (Brodie, 2013[2]). Implicit in this notion is the acceptance that any given translation or performance of a text simply constitutes a snapshot taken at a single point along the trajectory of the on-going life of that text. Within the translation field, the idea of an originarry text which unfolds and even evolves as it passes through any number of incarnations throughout its lifetime is perhaps not dreadfully radical, though some would contest it. However, when considering texts which are considered to be Holy Scriptures such as the Bible, the Qu'ran and other religious texts, such a concept may be seen as deeply unsettling and even blasphemous. For the purpose of this thesis, I wish to hold open the possibility that this metaphor of *trajectory* could be useful for reflecting upon the on-going life and development of biblical texts. That is, the argument could be made that the Bible text is not a fixed literary and religious artefact but is rather a text in-motion, a text which has been brought to speech in a variety of forms and languages; oral tradition, scrolls, print and hypertext, Hebrew, Greek, Latin, English, and so on. Each of these could be argued to be a fresh iteration or 'speaking' of that text influenced by those changes of language, form and by evolutions in our understanding of those originarry texts.

Before turning to the specific research context i.e. the BSL Bible Translation Project itself, I wish to provide the reader with a review of the history of the language of the project – British Sign Language (BSL).

1.3 British Sign Language

British Sign Language is the natural language of the Deaf community in the UK. Wherever d/Deaf people have gathered throughout history, signed languages have emerged.   The visual-spatial nature of each of the underlying grammars for those languages means that Deaf people can communicate with some effectiveness with people from other countries. However, each indigenous group uses distinct, arbitrary signs and hand shapes in the same

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[2] See:
http://www.translationstudiesportal.org/ar/media/entry/performability_what_can_theatre_teach_us_about_translation_talk_by_dr_geral

way that members of spoken language communities use arbitrary labels for the items and experiences of which their world is made. That is to say that, although a form of international sign language does exist as a secondary resource used by Deaf people in international contexts, in each indigenous Deaf community a distinct, primary form of signed language has emerged. Histories of migration and education mean that some of these share familial resemblances (American Sign Language [ASL] and Langues Signes Francais [LSF], British and Australian Sign Language [BSL, Auslan]), though each signed language has its own particular 'flavour'. What such an explanation fails to articulate is the huge controversies, highly oppositional politics and oppression that have surrounded the languages of the Deaf community.

As I rehearsed in the accompanying literature review,

> Here in Britain, the Deaf community have experienced oppression and ridicule, have been 'subject to an onslaught of labels and negative stereotyping' (Corker, 1990:1), and have 'suffered by having their language ignored or insulted.' (Sutton-Spence and Woll, 1998:9). They have seen their language banned out-right[3] at the will of professional educators insistent upon an 'oralist' approach[4]. Mary Brennan quotes the Royal Commission of 1889 'which recommended that children should be "taught to speak and lip-read on the pure oral system"' (1992:4) which effectively led to a ban on the use of sign language in schools.

> The significance of this historical oppression and suppression of BSL-use is a recurrent theme throughout both secular and faith-based Deaf literature (Ladd, 2003; Lewis, 2007; Sutton-Spence & Woll, 1998). As Paddy Ladd observes; 'the destruction of a people's language and culture is perhaps the most insidious (and effective) kind [of colonial violence] of all' (2003:24). Many Deaf people have experienced abuse at the hands of educators and medics as these professionals have tried to 'normalise' them into the majority, hearing community.

> In light of such attitudes, after years of oppression and devaluation of its language & culture, how does the Deaf community develop confidence in its own language as appropriate for sacred use, in liturgy and for the translation of Biblical texts? Linguistic studies, such as that

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[3] The Milan Conference of 1880 remains a pivotal moment in the history of Deaf people and its effects continue to shape both the education of deaf children and the subsequently the lives of d/Deaf people to the present day. This conference simultaneously affirmed the rights of deaf children to receive a specially adapted education, but proscribed the use of sign in favour of the oralist approach (see below).

[4] Oralist/Oralism: An educational approach which promotes the use of speech and lip-reading as the only way to communicate and which strongly advocates against the use of sign language.

undertaken by William Stokoe (1960) have been instrumental in bringing about a shift in attitudes to signed languages. Over the last forty years, signed languages in many countries have 'achieved linguistic recognition as natural languages' (Brien 1992:X). Specifically, 'one of the most important results of sign linguistics studies…has been to demonstrate to everyone (who cares to look) that BSL is a language just as good as English, or any other language' (Sutton-Spence and Woll 1998:9).

Such an appraisal of signed language is a far cry from the oppressive discourses of 'defect' and the inhumanity of Deaf people and the inferiority of their language (Ladd, 2003). The recent nature of many of those positive developments means that members of the Deaf community have had little time, formally or informally, to reflect on their own language use. Many Deaf people still vividly recall the physical punishments they received in school for any attempted use of visual-language communication. Furthermore, many of the people who have undertaken the formal linguistic research into BSL have been non-Deaf academics like myself. We may consider ourselves to be allies of the Deaf community and may indeed have worked in full collaboration with Deaf people but some of our research may have had unintended consequences within the Deaf community.

I have in mind the way in which the intense struggle to see BSL recognised as a language in its own right may have served to create highly politicised boundaries around particular forms of language use which have been counter-productive in terms of community cohesion within the Deaf community and may have stifled the use of any number of regional idioms and signs. As a fascinated second-language BSL-user, I have often asked naïve questions about the 'why or 'how' of a particular sign. Sometimes my question has been met with a very rich and helpful answer or with a neutral "I don't know"[5]. However, on occasion, the response has been almost one of embarrassment and a sense in which the label 'BSL' is somehow foreign to them: "I'm not very good at this 'BSL'", even though the person has been communicating through signed language throughout their life. At least anecdotally, it would appear that levels of confidence about their own language use are still very variable across the range of people who constitute the Deaf community. Furthermore, even with the willingness to do so, the opportunities to reflect on that use are often limited. The process

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[5] In the same way, many users of English might hesitate when providing an explanation for the difference between 'fewer' and 'less', for example.

of shifting discourse from stigma and disability, to identity as a linguistic minority and any associated increase in confidence, appears to be far from complete or even certain. Its on-going and contested nature is an important feature of the context in which the BSL Bible Translation Project and, therefore, this research, is being undertaken.

1.4 The Specific Research Context: The BSL Bible Translation Project

The BSL Bible Translation Project emerged from discussions amongst Deaf and non-Deaf colleagues working in the field of Christian interpreting and theology. As they reflected on issues of practice, they became convinced that the necessary linguistic and technical skills could be drawn together from within the Christian community to create a digital BSL version of the Bible. Aware of existing similar projects in other parts of the world they undertook a feasibility study, including taking advice from SIL International[6] and elsewhere. Having had a trial run at some translation work, they put together a project plan[7]. The BSL Bible Translation Project itself was officially launched on September 2nd, 2006 to a public audience that included members of the Deaf community, scholars and potential partner stakeholders. Following this event, a board of trustees was formed and the project registered as a charitable company.

The board of trustees included Deaf and non-Deaf people, all of whom were committed to the vision of the project, who together held a range of skills and experience: some native BSL-users; church members and leaders; ministers and interpreters. A number of advisors with a range of different skills also made themselves available to the project team following the project launch. The project employed teams of translators to undertake the creation of the BSL texts. These teams were designed to consist of two Deaf BSL-users and two non-Deaf translators who were guided in their deliberations by a Biblical scholar.

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[6] Summer Institute of Linguistics Inc; a faith-based organisation that supports language development through research, training, translation and materials development. While much of its work is in spoken languages, it also seeks to build capacity in sign language using communities for language development and for the translation of scripture. See also: http://www.sil.org/sign-languages

[7] As noted in my Research Proposal page 11, similar projects are currently underway in a number of countries including the USA (English to ASL), Spain (Spanish to LSE), and The Netherlands (Dutch to NGT).

The vision shared by the various members of the BSL Bible Translation Project Team was that of access to the text of the Bible for Deaf people that was equal in quality and convenience to that already enjoyed by non-Deaf people:

> Imagine in the future, you are in church and the leader stands up to read the Bible reading. The hearing people can find the chapter in their own Bibles, and the Deaf people could take their personal hand-held computer (or PDA) from their pocket and watch the same Bible reading … presented by a Deaf person in BSL[8].

The BSL Bible Translation Project's stated aim was to translate the whole Christian Bible, working from the best available Greek and Hebrew sources, beginning with the Gospel of Mark. The team proposed a particular structure, procedures and policies through which the work would be undertaken. These included a comitment to BSL as the primary language for all work undertaken in the project, a rigorous translation method based on team working and consultation, and an interdenominational appraoch to team member recruitment. See Chapter 4 for a detailed exposition of the translation process as implemented by the Project Team.

Alongside this initial setting-up phase, members of the Project Team, in collaboration with colleagues from the Universities of Manchester and Chester, bid sucessfully for a collaborative doctoral studentship under the AHRC/ESRC Research Programme 'Religion and Society'[9]. It was entitled 'Study and evaluation of a process of Biblical translation and its impact on community identity: a case-study in contextual hermeneutics'. The research context outlined in the bid included matters pertaining to the wider Deaf community and the concerns of Deaf Christians. These included the Deaf community's growing confidence in "challenging wider societal discourses" (Appendix 1, p.1) about the linguistic validity of BSL and about their status as a distinct community with their own language and culture. The bid also highlighted the need of Deaf Christians "to be equipped to reflect theologically on

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[8] See website: http://www.bslbible.org.uk/the%20bible%20in%20BSL%20Sarah%20Haynes.pdf

[9] See website: http://www.religionandsociety.org.uk/research_findings/projects/phase_one/collaborative_phd_studentships /www.ahrc.ac.uk

their own sacred texts" (Appendix 1, p.1). The scope of the proposed research was conceived as being broad, including:

> A case study of the impact of a sacred text on a minority community, and that community's impact on the interpretation of the text: an investigation of a methodology for the analysis and visual representation of sacred texts: a development of user-led research: a development of inter-disciplinary themes and approaches in the fields on linguistics, cultural studies, translation theory, theological and biblical studies and technological applications in the emerging field of Deaf studies' (Appendix 1, p. 2).

The role of student-researcher was designed to provide maximum access to the life and work of the project, thereby allowing the student to gain a rich overview of their processes and practices through observing and participating in "a number of regional translation teams, and as a member of the panel reviewing the reception of the work" (Appendix 1, p. 2). Following interview in June 2007, I was appointed to the role of student-researcher commencing October 1st that same year.

The BSL Bible Translation Project Team had anticipated translating the whole of Mark and publishing this as a single, digital entity (DVD, MP4 or other). They proceeded with translation as far as chapter ten, by which time the team felt that another strategy might be required. This was precipitated by a number of factors. Deaf people were keen to have some rigorously translated BSL Bible with which to engage, sooner rather than later. It was also felt that potential funders would more easily understand the project's work if there was some form of 'product' which they could be shown. Additionally, concerns were emerging about the range and variability of styles which had been used across the many draft clips and it was felt that a review might be useful in order to facilitate decisions for the long term. Following three days of review in July 2009, the Project Team decided to return to the first section of Mark's gospel (1:1 to 3:6) with a view to finalising and publishing this section as a pilot text which could be assessed and would inform the development of the rest of the

gospel. Detailed preparation of that text took place during the next two years and the pilot DVD was published in May 2011[10].

1.5 My Journey towards Sight and Speech

In this section I wish to examine some aspects of the multiplicity of my identity within this research process; researcher, participant, practitioner, theologian, hearing, second-language sign language user. Labelling those identities is only the first part of the issue; acknowledging and reflecting upon their constancy and fluidity is also important to inform the nature of the work that I have been able to undertake and which is being presented in this thesis. As researcher Maxine Birch remarks, during this research I am the "clear common denominator that has remained both constant and in flux as the many facets of my life criss-cross, each containing the possibility of understanding what I am doing in a different way" (Birch, 1998, p. 172). I offer here a narrative of the criss-crossing, the interweaving of several different facets of my life which have impacted upon and have been impacted by the research journey.

1.5.1 My Pre-Research Journey

My personal relationship to the Bible has been that I have found God's word to me within its pages; words of comfort, words of challenge and words that were life-giving. Growing up in a Methodist Church, I expected the hymns that I sang to have been written on the basis of one or more Bible texts which I would recognise. As an adult, I spent almost thirty years as a member of an evangelical congregation, where it was expected that a very detailed and systematic approach would be taken to Bible study and that I would learn passages of Bible text by heart. For many years I was unfamiliar with forms of Christianity that might take a different approach to the Bible and I was ignorant of the possibility that some communities of believers could have a rich relationship with God without such detailed, personal Bible knowledge. Over a number of years, I found myself reflecting on this heritage. I concluded that in my own life and ministry I wanted to strike a balance between holding to the value of the Bible as a primary source for Christian life and reflection, while not falling under a

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[10] DVD 2 published in 2013.

mantra of 'Bible study is the only way to know and understand God'. I believe that every Christian has the right to be able to engage with the Bible in their first language, if they wish.

It was a combination of my love for the Bible and my work with the Deaf community that first inspired me to get involved with translating the Bible into British Sign Language. I have no Deaf family members and, therefore, had no contact with the Deaf community as I grew up. However, towards the end of the 1990s, that situation was about to change:

> *A Day in the Life of a Christian Bookseller*
>
> The lady smiles and hands me her notebook in which she has written the titles of two Christian books that she is hoping to buy. Eventually, we find the books in the catalogue. The lady pays a deposit and leaves, agreeing to call back in a week's time to collect them. I know only her as Jean- the lady who always talks to me using her notebook. She is obviously a devout Christian woman who loves to share her faith through gifts of books and cards for friends and acquaintances.

This was my first contact with a member of the British Sign Language-using community, though it was some time later that I understood that to be the case. When we first met, I was unaware of the rich culture and community of which she was a member; a people held together by a way of being in the world that was shaped by the primacy of the visual, by shared experience of oppression and marginalisation, and by a common, visual-spatial language that has been much maligned and misunderstood by even those closest to them. As I began to learn British Sign Language (BSL) from the hands of members of the Deaf community, my eyes were literally opened to a whole new community of people and to new ways of seeing the world. As an evangelical Christian, it seemed only natural to use my emerging language skills to 'read' the Bible and in doing so, I began to ask new questions of the text. Things which I thought that I had understood suddenly became less certain. Other verses or concepts which had remained hidden suddenly came to life in new ways (e.g. the trees of the field shall clap their hands). The text and I were asking new questions of one another.

As I spent time with Deaf people and continued acquiring BSL, I began using that emerging skill-set in Christian settings; church services, Christian conferences, prayer meetings and so on. Here, I was brought up sharp by the challenges of working in a language that works in four dimensions (Stokoe, 1960), rather than one that acts in a linear way. That is to say that BSL operates in the three spatial dimensions (height, depth and width) and also moves, so employs the dimension of time. Very usefully, BSL can say things simultaneously; depicting the size, shape, emotional tone and direction of intent of an action or character using a single sign-in-motion, unlike English which tends to add additional descriptors. For example, in English one could recount the story of David and Goliath saying 'the huge, angry man lurched towards' (six individual meaning-carrying words), whereas in BSL this could be achieved in one or two signs at most. While such efficiencies and differences were often (though not always) very helpful, I was also aware that the differences between English and BSL were more than simply linguistic; there were significant political undertones effusing the context within which I and my colleagues were making interpreting and translation decisions. My journey into the world of signed language continued and I qualified as an interpreter working between English and BSL in the summer of 2007. My appointment as doctoral student within the BSLBTP that same year marked the next significant turning point along my journey towards sight and speech.

1.5.2 An Emerging Academic and Theologian

In my reflective piece (CD1, TH8004) I rehearsed and reflected upon the history of my own academic journey, which had started from a place of low confidence in myself as one who had or could generate knowledge. Working through the first part of the doctoral portfolio was a journey of self-recognition as someone who could value and articulate her own opinion effectively. It was also a journey of discovering that I could critique my own knowledge and experience and could offer a critical voice to others, through written work or during discussions with colleagues, be they practitioners or academics.

This part of my journey was facilitated by a number of new peer-groups in which I found myself. One such group was within the BSL Bible Translation Project alongside colleagues 'with far more experience in each of the different areas required; exegesis, translation and

BSL' (CD1, TH8004, p.3). Other new peer-groups were among fellow doctoral students and within the wider theological and academic community. My fellow doctoral students each brought to the cohort a variety of skills and knowledge, theological and epistemological frameworks which they generously shared. The British and Irish Association of Practical Theology and the Women's Research Group (Manchester) were also places where good models of academic theological engagement and critique were to be found and where those with less experience in the field were welcomed as fellow-travellers.

Another significant resource to my development was my time as a visiting student with the SORD research group[11]. There I found myself engaging in similar academic conversations and relationships that were all conducted in British Sign Language. The majority of the group's members - MA, doctoral and post-doctoral researchers – are Deaf, with a smaller number of non-Deaf colleagues who are all accomplished signed language users. Immersion in my 'target language' and the effort of finding visual-language expressions for the thoughts in my head was only one part of the picture for me there. There was also a journey of further inculturation into Deaf perspectives and greater awareness of some of the cultural and political drivers acting upon and from within that community.

Learning to function effectively in these arenas has been an emotional, as well as an intellectual journey, one that was facilitated by the open-ness, interest and affirmation of those around me. Maxine Birch has described her research journey as falling into three stages; "going there" (preparation), "being there" (participation), and "being here" (analysis and write up) (Birch, 1998, p. 172). She notes the fluidity of the boundary between the worlds of field research and academia, and remarks upon being "a participant in concrete social relationships in both areas" during the first two phases (Birch, 1998, p. 173). Birch contrasts this sharply against the isolation of working with only her computer screen to create the final representation of knowledge that had been in every way created in the context of relationships; with the participants in the field and through contact with research colleagues. My own research journey reflects a similar sense of knowledge generated in the context of social interaction, both formally and informally, and then crafted into a printable

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[11] See: http://www.nursing.manchester.ac.uk/research/researchgroups/socialcareandpopulationhealth/sord/

narrative during long hours alone. However, these collegiate spaces have particularly helped me to begin to examine and critique some long-held and precious personal beliefs.

This research has required that I extend my existing academic, reflective and linguistic skills and also learn new skills such as research design, interviewing, and computer-aided data analysis. Completing the assignments for section one of this portfolio, presenting work to peers and at conferences, assisting in the planning and implementation of a research strategy with the SORD research group, have all acted to equip me for the research work with the BSL Bible Translation Project. With Birch, I wish to acknowledge that, although I have designed and implemented this research and must, therefore, take full responsibility for its faults and limitations as well as its strengths, without doubt it has been shaped by a range of relationships and shared spaces within the project and within the academy.

1.6 Summary

Christianity is a religion founded on the notion of a God who brings things into being through speech (language), and reveals himself through the created order (form); two very different text types or genres. Furthermore, God journeys towards us and meets us, coming to live among us and to speak to us in person; "taking the very form of a slave … and being found in human form" (Philippians 2:7). This research into the life and practice of the BSL Bible Translation Project brings to the fore these various forms of text, in particular the nature of the synthesis of message and medium, of incarnation, of the embodied message.

In this introductory chapter, I have sought to lay out the context from which this research study has emerged, framing this as a coming together of four threads or journeys. The first thread or journey is that of the Bible text which I have argued is not as frozen and finished as it is often perceived to be but is actually a text with its own trajectory, having a number of versions, incarnations and iterations occurring at various points along that trajectory. The second is the journey of the Deaf community and their language, BSL; from complete denial of their value to growing emancipation and self-advocacy. The third journey has been that of the BSL Bible Translation Project; a space where Translation Team members are seeking to give a fresh voice to the text of scripture, with the BSL version acting as another iteration

or 'snapshot' in the life of the Bible text. The final thread is that of my own journey from Bible reader to translation practitioner to researcher and academic; moving towards sight and speech, needing to find my own view and voice in order to re-present or 'give voice' to what has been happening within the translation project.

In order to further contextualise this research study, this next chapter offers a summary of some of the relevant, extant literature.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

To supplement the literature review undertaken for section one of this portfolio (CD1, TH8002), this chapter seeks to offer a revised and up-dated summary of the most recent and pertinent literature about Deaf lives, translation studies, and theologies of Deafness. This material further contextualises this research study by identifying extant questions and themes within those fields. It also aims to provide a springboard for many of the research design considerations which will follow in chapter three.

2.2 Perceptions of Deafness and Deaf Bodies

Until recently, most research about d/Deaf people and d/Deafness was undertaken by professionals from the world of medicine or education, the vast majority of whom were non-Deaf people. Deafness has been regarded primarily as a pathological state and, therefore, the majority of such research has been focussed upon the faulty ear and associated structures. Much medical and educational research has been undertaken with the primary aim of the re-instatement of hearing function and/or the normalisation of the d/Deaf person to meet, as far as possible, norms constructed and perpetuated by those who are non-deaf. In this paradigm, the d/Deaf body is seen as suffering from a greater or lesser level of impairment for which remedy or rehabilitation is an absolute necessity. Such an approach is known as the 'medical model' of Deafness[12]. Hannah Lewis, a Deaf theologian, notes that

> The medical model dominates the way many d/Deaf people experience the world
> because it is the one held by the medical establishment (who first diagnose children
> as deaf and guide their parents as to the best way of dealing with it) and by most of
> the educational establishment (who determine the language in which d/Deaf
> children are educated) (Lewis, 2007, p.20).

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[12] First coined by Michael Oliver in 1983. Hannah Lewis citing M Oliver, *Understanding Disability: from theory to practice*, London 1996.

For people who have suffered hearing loss, through advanced age or injury, technological and medical interventions can be of great help and, therefore, such an approach can be said to be of value. However, such impairment-focussed research generally fails to acknowledge that d/Deafness could be conceptualised as anything *other than* a negative experience or loss; it fails to value or even imagine d/Deafness as a natural yet particular way of being in the world. While such an approach could be interpreted as misguided but benign, in reality it has had catastrophic consequences for Deaf people.

More recently, Deaf people[13] have begun to take the initiative in defining their own lives as valid and valuable ways of being in the world and, therefore, legitimate sources of knowledge. By doing so, they have begun to challenge many of the norms of language and intervention that have historically provided, and continue in the present time to generate, the context for the lives of d/Deaf people. In 2003, Paddy Ladd's monograph 'Understanding Deaf Culture' was published; a first example of PhD-level work undertaken by a Deaf person in the UK, exploring their own cultural heritage.

Despite the ground-breaking nature of his own work, he laments that

> Lack of research has …made it hard to enact [Deaf] cultural norms and values within various important domains such as Deaf education … the important task of understanding Deaf communities cannot be said even to have begun whilst Deaf cultural research remains unrecognised and unfunded (Ladd, 2003, p. xvii).

Ladd strikes a useful note of caution here; two important academic centres for Deaf Studies in the UK have closed their departments in recent years (Universities of Durham and Bristol). While work continues in the training of Sign Language interpreters and teachers of the deaf, Ladd's hope that sufficient momentum had been generated in the field of Deaf cultural research and his aspiration that Deaf people would have many opportunities to reflect academically appears to be under threat in the UK at this time.

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[13] It is worth noting here the heterogeneity of those people who may identify themselves as 'deaf', 'Deaf', or 'hearing impaired'. Just as 'woman' is a group noun referring to a whole variety of persons, so the Deaf community is made up of a variety of people whose individual experiences of being in the world will vary infinitely and whose audiological status may have little or no bearing on their self-identity as members or non-members of the Deaf community.

2.3 Understandings of BSL and Signed Language Translation

The study of signed languages occupies a small but significant space within the field of linguistics and translation studies. Much of the focus of that study has been the intricate and detailed analysis of specific features that are found in signed languages, such as the seminal work undertaken by William Stokoe into American Sign Language (Stokoe, 1960). Much sign language study in the UK has attempted to provide insight into the linguistic features of BSL such as the *Dictionary of British Sign Language/English* (1992) and *The Linguistics of British Sign Language* (Sutton-Spence & Woll, 1999). Other research projects have examined specific features, such as verb use, negation and so on. It is worth noting how little time has elapsed since these first studies were published and just how recent, therefore, is the revolution in our understanding of signed language use in Britain.

Academics working in the field of Signed and Spoken Language Interpreting and Translation Studies have largely focussed on the working practices of interpreters, examining features such as: the processes by which a source message is translated into a target message; quality of interpreting and the accuracy of interpreted messages; ethical decision making of interpreters; psychological features of interpreting; changes in communication dynamics in interpreted interactions; [and] gender features of interpreting (paraphrased from (Brueck, 2011)).

As Brueck also comments, studies of team interpreting practice are rare, as are studies of signed language translation (rather than interpreting) practice. Likewise, investigations of team approaches to signed language translation are few and far between. Chris Stones' recent study 'Towards a Deaf Translation Norm' (Stone, 2009) sought to explore with British Deaf people their approach to translation practice. He investigated how Deaf translators perceived their practice as similar to and different from that of hearing interpreters and translators, exploring how that knowledge might be utilised to inform the pedagogy of interpreter training. While his work sought to explore translation practice in signed language, it was focussed on the work of individual translators rather than on translation as a team activity.

From this summary of the foci of studies in the field it is evident that professional and lay understandings of the detailed workings of BSL have grown significantly in recent decades, yet are still in-development. This has implications for a language whose very status and existence is relatively newly affirmed[14] and for the confidence of Deaf people in reflecting on their language. Those implications are visible within the research process and in the data generated by this study, emerging in two particular ways: firstly, the lack of research into team practices of signed language translation has given the Project Team and myself as researcher very little by way of sources upon which to draw; and secondly, those implications can be seen in the ways in which team members have explored their own language use. Practices of team translation and translators' linguistic and reflective processes are a knowledge area which is currently thin but into which this thesis hopes to make a useful contribution.

2.3.1 A Note Regarding Bible Translation Theory

As discussed in the accompanying literature review (CD1, TH8002, pp.23-26, 29-31) several different approaches are available to the translator as they set about the translation endeavour. These approaches to translation vary in their understanding of where and how meaning is located and communicated. Those differences directly affect the preferences that they propose should be given to the structure and style of the source or target text and to the needs of the target language and audience.

The two main axes along which debates can be plotted within the field of Bible Translation are firstly, in relation to levels of adherence to the words and of the source text. Those arguing for a tight adherence to the source text favour a word-for-word or at best a sense-for-sense approach, often referred to as literal translation or formal equivalence (Ellis, 2003). Those arguing for greater attention to the comprehensibility of the text for the intended audience would favour a text-design strategy which draws more fully on the resources of the target language. Such translations are often referred to as dynamic, free or idiomatic

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[14] Government recognition of BSL as an indigenous language of the UK was given in 2003. It has been argued, however, that such recognition alone "is not enough to raise the chances of Deaf people to full participatory citizenship in the larger society" (Rayman, Why doesn't everyone here speak Sign Language? Questions of language policy, ideology and economics, 2009, p. 348).

translations because of their use of equivalent lexical features from the target language such as idioms (Beekman & Callow, 1974). The second axis or point of debate is closely related and concerns the extent to which a translation should retain the 'other-ness' of the original. Some authors argue that it is incumbent upon the translator to resist the domestication of a text by ensuring that the nature of the source text, including errors and even vulgarity, is not smoothed out but rather remains obviously alien to the new reader (Horrell, 2005). Others argue that a translated text should read as if it were an indigenous document emerging from the target linguistic community.

The strategy employed in the project is to seek the 'closest natural equivalence' in BSL to the words, expressions and style of the source text[15]. This strategy tries to negotiate a *via media* between the need to respect the style and lexical content of the source text, and the needs of any new target language and audience.

2.4 The Deaf Community in Practical Theology

As this thesis is to be examined as a piece of Practical Theology, this section focuses more closely on the three most recent monographs published in this field that explore theologically the lives of Deaf people. Each of the books examined are outputs from significant research and/or ministry within the Deaf community: Morris (2008), is an account of third-person, qualitative research undertaken as a non-Deaf person; Lewis (2007), is first-person reflection on her experience as a Deaf person in dialogue with Liberation Theology; Shrine (2011), is also a first-person work but takes a more strategic, even prophetic approach and is addressed directly to the organisational forces within the church[16]. This section lays out some of the ways in which the content of their work acts to inform and

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[15] For an explanation of the Project Team's approach, see:
http://www.bslbible.org.uk/Aims%20and%20Principles%20of%20translation%20for%20the%20BSL%20Bible.pdf. For another example of a team employing this approach, see Baker Publishing at http://bakerpublishinggroup.com/godsword/translation-philosophy.

[16] Other recent theology that includes the Deaf community as part of its focus include works by: Roger Hitching, *The Church and Deaf People*, Milton Keynes: Paternoster Theological Monographs, 2003; Louise Lawrence, 'Reading Among the Deaf' in *The Word in Place,* London: SPCK, 2009, pp. 91-104, and *Sense and Stigma*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013; Wayne Morris, 'Does the Church Need the Bible? Reflecting on the experiences of Disabled People' in *Education, Religion and Society: Essays in Honour of John M. Hull*, Abingdon: Routledge, 2006, pp.162-172; and Kirk VanGilder, *Making Sadza with Deaf Zimbabwean Women: A Missiological Reorientation of Practical Theological Method*, Gottingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 2012.

contextualise my own research. Chapter 3 will then draw upon some of the methodological implications arising from their work.

2.4.1 Wayne Morris, *Theology Without Words*, Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008

In his research among the Deaf community, Wayne Morris – a hearing theologian - seeks to explore the espoused theology of the Deaf community. He begins by identifying the problematic nature, for many Deaf people, of the centrality in Christian thinking of the notion of Word (*logos*) as synonymous with Christ (as one who is the speaking of God in human form and in the form of the words of the Bible) (Morris, 2008). Morris questions modern assumptions of the centrality of access to written or printed bibles, reminding us that for centuries the majority of believers' theology, Deaf and non-Deaf, was informed largely by the preached word and through visual and dramatic means such as mummers' plays or stained glass windows. He argues "that written texts are *not necessary* (emphasis mine) for creative theological debate, a deep spirituality or for ideas about God to develop" (Morris, 2008, p. i).

While accepting the potential need for some of the re-balancing that Morris proposes, in my opinion, what Morris misses in arguing against the necessity of permanent, i.e. written texts as sources for theogical reflection by the Deaf community, is that, without direct access to such Biblical texts, Deaf people are left at the mercy of the hands of others who do have such access. This leaves them potentially vulnerable to all kinds of interpretations, benign and malicious, and with limited resources for critiquing those interpretations. As Morris himself acknowledges, those with Bible knowledge have always wielded power over those without. Additionally, in some traditions, there is a strong need to have an orthographic representation as a reference source; to have a text with a sense of permanence may well be important for many Deaf Christians if they are given the opportunity to have such an item.

With regard to Deaf bodies, Morris notes how Western theology has promoted images of God that are closely associated with cultural ideals of physical perfection. He contrasts this against Deaf, relationship-based theology, where "Deaf people see in God a friend who

knows how to communicate with Deaf people, is bothered about sign language and Deaf culture, who can be spoken about as Deaf" (Morris, 2008, p. 158). Morris makes this assertion based on contact with only a small number of Deaf people and, therefore, his conclusions may not be wholly representative of the experience of all Deaf people[17]. However, my pre-research contact with members of the Deaf community in England would support such assertions, along with his comments regarding the appropriateness of BSL as a language entirely suitable for the expression of theological ideas and concepts. Morris posits the idea that Deaf people can be "ikons of God" (Morris, 2008, p. 156) but leaves this undeveloped. This is a concept which has found a strong resonance in my own research as will become clearer in later chapters (6, 7 & 8).

2.4.2 Hannah Lewis, *Deaf Liberation Theology*, Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007

Where Morris' work is largely third-person, focussed on reporting the what and how of Deaf people's thinking about God, Hannah Lewis directly names herself as ontologically Deaf and aligns herself with liberation theologians who include "anyone, trained or not, trying to 'think the faith in the face of oppression'" (Boff, 1996 in (Lewis, 2007, p. 12). Her aims and approach are explicitly liberatory, seeking to reflect upon her own work and that of her lay and ordained Deaf colleagues who are "actively involved in creating worship, reflecting on the Bible and theology and working for the full equality of Deaf people in the structures of the church" (Lewis, 2007, p. 179). She supplies numerous examples of her own and other Deaf people's work, thought and theology, and uses these to "show the inadequacy of modern western theology from the point of view of Deaf people and also [as] an attempt to see what can be done when we redefine the theological task in Deaf Liberation terms" (Lewis, 2007, p. 3).

Lewis challenges the negative paradigms that govern the use of the term 'deaf' both within and beyond the church: deafness as defect/deviance; deaf people as those in need of pity or charity; and deafness as refusing to respond to God. She argues that Deafness is every bit as natural a state for her as being non-Deaf is to someone else. That is, that her status as a

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[17] The Deaf community's heterogeneity means that its members hold a whole range of views about how God sees Deaf people and about a great many other things.

Deaf person is not something to be assigned by an external other but is part of her ontological make up: "the words deaf and deafness describe the way I am. Asking God to cure me of my deafness is comparable to asking God to make me a man" (Lewis, 2007, p. 1).

In chapter nine, Lewis offers a vision of key factors that would mark a Church that was liberating for Deaf people. She points to the need for the church to be a Deaf space, a Storytelling Space and a Creative Space; themes that also emerged very clearly as I reflected on the data generated by this research with the BSL Bible Translation Project. These themes will be developed further in the discussion section as I examine collaborative, creative and reflective dimensions of the Project Teams' working practices.

2.4.3 Bob Shrine, *The Church and the Deaf Community*, Cambridge: Grove, 2011

Like Lewis, Bob Shrine writes from the perspective of a member of the Deaf community, drawing on his wealth of experience of taking part in the life of the Church as both member and priest. His booklet (in the Grove Pastoral Series), is a distillation of theological reflection that has taken place over many years. Although only a slight volume, he very effectively lays out a number of the metaphors and ideas about Deaf people which have served to facilitate their oppression within the church and beyond, such as deafness as a metaphor for "spiritual deficiency, dimness of mind, dumbness and inability to understand" (Shrine, 2011, p. 14) and the idea that Deaf people are in need of physical healing or 'cure'. He explores a number of theological perspectives about deafness and, like Lewis, Shrine draws on Nancy Eiesland's work (1994) in the field of disability studies. He notes how even the church has contributed to the oppression of Deaf people through the use of stereotyped ideas such as: d/Deaf or disabled people are spiritually enhanced through virtuous suffering (p.15); d/Deafness or disability is caused by sin and is linked to punishment (p.15); and that d/Deafness or disability are deviations from, "or a perversion of, some assumed norm" (Shrine, 2011, p. 16).

Shrine sums up Eiseland's thesis as being that "God is a God of disabled people, who are created in God's image as much as anyone else" and he cites her assertion that "Our bodies participate in the *imago Dei,* not in spite of our impairments and disabilities, but through

them" (Eiseland in (Shrine, 2011, p. 16)). Shrine argues that "Deaf people are not incomplete hearing people; they are complete Deaf people" (Shrine, 2011, p. 17), people who are not in need of cure. Rather in Shrine's view, healing, which he defines as "bringing of wholeness or soundness to every aspect of human life", is something that *society* needs if it is ever to be healthy – a place where Deaf people, along with other minority groups, are included and valued as having a "vital contribution to bring to the wider church" (Shrine, 2011, p. 25).

In addition to several ecclesiastical recommendations Shrine makes to the church, he also asserts the need to "encourage members of the Deaf community to harness their own language and culture for worship … promote the recruitment and training of further Deaf leaders … [and explore the] potential for ecumenical co-operation" (Shrine, 2011, pp. 25, 26). Many of the issues Shrine rehearses with regard to the theology of Deafness and Deaf bodies, and with regard to the need for members of the Deaf community themselves to have agency and authority in generating liturgical and other texts appear in the data. These are, therefore, explored in more detail in later chapters (6, 7 & 8).

2.5 Summary

This chapter has sought to enlarge some of the emergent thoughts from chapter one regarding the journey of the Deaf community in the UK and of their language, BSL. That journey can be summarised as a movement away from negative, externally imposed perceptions of Deafness, Deaf bodies and Signed Languages, and a corresponding movement towards Deaf self-determination and the reclamation of the full humanity of Deaf people as loved by and made in the image of God. The literature highlights the suitability of Deaf people to act as mediators of the divine and, I would suggest with Morris, even to act as icons of God. Such a notion would have been unthinkable for many years, yet may prove to be a significant motif informing and emerging from reflections in the research data presented later in this thesis.

The reviewed literature above also highlights a call for the creation of 'Deaf spaces'; places where Deaf people can find confidence, agency and authority to generate their own Deaf

texts and tell their own stories of their encounters with God. While Lewis and Shrine
propose such spaces within an ecclesiological and pastoral framework, it will be interesting
to see how such a proposal may gain added traction in the context of this research with the
BSL Bible Translation Project.

Chapter 3: The Research Design Process

3.1 Introduction

Practical Theology has been said to be "rooted in the realities of actual human existence [and] requires intellectual and critical exploration on the basis of good information" (Ballard & Pritchard, 1996, p. xi). What constitutes 'good information' and how it might be arrived at is one focus of this chapter. Furthermore, "since theory and nitty-gritty [practical] decisions do not occur in different places but are constantly intertwined within the research process" (Edwards & Ribbens, 1998, p. 1), this chapter seeks to explore the research design process making explicit the various factors taken into consideration during that process such as the proposed purposes of the study, underpinning epistemology and the methodology. Later sections of this chapter describe the specific methods employed in the conduct of this research study.

3.2 Research Aims and Limitations

This study is a systematic exploration of, and reflection upon, the translation work of the BSL Bible Translation Project. It is a non-interventionist case study (Rugg & Petre, 2007, p. 63) which charts new territory by examining the hermeneutical and text-design processes employed by the team. It aims:

1. To evidence the processes and practices of the BSLBTP team, for consideration by members of the team itself as a means to facilitate future practice planning.
2. To provide opportunities for learning from the experiences of the BSLBTP team by other interested parties such as translators, theologians and colleagues from the social sciences and beyond through the creation of a 'thick description' of the Project Team at work and in more reflective mode.
3. To explore the relationship(s) between language and form, message and modality, with particular regard to signed language Biblical texts[18].

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[18] It is worth noting that I have been surprised by the sacramental direction those reflections have taken me, having come from a church tradition more focussed on the 'Word' and on 'Word in action'.

The purview of this study has been constrained by:

- Range of Expertise: I have explored the processes that have been used to translate the Bible into BSL because I am a translation practitioner. My skills and interests do not lie in organisational development, learning theory or any other range of perspectives which could have been applied and which would, no doubt, have yielded new and equally valuable knowledge. This study does not, therefore, evaluate organisational aspects of the project such as the functionality of the board of trustees, or their fundraising strategy, and so on.

- Role within the Deaf community: A pastor or Church leader might have focussed on the implications of this translation for the members of their flock; how it might be utilised by them or threats this text might pose to the variety of sign language strategies they employ when reading the Bible. I am not currently in that role and, therefore, I have not chosen to pursue that line of enquiry with regard to this material.

- Time Limits: In the early stages of this research, I was unclear as to the specific questions I wanted to ask. Refining and defining the actual shape and foci of the research took some considerable time. The original AHRC/ESRC research bid posed a question about the way in which Deaf people might actually receive and use the new BSL Bible text. The publication of the first BSL texts coincided with the end of the funding for this research project and, therefore, I was unable to address this particular question in this study. I hope that others will undertake to explore that question and I look forward to reading their work, in due time.

3.3 Epistemology and Methodology

Following Stanley & Wise (1992), Young and Ackerman assert that "epistemology is concerned with how reality can be known, who is or should be a knower, what the relationship is between the knower and the knowable, and on what grounds his or her knowledge should be trusted" (Young & Ackerman, 2001, p. 180). Building on the journey

intially outlined in chapter one, this next section seeks to explicate who has undertaken this research and from what perspective she has done so.

As outlined above, this thesis emerges from research undertaken as part of a collaborative doctoral studentship funded by the AHRC/ESRC. From its inception it was conceived as a multi-disciplinary piece of work falling across and, therefore, of potential interest to such divergent fields as Deaf studies, Practical Theology and translation studies. It could be argued, therefore, that this research has actually been conducted in a trans-disciplinary way that is, I have not worn two separate hats during this process but rather am a translation practitioner who is a theologian with a confessed faith position. Specifically, I believe in a God who created the world and who can be glimpsed through that creation, yet actually stands beyond it. In social science terms I find myself most comfortable, therefore, taking a subtle realist position with regard to what can be known. This reflects my belief that reality exists, while acknowledging that our ability to 'know' and experience that reality is only ever partial and subjective; such knowledge is constructed and created through the stories we tell ourselves about our experiences of living in relation with one another and with the world around us. This thesis, therefore, aims to explore and examine the world of the BSL Bible Translation Project in light of the multi-valent nature of the material with which it is working.

Another aspect of my multiple-identities is that I am a bi-lingual researcher working in two languages with very different features and which use two different modalities (English – oral, aural, written; BSL – visual-spatial, corporeal). My experience of undertaking research in a signed language is that my thought processes have been undoubtedly shaped by that language. For example, I have found that thoughts are often stored as images (I can 'see' people saying whatever they said) and that ideas are stored spatially in relation to one another. Another bi-lingual influence is that some concepts are stored and most easily accessed in one language rather than the other; I sometimes need to sign something 'aloud' before I can find an English 'equivalent' (though this is often a range of English near synonyms which need narrowing down). While sometimes my thoughts have been in English, very often my thinking has been in BSL, another reason why my membership of the

SORD research group has been so important (not being solely in the project or solely a DProf student).

I recently became aware of one subtle way in which BSL itself has influenced my thinking as it emerged through my transcriptions of spoken language into English:

> The word-processing software I am using to write this thesis has the facility to automatically correct common typing errors. The dictionary can be modified by the user to include common acronyms or regularly used phrases. I added a short way of typing the word 'translation' and found this very helpful. It was only many months later, when a colleague was reading some of my written notes and asked me what 'xn' meant that I reflected on my choice. It took me a little while to realise that I had chosen 'x-n', rather than the most obvious letter combination 't-n', because when articulating the BSL sign 'translate' the *movement* of the right hand reflects the shape of the letter 'x'[19].

A slightly more disturbing out-working of possible BSL influence showed itself when I introduced my best friend as 'my colleague, Debbie'. This caused her some degree of distress and myself some great consternation as to why I would have demoted her in such an apparently unkind way. Later, I realised that the two signs I most often use for those concepts share very similar articulations in BSL, despite their different meanings.

A whole field of research lies open for exploring with Deaf people these visual-spatial influences as features of signed language living which go beyond simply implications for text production such as arise within the data presented in this thesis[20]. Returning to the way in which this research has been carried out, it is important to note that I consciously made numerous decisions regarding the language of data gathering, analysis and presentation that

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[19] This has resonances with the way in which some early forms of musical notation mimicked the hand movements of the choirmaster (cheironomic notation), see:
http://academics.hamilton.edu/music/spellman/class_notes/images/Laon.jpg

[20] Such as whether there are particular preferences for Deaf people about vocabulary storage i.e. alphabetical arrangement is less likely in BSL-users (unlike ASL-users, perhaps), or do handshape, orientation, location or movement have equal relevance? How might knowledge of such strategies affect the way in which we teach BSL and English literacy? What implications would such understandings have for helping Deaf people to manage language difficulties associated with disorders of the brain such as dementia?

were influenced by my epistemological and political concerns and about which I have, therefore, tried to reflect self-consciously in this chapter. Equally importantly, however, some of my working practices were no doubt also influenced by visual-spatial, corporeal influences from BSL in other, more subtle ways of which I have not been aware and for which I can, therefore, give no account.

As I explored in my earlier piece, 'attention' and detailed observation are important concepts within the field of Practical Theology, a feature shared with the social sciences (Leach, 2007). My primary role in this research has been to listen and to observe the life and work of the BSL Bible Translation Project in order to reflect and report upon that work. Specifically I have taken an inductive, participatory, and collaborative approach, reflecting my epistemological concerns: to not pre-judge the outcomes of the research study; to ensure as far as possible that the Project Team can have ownership of the material and recognise themselves within the outputs; and my belief that the best way to achieve those ends was through engagement in the life of the project through working, waiting, listening and watching.

Occupying a liminal space.

My role throughout this research process has required that I occupy a liminal space; a space between worlds, a place of multiplicity of identity. As a practitioner-researcher, I have felt a deep sense of privilege in undertaking this work and yet, I recognise the view expressed by some researchers, that such spaces between different social worlds can be "a source of tension and discomfort, as well as a source of insight" (Edwards & Ribbens, 1998). It has been important to me to find a rigorous approach that would allow me to do justice to the complexity of the task, to honour the hospitality of those who had welcomed me into their worlds, and to meet the necessary academic expectations.

One particular tension, has been the dilemma of purposefully writing myself into the research narrative in order for the reader to understand who has undertaken this research and how this 'translation of worlds' has occurred. I have been deeply worried that in doing so I am thereby making myself "more central to the discourse, again pushing the voice of the

[participant] narrator to the edge" (Edwards & Ribbens, 1998, p. 3). However, because "the interpreter and his or her subject can never quite be separated from one another" (Drane, 2004, p. 38), I have endeavoured to find a balance between sufficient self-disclosure and reflexivity, while keeping the main thing, the main thing; the story of the project.

3.4 Research Design: Methodological Precedents

As with any good piece of social science, this research has sought to proceed "systematically, sceptically and ethically" (Robson, 2002, p. 18). I understand this to mean: taking a methodical approach to all aspects of the research process including record keeping, data collection, analysis and reporting; reflexivity on the part of the researcher with regard to her own role in the processes of knowledge creation; staying attentive to the possibility of findings being contrary to those anticipated; and proceeding with an awareness of the ethical responsibilities beholden upon the researcher, both to her participants and to the wider academic community.

What I was very keen to not do was to allow my desire to be systematic to lead me down the path of imposing a particular framework with which to analyse the data. This is an exploratory study of a ground-breaking piece of translation work and, therefore, it was essential to provide maximum leeway for discovery. Another important factor was a desire to prioritise the contributions and the language form of Deaf people and team members because Deaf voices have historically been absent from the academic record.

It has been suggested that

> the most important responsibility of the evaluator - ethically as well as technically - is to do a study of the highest quality she and her team are capable of, so that their conclusions are as valid and insightful as they can make them, and then report them candidly (Weiss, 1998, p. 325).

This section provides a brief review of research approaches which have informed the design and implementation of this research study. These are drawn from practical theology and the social sciences.

3.4.1 Research Approaches in Practical Theology

This section utilises the work of Ruard Ganzevoort to plot some of the various methodological approaches employed within the field of Practical Theology, thereby positioning this research within this wider field of enquiry.

As I embarked upon this research in October 2007, a novice researcher in the field of practical theology, I began by reviewing the extant literature pertaining to the nature of practical theological endeavour. I found that much publishing in the field was itself focussed on what it is that Practical Theology purports to be about and the methods that might be valid for use by the practical theologian. Since Anselm's succinct definition of theology as 'faith seeking understanding', a multiplicity of definitions and attempts at distillation of the practical theological task have arisen. One distinction that emerges from auditing the field is that, on the one hand, some practical theologians see their primary focus as ensuring that practice remains faithful to the religious tradition, while others conceptualise the practical theological task as discerning God's action in the world as a means to inform and challenge that tradition, with a whole range of opinions in between.

Paul Ballard and John Pritchard (1996) assert that

> The task of practical theology is to reflect on Christian life and practice both within the Church and within the wider society … [making] explicit that connection between theological understanding and faithful practice … [and facilitating] the processes of theological engagement with concrete social and personal reality (Ballard & Pritchard, 1996, p. x).

Atkinson & Field believe that practical theology "arises out of practice, moves into theory, and is then put into practice again" (Atkinson & Field, 1995, p. 6), a notion also posited by Don Browning (Browning, 1991, p. 6). A wide range of views appear to be held as to how such work should be undertaken: application (Schleirmacher, 1850); correlation (Tillich, 1951); critical conversation (Pattison, 2000); attention (Leach, 2007); and theological action research (Cameron, Bhatti, Duce, Sweeney, & Watkins, 2010) to name but a few.

In his presidential address to the International Academy of Practical Theology (Chicago, 2009) which he revisited in York, July 2013, theologian Ruard Ganzevoort expressed a deep sense of confusion (resonant with my own experience) when beginning to map the "myriads of definitions, approaches, themes, motives and objects of study" that make up the field of practical theology. He summarised this "complex network of networks of meanings and theories, actions and practices, relationships and conversations" in the table given below.

Tracing the sacred			
Travelling	Following	Studying	Sketching

Object					
Ministry	Church	Faith	Religion	Culture	Society

Method: Praxis as				
Object	Source	Telos	Field	Forum

Researcher			
Player	Coach	Referee	Commentator

Audience		
Academy	Church	Society

4 x 6 x 5 x 4 x 3 = 1440 types of practical theology

Figure 1 Taken from R. Ganzevoort, July 2013

Each horizontal row offers a series of potential lenses through which a particular aspect of practical theological endeavour can be viewed and represent points at which particular research studies might diverge, such as on row two - identifying the object of study, or row four – identifying the role being assumed by the researcher. He posited that, following his typology, some 1440 methods and approaches were possible within the field. Other theologians might conceptualise the field according to very different categories but this approach is a useful extant tool for examining the how and why of any specific research project or paper.

If we return to the work of key voices in theological research with Deaf people, Wayne Morris' work might be analysed as reflecting the following choices along the grid:

Figure 2 Wayne Morris

 Morris' own metaphor used in the conclusion of his book is that of *travelling* outside the city walls to see what is there but, following Ganzevoort's typology, Morris' work more closely aligns with his category of 'studying' because his work tries "to trace down the sacred indirectly [through the stories he encounters through his field work] in a reconstructive and empirical mode" (Ganzevoort, 2013). The object of Morris' work is the theology of Deaf people (therefore, faith) and he studies their practice of thinking and talking about God, bringing these into mutual critical correlation with the extant Christian tradition. While describing himself as an ally of and "in solidarity with" the Deaf community (Morris, 2008, p. 64), he also acknowledges that his research has been an act of commentary, of reportage; "an attempt to report back to the city [the Church] some of what I have found in the hope that it will contribute to breaking down the walls that have put Deaf people on the margins" (Morris, 2008, p. 159).

By contrast, Hannah Lewis' research seeks not only to describe reality but to 'sketch' new possible ways of living faithfully. Her work is church-focussed and she employs her own praxis and that of fellow Deaf Christians as both her source and field because she is seeking to transform their practice. She is most definitely undertaking her research in the first person (as a player; a Deaf theologian) and her work seeks primarily to inform and challenge the life of the Church.

Overlaying my research onto Ganzevoort's grid of practical theological enquiry I find myself, "*travelling* the realm of the sacred, trying to understand what is happening there, and letting [myself] be affected by what and whom [I] encounter" (Ganzevoort, 2013). The 'object' of my study is that of the church at work translating the Bible. It might appear that my research examines my own praxis as the object of study. However, Ganzevort conceptualises such enquiry as that where "the religious praxis contains the material that needs to be investigated, but the theological categories, models and theories come from the religious and theological tradition" (Ganzevoort, 2013, p.). My approach is one informed by Feminist and Liberation theologies which tend to employ more inductive methods which "challenge theology to reflect upon itself to see where it has colluded with unjust practices and structures" (Westmoreland, 2007, p. 42). Therefore, reflecting Lewis, I have used my own praxis as a 'source' of theological knowledge which has the potential to "transform the theological and religious tradition" (Ganzevoort, 2013). My aim and hope as I reflect on the data generated by this study is the transformation of practice and of theological understanding, rather than the imposition of theological norms.

One weakness with Ganzevoort's three categories of audience is that, for Morris, Lewis, Shrine and myself, the question of a d/Deaf or hearing audience is as pertinent a focal choice as the academy, church or society. I am writing primarily for my colleagues within the field of Bible translation. However, my hope is that its influence will stretch beyond that initial audience.

Ganzevoort's definition of the heart of practical theology is a useful way of characterising this research. He suggests a "hermeneutics of lived religion … attending to the most fundamental processes of interpreting life through endless conversations in which we construct meaning" (Ganzevoort, July 2013). Attending to conversations and various voices is where I wish to turn next; to voices from the margins and voices using different languages.

3.4.2 Research in Interpreted Contexts

In my publishable article (CD1, Th8003) I explored 'attending' as a recurrent theme in Practical Theology. Within the social sciences, the attention of the researcher can be

focussed in a number of ways, such as on an individual situation or case, on the practicalities of a system or systems, or on the political and/or sociological contexts within which individuals or groups are situated. Practical theological enquiry has been suggested as "a form of priestly listening … attending to others in their particularity within the presence of God" (Osmer, 2008, p. 28). This section explores the how and why of researchers' practices of attending and listening as pre-cursors to their reporting of those conversations. It is structured around: listening in bi-lingual contexts; attending as a specific feature of Deaf life; and finally, the representation of those who have taken part in this specific research study.

Listening and Reporting in Bi-lingual Contexts

Research which takes place in bi-lingual contexts generates additional design considerations for the researcher at each stage of the research process: the formulation and concretising of the research questions and the methods to be employed to answer them; the implementation of data collection; transcription and/or translation and analysis; and the re-presentation of that data via research outputs. Methodological concerns arising from the bi-lingual context of this research are addressed here.

<u>Engagement with Participants: Understanding One Another</u>

A growing body of work is emerging which reflects upon the epistemological and methodological issues which arise from research undertaken in bi-lingual contexts. Explorations of the relationship between the researcher working in bi-lingual contexts, her participants and any interpreters who are involved has been undertaken by a number of authors, (Reissman, 2008; Temple and Young, 2004, Stone and West, 2012). These authors problematize the use of translation in the context of the creation, analysis and presentation of data in multi-lingual research contexts. They strongly advocate a self-conscious and transparent reporting of the processes and people involved.

Reflexive Transcription Practices

Catherine Kohler Reissman (2008), is one researcher who is cognisant of many of the issues inherent in bi-lingual research. Building on the work of Mischler, Temple, and Young, she comments on the complex relationships between languages, translation and transcription, problematizing these and arguing that "transcribing discourse … is an interpretive practice [and] transcriptions are by definition incomplete, partial, and selective – constructed by an investigator (who may or not also be the transcriber)" (Reissman, 2008, p. 50). However, even in some cases of insider research the processes by which any interpretation, translation and transcription is undertaken can be given little more than a cursory explanation. For example, Ahmed *et al* (1998), whose work seeks to uncover insider perspectives on identity within the Asian Deaf community, only offer the briefest account of their methods; a "named interpreter facilitated and interpreted during interviews as did a number of interviewers … [and the interviews] were translated. Full transcripts were used for analysis" (Ahmad, Darr, Jones, & Nisar, 1998, p. 142). The vagueness of their explanation creates potential problems for other researchers with regard to establishing the validity of the claims made by the authors and the generalizability of any findings because such a superficial description provides us with no insight into the relationships between the investigators and the various interpretations and data transcripts. The process of knowledge creation is obscured which raises serious issues for the status of the data thus created and for any subsequent conclusions and recommendations from the study.

In contrast, Reissman (2008) describes in some detail the process employed by herself and her fellow-researcher in order for them to arrive at the final form of published transcripts in her work with women who had suffered infertility in South India. She laments the impossibility of fully capturing and re-presenting her interviewees; of "the fluid and dynanic movement of words and gestures … much is lost, and key features slip away [as] some of the qualities she expresses visually become invisible, and the particular cadence of her speech is flattened" (p.29). Interestingly, the Malayalam language in which her team were working exhibits some features which are similar to those found in BSL; that "pronominal reference and verb tense are often ambiguous and must be inferred from the surrounding discourse"

(p.205). However, as has been argued above, the dilemmas facing the researcher as she analyses her material are far from purely linguistic in nature but also spring from the cultural, political and subjective nature of meaning-making in general, and very specifically in relation to the research environment.

What all this points to is the need for researchers to be explicit about the processes by which knowledge has been elicited, analysed and re-presented in order to enable the reader to understand the limitations of the 'knowledge' or 'truth' that is being presented within the data-set and, therefore, the contingent nature of any interpretations that are proposed by the researcher.

Attending as a Specific Feature of Deaf Life

An academic colleague enquired as to why I had not simply written up the field notes made during my period of participant observation, as this would have been a perfectly acceptable research strategy. I hope that the methodological and epistemological discussion rehearsed above provides a coherent explanation as to why I chose to employ interviews and chose to make the main focus of this thesis the presentation of the data from those interviews. However, before leaving the task of epistemological and methodological definition, I wish to add another important influence upon this study which has emerged from Deaf culture itself; the notion of 'holding another's gaze'.

As rehearsed above, 'attending' is a significant concept within the field of Practical Theology. Within the Deaf community, looking at one another, and specifically maintaining eye-contact, is a far more purpose-filled act than among non-Deaf people[21]. Without sustained eye-contact, communication through signed language is impossible, therefore, one's willingness to look at someone is a significant act, signalling a willingness to participate, to engage relationally to at least some degree. Equally importantly, once a conversation with someone is under way, to move one's eye-gaze away is to break the communication bond and, therefore, to actively reject the other signer. This is considered to be very rude; akin to

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[21] This is not the same as staring in a fixed way but a more natural, purposeful attentiveness to a specific conversation partner, see (Stone, 2009).

someone either half listening or even walking away while one is still speaking to them – something that non-native signed language users often fail to appreciate.

As I have reflected on the factors that have influenced my research journey and the design of this study, I realise that some of my motivation in employing interviews was perhaps also an unconscious attempt to ensure that I had 'held their gaze' appropriately; that I had looked, attended, given my full and sustained attention to what my colleagues had to say *before* attempting to re-present those stories to those beyond.

Returning briefly to the work of others in the field, Morris clearly states that he is reporting to the Church and others to inform them about the faith experience of members of the Deaf community (Morris, 2008). Lewis, on the other hand, while speaking to challenge the Church does not see that task as an end-point, rather she offers her work back to the Deaf community as an attempt to "establish a methodology, sources and norms that can be used by Deaf people to create a comprehensive Deaf Liberation Theology" (Lewis, 2007, p. 3).

I chose to conduct interviews with my colleagues because I felt that to simply write up my own observations would have given a very limited impression of the project and was potentially voyeuristic. I did not want to objectify my Deaf and non-Deaf colleagues; something from which Deaf people, in particular, have suffered greatly. In contrast, I have sought to be "guided by a reflexive, culturally sensitive imperative to work along-side Deaf people, colleagues, participants on a footing that attempts to be more equal" (Stone & West, 2012, p. 647). Another reason for providing this particular way for team members to express their perceptions was because I was aware of my own knowledge as very situated and partial, despite the generous access that I had been granted. Also, I was keen to not conduct a piece of work that was uni-vocal, not least because I am naturally a team player (and often a choir member). If my Deaf colleagues will forgive the metaphor, I am interested in the harmonies and the dissonances between our various perspectives and opinions. Equally importantly, my understanding of the project is always as a hearing, second-language-using translator – other perspectives and experiences deserve to be made known.

Representation of Research Participants in this Study

The concerns raised above (and explored in my section one of this portfolio) regarding bi-lingual research contexts have encouraged me to work in ways that are "consonant with, and provide an opportunity for, the journey towards empowerment [thus affording my colleagues] the freedom to speak and be heard on their own terms" (Wasey, 2012, p. 49). However, I have taken care to avoid too direct a naming or describing of the participants because that was the arrangement agreed with them prior to interview and they, therefore, shared their thoughts with me on that basis. As Reed helpfully articulates, in research seeking to re-present authentically the contributions of those who have contributed to the study,

> the more detail is given about different voices, the more identifiable they may be. This is particularly the case when contextual details are given in order to help the reader understand a setting – this detail may also make identities more public and confidentiality more difficult to preserve (Reed, 2007, p. 158).

My desire has been to give voice to their individual and corporate contributions, while honouring the confidentiality originally promised to them[22].

It has been proposed that the theology of Deaf people is "concerned with relationship, with God, among themselves, and with other humans as they seek freedom in these relationships" (Morris, 2008, p. 93). Story and storytelling have been identified as key features of Deaf theological method (Lewis, 2007; Morris, 2008). During this research study, therefore, I have taken a relational and narrative approach to data collection and analysis in the sense that I have engaged with my participants through stories. That is, "the telling about yourself, which involves the selection and organization of experiences to be recounted within a social setting" (Birch, 1998, p. 171). While I have taken note of some of the 'how' of the construction of those narratives, my primary interest has been in the content of those stories; the Team Members experiences of the BSL Bible Translation Project. If people's own

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[22] For some researchers and their participants, anonymity is the last thing that they want; it can be vital to the integrity of some research that people's actual names are given as part of their right to speech (for discussion, see CD1, TH8003).

accounts of the world are important, then the language that they use to give those accounts must also be taken into consideration.

Translated into English…why and how?

Reissman argues that because "translating dynamic talk into linear written language … is never easy or straightforward, … investigators need to interrogate the decisions they make as they construct written representations of oral narrative" (Reissman, 2008, p.29, 37). A significant and difficult aspect of this research is "to take cultures and discourses that are peripheral to predominant Western knowledge forms, and 'translate' them into a discourse recognizable to Western public audiences" (Edwards & Ribbens, 1998, p. 3). In the same volume, Kay Standing reflects at length on the way in which our reporting of others' speech, with all its natural rough edges, when juxtaposed against our smooth, academic forms of English can serve to marginalise the very people for whom our research seeks to be liberatory:

> By the very use of our language we can serve to reinforce inequalities of knowledge, by presenting … the women's words in a way that makes them look 'authentic and simple'. By doing this, we reinforce divisions and hierarchies of knowledge across the lines of gender, class and race" (Standing, 1998, p. 200).

I would, of course, add language modality as another axis along which division and oppression can be effected.

Having immersed myself in the visual-language data (see below 'Coding of the interview video data – Immersion'), I translated the research data into English only at the last possible stage of the research process. In effecting that translation I have chosen to employ a professional 'voice' in English because my Deaf colleagues' professional standing requires it. I have employed glossing[23] only to illustrate concrete examples of BSL terms or hermeneutical issues. I have not used glossing to represent the content of the data generated at interview because it grossly over-simplifies and I was seeking to avoid being

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[23] See abbreviations

"complicit with dominant representations which reinscribe inequality" (Bhavnani, K., 1994, p.29 in (Standing, 1998, p. 193)). As Ladd reminds us, "with the best will in the world, written translations of sign languages are the palest shadow of the power and beauty that lies therein" (Ladd, 2003, p. 12). The thematic arrangement of the data may have resulted in some of the subtleties at discourse level having been lost, for which I can only apologise to my colleagues; wherever possible, I have tried to give clear background context in an attempt to ameliorate any such losses.

3.5 Methodological and Epistemological Summary

In summary, this research is ethnographic, participatory, collegiate and exploratory in nature. This research has employed qualitative methods because I believe that "people construct their own versions of the world based on their own identities and experiences. Therefore, [I] do not expect evaluation to produce truth but rather … seek to reflect the multiple experiences of the participants in the program" (Weiss, 1998, p. 266). Within the field of Practical Theology, it is located

> within a praxis-reflection method, with roots in the insights of liberation theology, feminist theology, and other approaches which prioritize the experience of people as the launching pad from which new questions might be addressed to the Christian tradition in order to articulate appropriately theological perspectives on today's world (Drane, 2004, p. 38).

That is to say that this research seeks to reflect collaboratively on a very practical situation (a process of translation), examining the 'how' and 'why' of the translation work. It then seeks to use that knowledge to critique existing theoretical and theological understandings of Biblical texts and the nature of translation. It does this work in order to generate new understandings that can, even if only in small ways, transform future engagements with both texts and the communities to which those texts belong.

This research has proceeded in the belief that "human persons are at best limited in their perceptions but … this should not deter them from attempting to see clearly" (Lartey, 2000, p. 132). Following Lartey's recommendation of the value of collective seeing, the raw data in

this study has been co-created by my colleagues and myself in the first instance, with the goal of learning about ourselves. However, the painstaking work of analysing that material, reflecting upon it, and presenting it for wider consideration has been mine. So while the creation of the data has been shared, the research study itself has been directed, shaped and reflected upon by me. Utilising Ganzevoort's definitions of the role of the researcher, my role has shifted during the study: from player, taking part in the work of the project; to player-coach, bringing the team together to reflect; and finally becoming a commentator, taking in the wider view, editing the highlights for further consideration, and offering an analysis of what has been taking place. This ongoing inter-weaving of doing, questioning, doing differently, reflecting and so on has meant that identifying something as 'known' at any one moment has always been treated with caution; such knowledge has always been in flux, shifting, because it is held as temporary and open to change in light of new experiences.

3.6 Research Implementation: Methods

Having explored the underlying methodological principles that have informed the research design, this section lays out the specific methods employed in this study.

3.6.1 Data Gathering

Data gathering was undertaken in two phases; the first phase was an extended period of being and doing (Oct, 2007 to May, 2011). The second phase was a distinct moment in the life of the project set aside for reflection and learning, over the summer of 2011. The analysis and writing up of the research followed throughout 2012 and 2013.

Phase One: Participant Observation

During the initial phase of the research, I worked twenty hours each week as project co-ordinator for the BSL Bible Translation Project. This involved organising translation days, speaking on behalf of the project, participating in translation activity, and co-ordinating the filming and production of the first BSL Bible DVD in liaison with the production company. I kept a diary of tasks undertaken along with a reflective journal which I used to explore on paper many of my practical, professional and theological responses to the work, and to the

experience of participating in the life of the team. I also employed large sheets of paper onto which I mapped various processes, experiences and potential theoretical lenses through which the work might be fruitfully explored. This extended period of time as a participant and observer acted as a door-way into the practical, theoretical, and social world of the project, giving me new professional knowledge and detailed understanding of a wide range of the activities which make up the project. During this time, new relationships developed with team members, both getting to know them and becoming known by them, without which I would have been unable to carry out the research.

Those relationships and the knowledge accumulated during that period of participation and observation have influenced this research in a number of ways. Firstly, I experienced a strengthening of my alignment with the goals and motivations of the Project Team, with a concurrent desire to reflect upon and refine these, and to evidence them to those outside. Secondly, I was enabled to provide over-view material such as the macro-description of the translation process (presented in chapter 4) and the contextualising paragraphs for each section of the data (presented in chapter 5). Thirdly, the relationships and knowledge came with me into the interviews, affecting the way in which I was perceived by the interviewees and influencing the content of what was shared with me.

Hannah Lewis highlights a particular power dynamic that often operates between Deaf and non-Deaf people. She specifically notes that "no matter how well intentioned the hearing chaplains are, their hearingness disempowers Deaf people and prevents them from freely expressing their own views and desires and questions" (Lewis, 2007, p. 174). I believe that my time within the team helped to ameliorate this potential dynamic. However, while I have endeavoured to facilitate full and equal participation by all team members, I cannot guarantee that Deaf participants did not feel constrained in their engagement with me because I am a hearing person.

The highly reflective nature of this study and my presence as a prompt for reflection have also undoubtedly influenced the data that has been produced. It has been important to bear in mind throughout the research process that "inquiry and change … are not separate and sequential stages in development. An *inquiry* is an intervention in the way it stimulates

reflection and thought that lead to different ways of thinking and doing, and this needs to be acknowledged" (Reed, 2007, p. 26). In approaching the whole of the data collection, analysis and thesis-writing stages of the research, I have endeavoured to be systematic and transparent. This was an attempt to produce research with high levels of trustworthiness (Sanders & Wilkins, 2010), not only as a fundamental research principle but also as a means of honouring those who have entrusted me with their stories, i.e. as an issue of research methodology (of validity and integrity of the research), *and* as a political and epistemological goal of honouring my participants.

Phase Two: Interviews

In 2011, I proposed that, in response to the Project Team's desire to reflect on the practices and processes which had been in development and in use up to the publication of the first DVD, I would assist them in formally reviewing their work. This took place in two ways: firstly, by my taking part in project meetings (team and one-to-one) where we reviewed the work; and secondly, by way of a series of interviews with team members. It was this series of interviews which has formed the basis of the majority of the data presented in section two of this thesis.

The series of interviews was designed to be exploratory and formative in nature, looking at how team members felt that their work within the project fit into, or challenged, the wider context of their lives, either professionally, personally or more widely. The real possibility was that those meetings could generate new knowledge for immediate use by the participants while simultaneously generating material that would help me to meet my research aims.

Who, How chosen, Where?

All team members were given the opportunity to take part, if they wished. However, care was taken to ensure that interviewees were recruited purposively from across the team to represent a range of knowledge, skills, roles and experience such as translator, trustee, and advisor. Some of the interviews took place in people's own homes and others in mutually

convenient locations, including my office at the University of Manchester, because some of the participants and I live at some considerable distance from one another. Each of the five interviews was video-recorded using a single, portable digital camera with hard drive. Simultaneous audio recordings were made of the spoken language interviews to provide an additional back-up in case of video failure.

Interview Structure and Style

Jan Reed suggests that "people author their world continually, choosing the parts of their stories they are most interested in at the time and experimenting with different 'plot lines'" (Reed, 2007, p. 26). Following that principle, team members were offered the opportunity to reflect on the what, how and why of the work of the project, and to explore their relationship to that work. The structure suggested for the session was to focus our enquiry around three areas: what did we think we would do; what did we actually do and how does that compare with other translation and interpreting work which we have done; and how should we go forward?

These questions were designed to stimulate particular 'plotlines' to facilitate the exploration of individual team members' expectations on joining the project and how these related to their previous professional and personal experiences. They also offered an opportunity for exploration of the actual practices and processes of which they had been a part, reflecting on how effective and/or difficult these had been, noting any particular learning which it was felt had occurred or, indeed, still needed to occur. The third suggested focus (going forward) was intended to enable team members to consider what recommendations they may wish to make for the team's own future practice and, beyond their own work, what they might recommend to other teams involved in similar translation endeavours. Thus the interviews were designed to "facilitate [each] participant in providing an account of their reflections" (Smith, Flowers, & Larkin, 2009, p. 190) thereby raising team members' consciousness to "previously hidden dimensions of everyday situations" (Swinton & Mowatt, 2006, p. 16).

A conversational approach was taken for the interviews, similar to that of narrative interviewing where the interview is regarded as "a discursive accomplishment [where]

participants engage in an evolving conversation; narrator and listener/questioner, collaboratively, produce and make meaning of events and experiences that the narrator reports" (Mischler, 1986).

Some of the interviews picked up on the structure offered above, while some were more free-flowing, bouncing from one topic to another. Some were very project-focussed, exploring the intricacies of various aspects of the translation work, technical and practical, theoretical and theological. Some of the interviews (whole and in part) were more widely contextualised, drawing much more on team members' experience, knowledge or theology from beyond the immediate context of the project.

Weiss tells us that

> the evaluator should not settle for facile explanations even when (especially when) they are part of the current orthodoxy … [and that] especially when the evaluators are being paid by program people and/or have been working closely with them, there is a strong temptation to soft pedal poor results and emphasise positive findings (Weiss, 1998, p. 280).

In reviewing the data in light of Weiss' comments I note that team members shared their reservations about aspects of the translation process, critiquing their own work and that of colleagues. I have endeavoured to accurately represent those hesitations and concerns in the data presented below. I have also endeavoured to be sensitive to contradictions within the data and to critique underlying assumptions.

Management of Interview Data

Most of the interviews had been recorded in two or three separate video clips which were then edited into a single file per interview using Windows Movie Maker[24]. These files were then saved on an encrypted portable hard-drive. Simultaneous audio recordings were made of the spoken language interviews to provide an additional back-up in case of video failure.

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[24] Some interviews had minor interruptions. For some, the camera's software could not save the interview as a single file as the file size was too great (in excess of xGB).

Something of which I was not conscious until much later was that I filmed myself as well as the participant, in both the signed and spoken interviews. On reflection, I believe that this was influenced in part by the primacy of the dialogic nature of the research and of visual languages; to have only recorded the participants would have been inappropriate.   Because I envisaged the interviews as knowledge creating moments (and that knowledge as something co-created), not just opportunities to record existing knowledge it had, therefore, been important to have both of us in view. At one of the interview locations I was only able to do this in a limited way but both of us are visible in some parts (working through a document together, scribbling on it, and trying to work out what we thought).

3.6.2 Data Analysis

Trusting that the interviews have/will produce the required information has been a particular point of anxiety for me whilst conducting this research. I have doubted myself as being insightful or strategic enough to probe and pursue useful and/or unique or contentious matters or topics which might arise during interview. One strategy to alleviate that anxiety might have been to create a programme framework earlier in the research process, possibly from my own observations and from project documents and then to have used this framework to create the codes for the analysis of the data. However, such a strategy could have had the negative consequence of constraining the way in which I looked at the data and what I looked at/for, i.e. I might have used the interviews to substantiate beliefs that were already well-formed.

The advantage of not creating a strict framework or list of issues or codes for exploration is that I have used the interview data itself to generate the scaffolding and program theory (Weiss, 1998). The study data, reflections and conclusions should, therefore, all have greater authenticity, i.e. they should more effectively reflect/evidence the situation as perceived and understood by the team.

The interviews generated approximately seven hours of digital video footage in total. The five interviews were analysed in their digital video form using store and retrieve software, NVIVO9. This enabled "the editing of the interviews into thematic clips [and for] multiple

'copies' of parts of the videos to be included in many different themes and categories"
(Stone & West, 2012, p. 653). This direct coding of the video files had other important
advantages:

- Removing the immediate need for transcription into English, allowing the BSL to stay
  in its native form during the analysis stage. This allowed for the preservation of
  affect, nuance and signs (linguistic and examples) used by interviewees, including
  signs or sign language use occurring in the spoken English interviews. This should
  result in greater reliability of the coding of the content of the data.
- The body language, including gross body movement and facial expression, and the
  type of pauses (reticence, reaching for a particular phrase, neutral processing time)
  are all preserved in the video text giving a richness to the data which would be
  difficult to match and difficult to utilise analytically via transcription i.e. improved
  contextual quality of data.
- It allowed the editing of the interviews into thematic clips, but also enables multiple
  'copies' of parts of the videos to be included in many different themes and
  categories.

These advantages go beyond any philosophical and/or theological merits which accrue from
keeping the status of the two languages on an equal footing, rather than having the signed
language data immediately subsumed by the written form of its dominant antagonist,
English.

Coding of the interview video data - Immersion

The material generated at interview was very rich in nature; the interviewees had
knowledge across the vast range of detailed processes which take place in the project and
had reflected on these in great detail. The five interviews were watched in full twice, i.e.
1,2,3,4,5,1,2,3,4,5. The aim of this was to immerse myself in the world of the interviews in
order to begin to discern some major themes around which other sub-ordinate themes and
material seemed to be clustered. Fourteen provisional major themes were identified and an
initial coding sweep was executed across the five interviews. During that sweep additional

sub-codes were created to reflect some of the sub-themes that were becoming clearer in light of my contact with the data. A further two full coding sweeps were undertaken to ensure that the full range of themes had been identified and that all the interview material had been explored using the full range of those themes.

Coding of the interview video data – Mapping

Next, a process of detailed mapping of the content of the individual sections of coded data took place using diagrammatic representations of how the data both coalesced into nodes and/or diverged. Some transcription of the data into English was employed at this point using two strategies: firstly, bullet-point summaries of the main point(s) of each clip of coded material; and secondly, an attempt to capture 'verbatim' the essence of that content. Each major code was mapped, including its sub-codes and a first narrative draft created before moving on to the next major code.

Keeping the data in its visual form throughout the majority of the data analysis had both positive and negative impacts. It allowed me to preserve the content, context and nuance of the data (see 'Data Analysis', above). Less helpful was the sheer physical effort of watching the video material over and over (eyes, brain, muscles). The process was inherently time-consuming, though I eventually learned how to use the NVIVO9 software to slow down or speed up the film to get to particular points of interest within any given clip. This time cost when accessing the details compares negatively with being able to scan a piece of prose or a couple of pages of transcribed data much more quickly. Allowance for the additional effort and time needs to be included in any future research planning/bids.

3.6.3 Data Presentation

The presentation of the data aims to provide a thick description (Geertz, 1973) of what has been happening, allowing us to glimpse the myriad professional judgements occurring as the team works. It aims to uncover and re-present events that are hidden from view, for the benefit of the team (each person will experience the process individually and not everyone knows all that takes place) and for those who might follow in their footspteps.

A well-worn trope in Deaf culture is of the street outside the Deaf club immediately after closing time. Here can be seen groups of people gathered under the light offered by the nearest lamp-posts still signing to one another: remembering one last thing that must be communicated; continuing a debate that had begun inside (Ladd, 2003). The mapping points within the data have acted somewhat like those lamp-posts: allowing me to gather the material together in light of a particular theme. The data are presented as a series of themed narratives that explore a range of features of the world of the BSL Bible Translation Project. These themed narratives have been arranged and presented with the goal of providing the reader with a window into the life and work of my colleagues and myself within the project; a window that is not only descriptive of practice but also shows team members' reflections on those practices.

3.7 Summary

Qualitative research approaches have been described as potentially falling in to two categories with regard to how they are conducted and reported. Reed (2007) draws on Shotter's (2006) work to argue that "one important difference between voices is the idea of 'withness' or 'aboutness', in other words, that voices can talk *about* the world or *with* the world they have explored" (Reed, 2007, p. 156). This research has endeavoured to proceed in a collegiate manner; that is, 'with' rather than 'about'. Yet, while such a framework can be helpful, this form of conceptualisation focuses on the insider/outsider dichotomy, accentuating the researcher's status as being either one or the other. Ganzevoort's typology offers more subtle and more flexible expressions of the relationship between the research, the researcher and the audience. His labels of 'player', 'coach' and 'commentator' are more suitable expressions of my role as I have undertaken this research journey.

I have been deeply aware throughout this research that I am an outsider to the Deaf community, although a person who has received a warm welcome. Wrestling with the ethical dilemmas that arise from being a member of the community of people who have largely oppressed the Deaf community, I worried about doing research in a manner that objectified Deaf people, and was concerned not to misrepresent what Deaf people might share with me. I have been concerned for the power dynamics of people being able to freely

choose to take part and that they should then be seen as co-researchers. I have endeavoured to choose research methods and practices which are consonant with the ethical and practical research goals outlined throughout this first section of this thesis. Section 2 (below) presents the data gathered during this research study.

Section 2 Data

The translation process used by the team was initially created in 2006. Some aspects had been modified by the date of the interviews (summer, 2011) and some parts of the process had only emerged as the Project Team reached the later stages of the work, such as the production stage[25]. During each of the interviews, Project Team members frequently referred directly to various parts of the translation process. Often those references were reflective and evaluative rather than primarily descriptive in tone.

My participation in the project for such an extended time prior to the interviews meant that interviewees started 'in the middle' as it were, consciously (or more probably unconsciously) drawing on an assumption of shared knowledge and experience. One positive result of the tacit knowledge shared between myself and my fellow Project Team members was that detailed discussions were possible without having to set up much, if any, of the macro context in order for us to understand one another. However, this constituted a real difficulty when re-presenting this material for an audience which was uninitiated into the processes and procedures in use within the project. Readers who had not been members of the project would not have the necessary framework of background knowledge to interpret for themselves the significance of many of the details of the data generated at interview. This potential disconnect was perhaps exacerbated by my decision to undertake a thematic, rather than a narrative analysis of the data; by clipping the data into individual sections, one can easily lose the connection with the wider picture.

In order to address this, I have purposely organised the data into two discrete sections: the first draws heavily on my own observations of the Project Team and aims to give the reader a clear over-view of the mechanics of the translation process; the second is a detailed analysis of the data generated at interview and is far more wide-ranging in scope.

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[25] For diagrams outlining the process as instituted and amended by the team, see appendix x, charts a and b.

Chapter 4: Introducing the BSL Bible Translation Project Translation Process

4.1 The Translation Process as implemented by the BSL BTP

The translation process utilised by the BSLBTP team can be divided into four major phases; drafting, reviewing, production and consultation. A description of each stage is presented here in a 'neutral', narrative form. This chapter does not examine the detail of how those decisions are made, as this comes under close scrutiny in the data presented in chapter 5.

4.2 Drafting

The translation work is usually undertaken by a team of four translators[26]; two Deaf and two hearing. These are drawn from a pool of between eight and twelve people, with the particular make up of a Translation Team being dependent on translators' availability and on the particular tasks being undertaken. The Deaf translators are all experienced BSL presenters, translators, teachers, poets or clergy.   The hearing translators are all experienced BSL/English interpreters, most with many years of experience of working with Biblical texts in BSL-using contexts. A Biblical scholar advises the Translation Team, via a BSL interpreter, on the theology of Mark's gospel and other theological, historical and geographic matters which impinge on the reading of each passage of text. He also advises on the semantic range of particular Greek words and helps the Translation Team to examine the translation choices that have been made in a range of current English versions of the Bible.

The Translation Team members spend some time discussing their understanding of the passage; both their plain reading of the text and the theological functions and allusions which might be present in the passage. The relationship of this piece of text to other Bible passages and discourses is also explored to foster continuity or discontinuity, as appropriate. The Translation Team take considerable time to explore the best way to represent the passage, exploring this with regard to any relevant geography, narrative structure, contextualising discourses, and with regard to any BSL-specific issues such as those that arise from the need for emotional, spatial and visual/iconographic information. Following these detailed discussions, the Deaf translators on the team each draft a BSL version of the text.

[26] Hereafter referred to as a 'Translation Team'. See 'Definitions and Abbreviations'

These initial drafts are watched and discussed by the Translation Team, exploring the relative merits of each, noting particularly creative, fluent or disjointed parts of the suggested BSL texts. The Biblical scholar advises on any additional questions that have arisen throughout these discussions and a single BSL version is created. One of the Deaf members of the Translation Team signs this to camera (the initial draft clip). The team then moves on to the next piece of source text. The clip is downloaded onto a computer for the team to view later in the day or at a future translation day. If the group feel that significant challenges inherent in the passage have not been effectively addressed, they may decide to recommend that further work takes place to seek a better solution. In such cases, the passage is scheduled for re-consideration at a future translation session. However, if the Translation Team is still happy with the signed text, it will be sent for back-translation and to focus groups for comment. The back-translations will also be sent to additional Biblical scholars for further comments.

4.3 Reviewing

Two back-translations, from BSL to English, are requested for each clip, with one Deaf person and one hearing person generating an English prose text in response to the BSL video. They often make additional comments about any unfamiliar signs or areas of doubt, such as if it appears to be uncertain who is speaking or acting in the clip, or if the finger-spelling was unclear or simply unfamiliar e.g. 'it looked like Idumea but I'm guessing'. Back-translators are recruited on the basis of not being very familiar with the Bible, though they may be skilled linguists, and are asked not to read any English versions of the text so that theirs is as clean a reading as possible of the text as-designed. The back-translations are sent to two Biblical scholars for further comment. The scholars, drawn from different denominational affiliations, compare the back-translations with their own readings of the Greek text and comment on apparent errors, omissions or ambiguities. The initial draft clip is also sent to one or more focus groups for feedback. These groups are deliberately arranged in a variety of locations around the UK, where members of the Deaf community, sometimes linked to a Deaf church congregation and sometimes not, meet together and watch the clip. Time is given for discussion and comments are recorded in BSL (Project Team

members may make additional written notes about overall reception or specific issues of interest or concern).

Once all this feedback is collected and collated, a Translation Team is re-convened to review the draft clip. The team read through the back-translations, checking these against the video clip and noting the BSL-related queries first. Once the BSL-related queries have been explored, the team moves on to discuss the scholars' comments. The team may respond to the feedback from back-translators, scholars or focus groups, in any of a number of ways. They may reject a comment because it is wrong (e.g. the Greek or the BSL does not mean that), or because the BSL text has been incorrectly translated back as direct speech (an issue about how reported and direct speech are read in BSL that even skilled translators struggle with). They may agree with and accept the comment but still feel that the current draft is the best solution to the issue being raised. They may accept the comment and decide to amend the clip; work that might be undertaken on that day or scheduled for a future date. Once the clip has been through this process and is approved, it is put into an archive ready to be allocated to a presenter when the team are ready for final studio filming.

4.4 Production

The BSL Bible Translation Project Team does not have its own studio and production facilities and, therefore, they engaged a production company to film and produce the DVDs. In order to minimise costs, as much pre-production work as possible was undertaken by the Project Team themselves.

Once all the clips required for section one (Mark 1:1-3:6) had been approved, a number of steps needed to be taken prior to the final filming sessions. These were:

- deciding which clips formed a particular group or narrative run (this involved amalgamating two, three or four clips into one continuous text);
- deciding which presenters were to sign each clip or group of clips;
- watching the clips back to back to ensure any issues of continuity with regard to placement were identified;

- ensuring each presenter had access to the approved drafts from the archive along with any team notes for amendments;

- creating a policy for the use of in-vision subtitles and then generating a list of them;

- writing and drafting signed versions of additional Bible notes e.g. summaries and glossary of terms.

Presenters were given copies of the approved drafts along with team notes. Sessions were booked which gave the presenters the opportunity to work with other members of the Project Team to "polish up" their rendering of the clips, including input from a Deaf man with many years of experience of BSL presenting on television.

Studio filming of the BSL Bible texts, notes and glossary took place in London during two, two-day sessions. The production company edited the clips together and added in-vision titles according to the structure provided by the BSL Bible Translation Project Team. The production company created the artwork for the DVD and case in liaison with the Project Team Co-ordinator. Once the master copy DVD had been created, they arranged production and delivery of 1000 DVDs to the project head office. Distribution of the DVDs was undertaken by the Project Team rather than being outsourced and was on-going at the time of the interviews.

4.5 Consultation

The team were very keen to gather feedback from the UK Deaf community about the new BSL Bible DVD. No formal arrangements had been put in place for this at the time of interview, though the team were exploring several possibilities: team members going to various locations to gather feedback from the Deaf Community; asking a supporter to go and undertake this task, possibly with a BSL DVD of questions to which the team were looking for responses; or developing a web-based method which would enable Deaf people to use their

web-cam to send their feedback to the team in either a structured or unstructured way[27]. Questions that the Project Team expressed an interest in exploring were largely grouped around; the communicative quality of the BSL text; the functionality of the DVD - text, glossary and notes; and the usefulness and effectiveness of the BSL Bible text as assessed by the Deaf community.

4.6 Summary

It is my hope that the material rehearsed above has provided a useful overview of the underlying framework within which the work of the BSL Bible Translation Project is taking place, and acted as a form of induction into the working life of the Project Team.

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[27] The Project Team have since investigated the use of web-based data capture software as created by The University of Manchester as part of a research study 'Genetic and medical information in British Sign Language: terminology and its impact on access to services'. See http://www.nursing.manchester.ac.uk/research/researchgroups/socialcareandpopulationhealth/sord/services/?ID=1506&Control=TagList2

Chapter 5: Interview Data – Team Member Reflections

5.1 Introduction

The framework offered to participants for the interview discussion was as follows: aspirations and expectations on joining the project; actual experiences within the team; and recommendations that they would carry forward or recommend to other teams undertaking similar work[28]. However, the structure of some of the interviews bore little resemblance to the anticipated direction of travel.   As described previously, interviewees were recruited purposively from across the Project Team to reflect a range of knowledge, skills, roles and experience. The data collected from those interviews are likewise wide-ranging in both content and perspective. The interviews were designed to be semi-structured in nature and, therefore, I attempted to let the interviewees determine what material was most pertinent to them during our discussions. The data from those interviews is presented here under the following headings, which were not pre-determined and imposed on the data but emerged through the systematic and inductive process applied to the data (see above, section 3.6.2), which thus reflect and respond to the various topics which were of concern to the interviewees

1) Aspirations
2) Underpinning Values
3) Sacred Texts
4) Technologies of Translation
5) Resources for Translation
6) Issues still in flux and recommendations

Each section of data stands alone, though themes often overlap and resonate with data in other sections. That is, no attempt has been made to use a single lens or create a single narrative to which the material must bend. Further exploration and discussion will take place in later chapters. This chapter presents to the reader an organisation of the data under these themes. It does not seek to discuss the data or draw theoretical inferences from them; this will follow in chapters 6 and 7.

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[28] See 3.6 Research Implementation: Methods (Interview Structure and Style) where this strategy is outlined.

5.2 Aspirations[29]

The BSL Bible Translation Project website[30] and literature set out a clear vision, method and rationale for their work: a team approach to the translation of the "whole Christian Bible"; well-informed and "checked at every stage"; a translation that it is hoped "will become an accurate, well-used resource for all BSL users". These documents set out the Project Team's aim of creating a signed text which can be used for Bible study or as an alternative to a printed English Bible, to be made available in a digital format such as a DVD, or as a web-based or hand-held text. This translation is offered as the next necessary step in the long-standing tradition of Bible translation which reaches back as far as the Septuagint, thereby ending the BSL-using community's long wait "for a Bible that is theirs, in their 'heart' language" (ibid).

During the interviews, Project Team members drew upon their familiarity with these ideas, sometimes referring to them directly and at other times indirectly. Team members' comments often expanded and illuminated those ideas; additionally, they sometimes offered limitations or refined them in light of their practical experience. The aspirations of the Project Team, corporately and individually, have the potential to influence the work in a myriad of ways and, indeed, the practical out-workings of those aspirations feature significantly throughout the rest of the coded data. 'Aspirations' is, therefore, the code with which I wish to begin.

The Project Team members' aspirations, as expressed at interview[31], focussed around the following themes:

- Why or why not create a BSL Bible text?
- What to translate and into what sort of text? and

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[29] The working definition for video material to be coded at the node 'Aspiration' was: desired outcomes, goals and motivations for undertaking the work of the project, with a distinction drawn between these and any expectations of how the translation process might work or be experienced (coded as 'expectations'), and between these and influences which the Bible - its status, or other features – might have upon the processes of the project (coded under 'Bible' as source and target). See appendices for a full list of codes and their descriptors.

[30] www.bslbible.org.uk

[31] My position as an insider, yet within the context of the interviews taking the role of outsider, may have influenced how explicitly those ideals and goals were expressed, as they may have been taken as being shared knowledge and values.

- For whom?

5.2.1 Why or why not create a BSL Bible text? Motivations and Hesitations

a) Motivations

Team members offered a range of motivations for translating the Bible into BSL. Several team members spoke with deep conviction of their desire to foster equality for Deaf people and saw the BSL Bible Translation Project as having been commissioned by the Deaf community. The project was seen as a response to Deaf people's right to have access to the Bible in their own language, BSL, with team members noting that this was long overdue. For some team members, the production of a BSL Bible text was deeply associated with mission, reaching out with the Good News, including the possibility of this being a life and death issue.

This is the first time that such a scholarly BSL translation of the Bible has been undertaken and the pilot nature of the task was commented upon by several team members, who focussed on different aspects of this. For some people, the whole translation endeavour was infused with the notion of testing something new and this, therefore, framed the translation work as a process of learning and exploration, rather than simply implementation of established practices and processes. This being a pilot project appeared to act as an additional rationale for the active and on-going inclusion of the Deaf community who are involved at a number of levels and in a number of roles – from initiating, drafting and re-drafting the signed text through to evaluating the usefulness of any resultant product. For all the team members, both quality and equality were significant threads throughout the interviews, almost regardless of the specific topic area under discussion, including aspirations for the creation of the BSL Bible text. Typical aspirational comments regarding the creation of a BSL bible text were:

"The Deaf community should have a Bible that's as good as anybody else's, I'm absolutely for that" (02).
"The language [the Bible] was written in was beautiful and rich and we want to design our signed text to reflect that same richness as it conveys the message" (01).

b) Hesitations

Respect for Deaf people's language, culture and skills appeared to feature as a significant under-pinning value, influencing a number of aspects of the process – both guiding and propelling the team forward, and providing hesitations and checks. Despite a strong desire to produce a high quality Bible text, team members were reluctant for this translation to be seen as 'the' way to do it. Rather, this translation was part of a dialogue with the Deaf community about Bible Translation into BSL. Team members were keen to not denigrate other types of 'telling' such as signed interpretations of the Bible, and Deaf-to-Deaf transmission of the Bible through formal or informal interpretations, story-telling or drama.

"We know those [tellings] can be very moving and true and spread the gospel…we were asked to do something different" (02).

This version was seen as being offered, not as a model to be copied slavishly, but as a resource and as "a guide to understanding" (04).

Team members raised questions about the considerable cost of this venture, with regard to both time and finance. Some wondered whether they personally would only ever translate Mark, rather than the whole Bible because of production timescales. Other team members queried whether this was a viable model as it stood because of both the time and cost involved[32]. The team were keen to find ways to improve the efficiency of the translation process and text production and offered three reasons for this: a desire that the Deaf community not be kept waiting any longer than necessary; to minimise the expense as an ethical issue of making the best use of limited resources; and as an issue of the long-term sustainability of the project, both with regard to finance and personnel[33].

5.2.2 What to Translate and into what sort of Text?

The BSL Bible Translation Project Team's stated aim is to produce 'the whole Bible in BSL'[34]. Beginning with the Gospel of Mark, the Project Team is seeking to produce a BSL text of that gospel with accompanying materials such as brief study notes, a glossary and a commentary

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[32] For further discussion of this topic, see section 5.6 'Resources for Translation'.
[33] Data coded under 'finance and 'time' are presented in '5.6: Resources for Translation'.
[34] www.bslbible.org.uk

about how it has been translated. The Project Team had hoped to publish Mark as a single piece but later decided that it was better to produce the Gospel in sections to enable people to have at least some of the text sooner, rather than later. This strategy was reported as also allowing some of the production features of the DVD to be piloted – menu system, subtitling for finger-spelled words and so on – to inform the on-going processes of text production.

The Project Team has chosen to work from a Greek source text[35]. This offered the opportunity to recover meanings from the original text, rather than it being mediated through an extant English version, something that team members remarked upon as a valuable feature of the process. This use of the Greek source has resulted in a tri-lingual process, with all the discussions taking place in BSL. A scholar advises the team, who work from a Greek text with two English texts acting as possible renderings, guiding the team's deliberations[36]. Although Mark is one of the synoptic Gospels, the Project Team are using a method which relies solely on what can be deduced from the Markan source texts, aspiring to produce a BSL version which reflects the distinct style and colour of the original authored text[37].

The data clearly show the team's aspiration to create a BSL Bible text that stays faithful to the source text while simultaneously providing a good translation. Team members articulated this aspiration as having multiple features: a text which is clear but not oversimplified; a text which is grammatically correct and in a stylistically engaging form of BSL; and a text which has natural BSL narrative flow, rather than a verse-by-verse rendition. The intention articulated by the team members was that of creating a BSL text which makes the Bible's meanings and message clear, while acknowledging that the Bible can be ambiguous and sometimes defies any attempts to understand it easily. Some team members contrasted such a text with the often limited or mixed level of understanding which previous 'signings' and 'tellings' have sometimes afforded. That is, they outlined the

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[35] Nestle-Aland 27th Edition/UBS 4th ed. Greek New Testament.
[36] See appendices for sample text.
[37] This is a very different approach from story-telling, where all the available information from the various gospels can be brought together to inform a single, very rich rendition; something which would constitute a well-prepared interpretation rather than a translation. This is a method used in some BSL 'tellings' and dramas.

pressure to use Sign Supported English[38] and remarked with concern how little has, therefore, been understood.

"Historically, it's been signed using signs out of context or in the wrong context and so it's not been clear. Now they'll be able to use the BSL DVD to get a clear appreciation of the text. That's a goal that really moves and motivates me" (01).

5.2.3 For Whom?

Team members were clear that the audience for whom this BSL Bible Text is being designed is conceptualised as broad and multi-generational; Deaf people in the church and those who are non-churched; BSL users rather than predominantly finger-spelling users; Deaf people who do not have full access via English or who have only had access to the Bible through signed renditions which were very heavily influenced by English grammar (a little like trying to read the Bible in English with the words arranged to suit the grammar of the original Greek or Hebrew texts). Team members reported that the new BSL Bible text has been designed in such a way as to be clear to the average user but also to be of sufficient depth for Deaf people wishing to study the Bible using this text. For example, by making use of similar hand-shapes for heaven opening in Mark 1:10 and for the temple curtain being torn in Mark 15:38, the team hope that the serious Bible student will be able to see the correspondence of the underlying Greek source word.

5.2.4 Other Aspirational Data

In addition to these superordinate motivations and aspirations associated with project-wide or community-wide concerns, team members mentioned some goals which related to the potential for personal development such as a desire to gain a richer understanding of the Bible texts and to improve their linguistic skills.

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[38] Sign-Supported English (SSE) uses BSL signs but arranges the signs in English word order. See section 5.4.1 'Sacred language' for further explanation

5.3 Underpinning Values

The values expressed by team members as underpinning the aspirations and objectives of the project included the desire to work in a way which is academically rigorous and accountable (open to critique), collaborative and consultative.

5.3.1 Rigor and Accountability

As outlined in chapter 4, the translation process was originally designed and instituted with a focus on thoroughness and on the traceability of decisions. The process itself, therefore, includes several loops whereby clips are reviewed; internally by the translating team(s), and externally by focus groups and by the use of back-translators and external scholars. These various loops are designed to provide a thorough critique of the translated material before it is published as final text. Team members regarded the mechanism being employed by the BSL Bible Translation Project Team as being designed to ensure that several different constituencies, Deaf and hearing, are able to contribute to the design of the text: some with little knowledge of the Bible; some New Testament scholars; and others who are Church leaders and linguists. The data show that team members were very aware that such a meticulous and highly consultative method cannot produce large amounts of text quickly but aims to produce a text of outstanding quality with high levels of acceptability. The data clearly show team members wrestling with this dilemma of speed versus accuracy and quality. The evidence appears to show that team members link the project's focus on rigor and thoroughness not only out of duty the original and for accuracy's own sake but also with increasing the likelihood of this text receiving high levels of acceptability with regard to its status and function as a Biblical text, as opposed to the status of a paraphrase, dramatization, or adaptation of what is contained in the Bible.

From the outset, the Project Team were keen to ensure that translation decisions could be justified to anyone who might have cause to query any particular translation choices. The team, therefore, maintain detailed records of how, as well as what, particular translation decisions were made, such as; which options were considered and rejected, which options approved. The initial method for this was the setting up of two cameras which recorded all of the teams' deliberations. These video tapes were then kept as an archive for future

reference. During the interviews, team members remarked on how this had proved to be a time-consuming and unwieldy system which was seldom utilised as a checking tool. Team members described how, as time went on a computerised system was established using typed notes with an accompanying, brief BSL video for any specific information which was best kept in visual-language form. This system was reported as far more efficient and more effective for facilitating the on-going, internal decision-making processes of the teams. It also appeared to coincide with the team's growing confidence about the validity of the translation process and their sense that they, therefore, had other ways of answering any queries or criticisms.

5.3.2 Collaboration

The translation process is undertaken in teams rather than by individuals and this collaborative approach is evident throughout the drafting, reviewing and production phases. Even the final filming, the presentation to camera, which one might imagine would be the work of one person – the presenter – was actually a team effort, and remarked upon as such: one person signing to camera; another operating the autocue; and another person acting as monitor and providing a live audience with whom the presenter can engage. One team member directly expressed one of the project's goals as "helping to generate increased capacity for undertaking signed language Bible translation work…by building a translation community" (02). This focus on mutuality and on the group or team as the foundational unit of practice, for good or for ill, permeates the data.

Team members remarked on the qualitative difference between their experience of translating on their own and when they were working in the project, highlighting the value of shared expertise and mutual support. Team members were quick to remark positively on a number of aspects of their colleagues' experience and skills; practical, theological, linguistic, organisational and relational. They were generally very appreciative of the opportunity to work with people with whom they would rarely collaborate outside of the context of the project.

Both Deaf and hearing team members remarked on the participatory nature of the project's practice, framing this as reflecting that of Deaf culture; "in Deaf culture, everybody has to be

given the opportunity to comment" (02). They noted that their method aimed for the creation of an agreed translation, that is; a translation which is designed and produced on the basis of consensus. Team members recognised and valued the range of perspectives brought to bear during their deliberations, while accepting that this had led to prolonged periods of discussion without always generating agreed text or even much apparent progress towards that text. This was something that was seen by some as to be expected, considering the demands of the process itself, but it was also experienced as a somewhat frustrating and, in some ways, limiting feature of the project's practice.

5.3.3 Consultation

Despite the significant level of skill and experience of Deaf and hearing members of the Project Team, they regularly consult with members of the wider Deaf community (see chapter 4, section 4.3 Reviewing). This consultation usually takes the form of focus groups which advise on issues such as signing style and any idiosyncrasies or incoherencies in the text and these were remarked upon as being a vital part of the translation process. Deaf people also contribute individually by generating back-translations of drafted clips and are also generated by hearing people with high level BSL skills. Team members commented on the value added by these back-translations which often include additional comments about the narrative flow of the clip or unfamiliar signs. Other hearing people involved in the consultation stages of the review are Biblical scholars and some discussion took place regarding the range of theological perspectives provided by the various scholars. Having fresh external perspectives on the text was commented upon as being an important checking feature within the overall translation framework being employed by the Project Team.

Although not a feature of their formal consultative strategy, as part of the BSL Bible Translation Project's publicity and marketing work, team members have given presentations about the project to members of the public through visits to churches or other interested groups. Some reflection on the value of these took place during the interviews. These presentations had often been to people who have limited prior exposure to BSL but team members reported that their comments could still generate useful informal feedback for the

team. When showing a clip of Mark 1:9-13 on one occasion, a non-signing member of the audience had said that his initial impression was that it was about an exorcism but had then realised that this was not the case. One team member was particularly pleased to note that the same Greek source is used in this verse to say that the Holy Spirit 'drove Jesus out' (v 12) into the wilderness as is used elsewhere for the driving out of unclean spirits. This had confirmed that the hard work that had gone into designing in such resonances was justified. Team members commented on how valuable all these various types of feedback were, although there were some concerns that some fine-tuning of the feedback mechanisms may need to be undertaken as the project goes forward.

A subtle theme throughout the data is a sense of unease which appears to exist regarding some teams members' perceptions about their status, corporate and individual, as experts in the design and production of this text. That is, at times they show serious discomfort in being the final arbiters and mediators of the text, a role which their experience and skill justifies. Their theological and political position is such, however, that they are at great pains to work non-hierarchically and are working to ensure that, as much as possible, the text is seen as indigenous and is owned by the Deaf community rather than being imposed as "the way to sign it" (04). As one team member remarked:

"Our version of Mark needs to have said 'Here's a way to do it; is this the way you want it done?' That is what we're offering. Our short-term aim is to turn out Mark's Gospel and our long-term aim is to say 'Well, is that useful? Do we continue with the same way forward or a different way forward?'" (02).

This consultative approach, along with a certain reluctance to be definitive has a number of implications which emerge in greater detail below.

5.4 Sacred Texts (as both source and target texts)

One of the central features of this translation is that the Project Team are working from and seeking to create a Biblical text. The source text is sacred, frozen, historic, foreign yet familiar; each feature bringing with it attendant considerations. The Project Team described their aspiration to create a target text which reflects the Bible's status while addressing

functions which go beyond those which might be associated with a standard text. That is, in addition to providing access, informing and empowering their 'readership', the data clearly shows that they are seeking to create a representation of 'the Good News', and that the Project Team understand this to be a message with theological and spiritual goals. Project Team members self-consciously discussed ways in which these genre-specific concerns set it apart from more work-a-day translation tasks such as making contemporary health documents accessible to the BSL-using community.

A number of different features about the nature and status of the Bible were observable in the data, appearing to exert particular influences on the team's thinking and practice. These included: a sense of working with a holy object – something not to be "messed about with" (03); that the Deaf community had expectations of something that resembled a Bible, with the associated links with the use of SSE (therefore, strains between literal/free translation strategies, continuity/discontinuity with regard to existing translations); and other functional issues, such as the Bible's role as a mission-focused text.

Data from several Bible-focussed codes appeared to coalesce around the following major themes: language, form, function and familiarity and they are, therefore, presented thus below.

5.4.1 Sacred Language

The approach the team are taking is predicated on the linguistic validity of BSL. Although this might seem self-evident, the team were aware that they were working within a context where the linguistic status of BSL as a full, grammatical, and living language has been denied for centuries. Team members were keen to wrestle with the source and target texts in light of that debate and it appeared to act as a further spur to finding linguistically rich and creative translation solutions. From their perspective, any translation issues were regarded as stemming from, among other things, the differences between languages of equal value; BSL, Greek and English. These differences were regarded as fascinating and frustrating features of the translation process. They were not framed as deficiencies in BSL, which team members were all too aware had been, and in some respects still is, a common discourse about signed languages.

Something of which team members were acutely aware but which is not always understood by non-BSL-users are the political and linguistic relationships between BSL and English. As mentioned earlier, historically there has been pressure to use non-natural ways of signing in church, predominantly SSE. This was in part because English was regarded as having superior status and because the majority of priests did not have the signing skills to encode theological information effectively[39]. Some team members reflected on their own journeys in relation to this issue, describing their increasing confidence in, understanding of, and appreciation for BSL as a valid language medium for use in Church settings. This shift was expressed as being influenced both by changes taking place more widely in Deaf church over recent years and in response to their involvement with the translation project. Passing on this increasing confidence to the wider Deaf community was also seen as a motivating factor for continuing with the translation task.

The data support the view, however, that members of the Deaf community (including Project Team members) are not completely liberated to bring their whole selves, including their language, fully into their church life. The idea that some continued to carry an internalised pressure to use SSE was self-consciously discussed and this pressure was not necessarily one felt only by Deaf team members but recognised also by hearing team members who had roles within Deaf church.

One team member was at great pains to refute one common misconception about BSL:

> "BSL is often believed to be being signed representations of English words rather than being signed representations of the underlying object or concept to which a particular English word might also point" (04).

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[39] This reflects Deaf people's experiences in education, where many of the professionals – teachers of the deaf, teachers and classroom assistants often have limited signing skills. Schick, Marschak and Spencer (2006) note the impoverished language environment in which most deaf children spend their school years, where. 'classroom teachers are often not fluent in sign language, even when it is the (or a) language of instruction' with many teachers admitting that 'they had learned to sign from the children they taught' (2006:12).

This misconception can be illustrated thus:

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┌──────────────────────────────────────┐
│  Object or concept e.g. 'dog', 'love' │
└──────────────────────────────────────┘
                  │
                  ▼
┌──────────────────────────────────────┐
│     English representation of object  │
│  or concept (a word): 'dog' or 'love' │
└──────────────────────────────────────┘
                  │
                  ▼
┌──────────────────────────────────────┐
│       BSL sign for the English word:  │
│            'dog' or 'love'            │
└──────────────────────────────────────┘
```
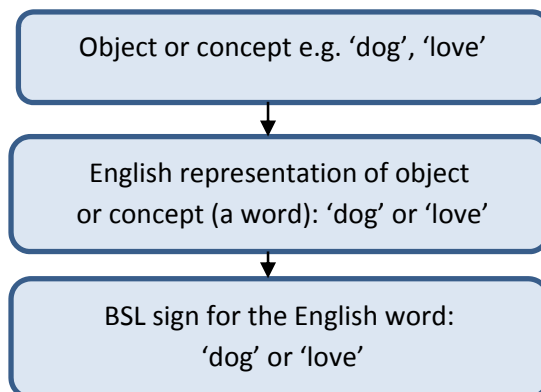
This hierarchical model conceives of BSL as sub-ordinate to the majority spoken language of the UK; English. The actual linguistic relationship between BSL and English should be illustrated thus:

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┌──────────────────────────────────────┐
│  Object or concept e.g. 'dog' or 'love' │
└──────────────────────────────────────┘
          │                   │
          ▼                   ▼
┌─────────────────────┐ ┌─────────────────────┐
│ BSL representation  │ │ English representation │
│ of object or concept│ │ of object or concept  │
│ (a sign): 'dog' or  │ │ (a word): 'dog' or    │
│ 'love'              │ │ 'love'                │
└─────────────────────┘ └─────────────────────┘
```
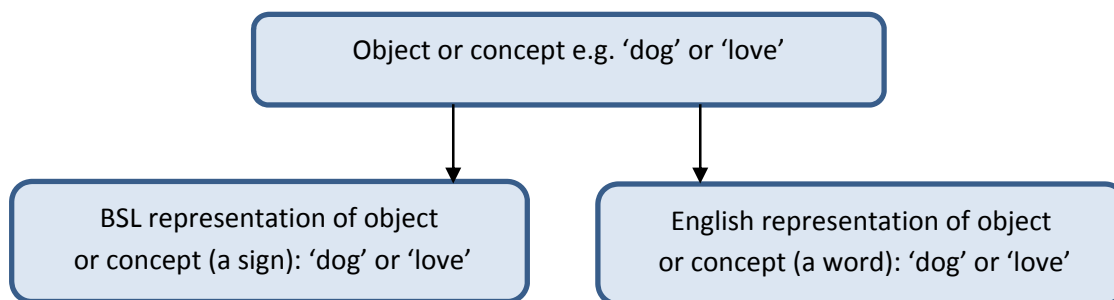
One of the outcomes of misconceptions about the linguistic status of BSL has been the widespread use of SSE in church settings (and in education). The use of SSE, i.e. following English word order, creates a number of problems of both language production and understanding. As BSL is highly inflected, the process of adding in all the necessary markers which English requires is quite unwieldy. Such a process usually requires resorting to the increased use of finger-spelling (e.g. W-A-S, F-O-R, T-H-E) and the use of de-contextualised BSL signs or artificially created 'signs'. Hearing Project Team members were awake to this debate and were keen to move beyond the use of SSE to the full utilisation of the riches of BSL. For one Deaf member of the Project Team, this was a very 'live' issue and they remarked with great sadness about the way in which the use of SSE substantially increases the cognitive workload of the Deaf viewer, and often results in impoverished understandings of the text, something they were highly motivated to see changed through their involvement in

the project and by making such a quality BSL text available to the rest of the Deaf community.

Aware of this historical context, the team have made use of finger-spelling only where it is clearly a BSL-usage, such as for the names of people and places and, as participant 3 remarked, "not as a strategy to achieve a false 'clarity'" (03). They are very clear that this is not intended to be a signed English version or, as one person quipped, "sign supported Greek" (02). As described above, a central aspiration of the BSL Bible Translation Project Team is to create a Bible that begins from an understanding of BSL as a natural language that is of equal status to Greek and English; one that uses grammatically correct BSL and does not make use of a visual version of another language by using SSE, which is neither English nor BSL.

An interesting feature which emerges about this translation process is a change in the status afforded to existing English Bible translations. As stated earlier, this BSL translation is a completely new Bible version from the Greek. Many members of the team had never worked in this way – translating into BSL from a text that was not English. In the project's work, the status of the English text is being tempered by the needs of BSL which is being judged against the Greek text. In this scenario, although English is employed in the form of back-translations and transliterations, it does not have the final say. The question 'is the BSL consonant with the Greek' is the final arbiter (03). The social and cultural power of English (spoken and written) as the language of faith and worship to which BSL 'versions' related, has the potential to thus be significantly weakened, if not usurped completely.

5.4.2 Sacred Form

a) Of Words

Translation Team members are drawn from a variety of denominations and include those who would not consider themselves to be active members of any particular church. Therefore, the status of the Bible as a sacred, and so rather fixed, source text in the eyes of the Translation Team members falls along a continuum. Some members described a great reluctance to move away from the structure and detail of the source text, with others

appearing to be much more comfortable with doing so, particularly if such a move might generate a text which is better suited to the target language by providing greater coherence or facilitating a more creative BSL rendering. During a discussion about re-structuring at sentence or paragraph level, one team member gave this as a worked example of why such changes might be necessary:

> In Mark 3, verses seven and eight, there is a description of crowds coming to Jesus from a long list of locations because they have heard about what he is doing. If the BSL text tried to follow the English construction 'they came – from all these locations - because they had heard' then this could risk the Sign Language text giving either of two false impressions: firstly, they came and heard here, or secondly, they came, then went back and heard, so came again. A better BSL construction would be 'in all these locations – they heard – so they came' (03).

While such an adjustment appeared to some to be unremarkable, for others, changing the order of verses was not to be undertaken lightly and needed to be clearly justified. Drawing the team towards a conservative approach was a sense of reverence for the source text, and a reluctance to unnecessarily jar the expectations of people who might use the BSL version who were already very familiar with the English versions. Counter-balancing those drivers was the desire to create a high quality, indigenous sign language text; a text with good narrative flow which would meet the structural, narrative, and discourse expectations of BSL-users. Team members frequently referred to the detailed and intense discussions that had taken place as they wrestled with these issues as translation and Christian perspective became interwoven.

b) Of Signs

Notwithstanding the desire to treat the structure and form of the source text with respect, some features of BSL are able to create new forms and correspondences which offer not only equivalence but also illuminations of the source text. In the BSL version of Mark 4 verse 21, the order of the placing of a lamp has been slightly re-ordered and rendered as "under

the bed, under a bowl, on a lampstand" (02). This follows the BSL strategy of moving a concept or object along a single plane, in this case, from lower to medium height to highest. This equivalence is aesthetically pleasing, a natural form of BSL, and is an example of achieving a correspondence of story-telling form that required a simple exchange of 'bed' and 'bushel'. In Mark 1 verses 4 to 6, a larger re-ordering has taken place. Here the BSL version has transferred the location of 'the river Jordan' (verse 5) and the description of John's clothing and food (verse 6) into verse 4. This strategy allowed the team to follow BSL norms of first introducing a character, including describing him, then locating the character, then continuing with the description of what he was doing. The author of Mark is keen to tell us what he was doing first and, therefore, moving the text around so significantly has the potential to disrupt both style and message in this case. This decision was not taken lightly but was guided by the question "If the author of Mark had understood BSL, how would he have ordered this information?" (03). Some of these re-orderings are not obvious when first working through a passage and team members commented on the importance of having translators whose BSL is very creative, even poetic in order to generate different forms. This also held true for some of the detailed work with individual words and concepts[40].

Another issue linked to the form of the signed text is the decision to create a semi-continuous text; that is, a text that only breaks at natural points in the narrative, rather than signing each verse individually. This sense of flow in the text was reported as being essential to the Deaf character of this translation. Because of the visual-spatial nature of BSL, careful attention has been paid to continuity between the different passages to ensure that characters are where they should be from the previous clip, thereby minimising any sense of fracture between the various pieces of text.

c) Of Bible …Embodiment Issues (1)

The mental images generated by the term 'Bible' may be many and varied: a huge Bible for use with a lectern; an old family Bible with the genealogy page filled in over generations; a modern translation such as the NIV or The Message in leather, hardback or pocket-sized

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[40] see below, Technologies of Translation: BSL

paperback; a Gideon Bible in a hotel drawer. What is shared by all these different images is that they all refer to a bound book. Two of the most commonly used BSL signs for Bible are 'BOOK-WITH-CROSS-ON-FRONT' and 'B-BOOK'. One of the first responses that people have had when I describe translating Mark's Gospel into BSL is 'Won't that make for a very heavy book?' People seem to imagine that we are somehow using pages and pages of unwieldy photographs or sign graphics[41] to create something which in their mind constitutes 'a Bible'.

Project Team members are clear that they are creating a Bible, not a paraphrase, not a transliteration; a Bible in the medium of a signed digital video. It can take the form of a DVD or a website or a mobile phone app. It could have additional notes and maps such as might be part of an interactive CD-rom. However, such features are stated to be secondary to the first goal: the translation and distribution of the Biblical text.

Team members contrasted the permanence of the DVD text (that can be watched again and again), as being in sharp contrast to the transience of signed versions which have gone before; live interpretations. This text was seen as a great step forward for a number of reasons. Many Deaf congregations only meet for worship or Bible study once a month, therefore, many Deaf people's access to informed interpretations of scripture are few and far between. This DVD was seen as providing a permanent resource which can be accessed at any time, thereby facilitating a potential increase in the amount of access Deaf people have to the Bible. Furthermore, the quality of that permanent text, as designed by the team, aims to provide a resource for study whereby each clip can be watched several times to generate a rich understanding of individual verses or passages within their wider context. Team members reported that his has affected translation decisions because of the different levels of implicature which can or should be built into a live or frozen text.

Detailed examination of the various technologies of translation, including embodiment, feature as a separate section below. However, before leaving the data regarding how a Bible is embodied, I am presenting here the Bible-focussed data regarding the issue of a person, the presenter, embodying a Bible text.

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[41] Sign graphics are simple line drawings depicting the base form of each sign. These often employ arrows to show how the hands should move.

Notwithstanding debates about the authorship and originality of the final chapter, the Gospel of Mark is a single book with a single 'voice', whereas the Project Team has used a number of presenters in this version. Team members described in great detail the lengths they have gone to in order to design into the signed text a strong sense of continuity and consistency across the different clips and between the presenters. One example that arose during interview was that all the presenters had worn similar clothes for the final filming of the BSL text; this had been suggested as one strategy to ameliorate the possible effects of change of presenter such as disrupting the continuity of 'voice' or loss of coherence of the text.

During the interviews, a range of views were expressed about this issue, with one team member being particularly keen to preserve the sense of all these different clips being 'Mark', and wanting all possible steps to be taken to minimize any negative implications that might arise from this multi-presenter strategy. Other team members seemed less concerned, commenting on the pilot nature of this text, offering a counter-point to that view by expressing a desire for some breadth of signing style. This was conceived of as advantageous because it allowed the team to reflect the heterogeneity of the BSL-using community and because it would enable the Project Team to canvas opinion from the Deaf community on which style (or styles) might be considered as the most appropriate for use in this new, signed Biblical context.

While acknowledging the sacredness of the source and target texts, equality of participation in the project's work was reported as being very important. Team members appeared to be of the opinion that the presenters' gender, sexual orientation or faith position was of far less relevance than the quality of their signing; considerations that would be far less likely to even arise in a standard written to written translation. In deciding on who should present for future publications, the Deaf community's response to the text was seen as being a very important consideration: "If the feedback about a particular presenter was consistently that the text didn't come across well, then we'd have to review that" (05). One suggestion put forward during the interviews was that, in future editions, a wider range of presenters could appropriately be used for the glossary and study notes as these were individual pieces of

text without the status of the Biblical pieces. It was then envisaged that a smaller team of more experienced presenters could then work on the Biblical texts.

All the team members were acutely aware of the considerable demands inherent in the presenter's role; linguistic, cognitive and performance-related. Non-presenters expressed great admiration for their colleagues who were functioning in this role and remarked on the high quality of BSL text which had been achieved:

"Sometimes you watch and you think 'Wow! This is great. I'm seeing this story and I'm getting it'; the investment of the whole person in the presentation is an extraordinary skill" (02).

Another issue referred to in a variety of ways within the data is the reader's awareness of the translator(s); one feature of Bible translation that is unique to sign language versions. As discussed above, the text is embodied by a specific person. Another aspect of this is that one person, or in this case three people, represent the work of a much larger team who are able to remain relatively anonymous. This is very different from the work of translators working into written texts.

5.4.3 Sacred Function

Team members were enthusiastic about creating a signed language Bible of high quality, linguistically and visually. The data also shows them to be equally focussed on designing a text which can carry a theological message and function as a religious text. Presenters are being asked to embody a text which the Project Team intends will not only inform but also potentially transform its reader.

Team members used a variety of terms which illustrate the type and function of text that they were endeavouring to produce: "good news, matters like nothing else, the gospel, scripture" (02); "Deaf people to know the good news" (01); "a resource for learning" (04); "at long last to understand what the Bible means" (01). They also reflected on what they believed other team members might see as the text's function: "wanting Deaf people to engage in a new way with God's word, to understand it and life to spring from it" (06);

"some may think that this is life or death because these people might go to hell if they don't get it" (05).

This notion that the text was being constructed with a theological and missiological purpose in mind can be glimpsed throughout much of the data. One area where it was consciously discussed was in relation to whether the person translating and embodying the text needs to understand it theologically in order for it to be effective as 'the gospel'.

Gospels are often thought to be simply religious biographies. However, each gospel author constructs what appears to be a biography but which is a polemic designed to present a particular image of Jesus (suffering servant, king, et cetera). These gospel documents are intended not only to describe events and provide a record of particular teachings but also aim to persuade their readers; there is a 'message', a missiological dimension. Team members were wrestling with the question of whether the texts can be understood at a purely linguistic or historical level, or must be approached with at least a degree of openness to a theological component. They were keen to ensure that a balance was maintained between critical distance and faith and had sought to be inclusive of a variety of approaches within any given Translation Team. Team members expressed an interest in whether any potential differences in presentation might be perceivable in light of presenters' varying relationship to the text; something that might not become clear until the pilot text was distributed to a larger audience.

5.4.5 Remote, Foreign and yet familiar

The Gospel texts were written almost two thousand years ago for a specific audience, located in particular places; mostly around the Mediterranean and within a Judeo-Roman culture. Unlike much signed language translation work, where the source and target texts are often contemporary with one another, the historic nature of this source text prevents any direct discussions with the author regarding content or form, something which several team members noted would have been of great help to them. Although Bible scholars assist the Translation Teams, some meanings are obscure (even to Bible scholars), and some information which BSL requires is not present in the text. Mark was not writing for a specifically Deaf audience and, therefore, many of the markers that a Deaf author would

naturally include are absent from the Greek source e.g. visual and spatial information, emotional content. These apparent gaps in the source were described by Team members as having been a point of some considerable frustration. As is often the way with things which we find ourselves struggling with, the fact that often 'Mark doesn't say' was reported as having become a source of dark humour among the team.

Conscious of the remoteness of much of the historic, cultural and religious setting of Mark's gospel, the BSL Bible Translation Project team has created a glossary and brief study notes to supplement the translated Bible text. This additional material was described by team members as being an important feature because it supports the project's goals of informing and facilitating Deaf people's engagement with the Bible. It also was reported as functioning to support the Translation Teams' decisions about use of non-standard yet most appropriate signs in the main text (such as 'disciple' and 'fishing') and then make use of the glossary to explain that use. The Deaf community's response to these additional materials was noted as being of great interest to the team for guiding their future production planning.

Although the team are only using the information which can be gleaned from the gospel of Mark, team members self-consciously reflected on how they often have in mind information from other renditions of events or teaching which appear in the other gospels and, for some, from many years of listening to sermons and reading Bible commentaries. These could all act as influencing factors and, therefore, the team described having to deliberately guard against such influences. The author of Mark's gospel took a particular approach, wanting to present the reader with a particular Jesus and a particular theology and this was reported as having influenced the translation solutions available to the team. One example of this is in Mark 1:13 where Mark's gospel gives little indication of the form of the temptation of Jesus, a situation which team members described as having given the translators considerable difficulty and which I have included in a later section of the data[42].

Another way in which the Bible can be familiar is through its incorporation into hymns or through its inclusion in English vernacular: 'by the skin of my teeth'; 'a Damascus road experience'. In one interview, a Deaf team member and I reflected on the degree to which

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[42] See below BSL: A Visual-Spatial Language

Deaf people might be looking for correspondences between familiar Bible quotations and the BSL version. The team member felt that such experiences of having a structure of words fixed in their mind which a reader might be expecting to encounter was far less common within the Deaf community but that it was an issue which had been reflected upon during translation sessions.

5.5 Technologies of Translation

The technologies that enable the production of texts have developed over many, many centuries, from hand-made texts such as cave drawings, inscriptions on stone, use of animal skins and much later, paper, through to the advent of the printing press. Even more recently, with the development of computing systems such as word processing, those technologies continue to evolve beyond the printed text through to web-based hypertext and the advent of the tablet and the e-reader. Notwithstanding the huge cultural shifts which often accompany such technological shifts, each of those technologies has material properties which directly affect the type of text produced. This section focusses on data which explore the different material properties of this translation and the influences which those material properties, therefore, exert upon the process.

During the translation process, the BSL text undergoes several changes in the form in which it is embodied, moving from a written source text into the corporeal form of BSL, and into the agreed mind of the team. From there an autocue is prepared by the presenter who then embodies the text and presents it to camera. This raw digital video is edited and augmented and reaches its final form as a digital video file which can be burned to disc, converted into a mobile phone app, or uploaded onto a website. The data that follows is arranged under the following headings: BSL as both language and form; a filmed text; a digital video text; and geography.

5.5.1 BSL as Language and Form – Embodiment Issues (2)

At interview, team members identified a number of specific translation issues which were directly related to the physical and visual-spatial properties of the target language, BSL.

a) BSL: A Visual-Spatial Language

Signed languages "make use of space, non-manual markers, or classifiers to indicate meanings typically expressed [in spoken languages] by sequentially bound morphemes". (Marschark, Schick, & Spencer, 2006, p. 16). That is, signed languages use highly integrated combinations of hand shape, bodily movement and use of space to create very succinct representations of meanings which are qualitatively very different from the sequential, linear spoken forms of most spoken languages.

As alluded to earlier, each team member acknowledged that they bring their own individual theological understandings to the text. When taking a team translation approach in a visual-spatial language, this theological diversity is compounded by visual factors. These further complications arise because, whenever we read or hear a text, each team member potentially visualises that situation differently. Generally speaking, if I tell you that 'while I was watching television someone walked past the window', it is unproblematic whether your mental picture places the window to left or to the right, or has a television on a low table or hung on the wall. Because signed languages function both visually (what does it look like) and spatially (where is it located, how does it move), such questions are foundational when working into BSL. Presented below are some of the visual-spatial language issues which team members explored or referred to at interview.

BSL signs are visually motivated, that is; 'there is a link between an object or action and the form of a sign (e.g. it has the same shape or movement)[43]'. One example of this is the BSL sign for roof, which is usually produced using two flat hands which meet at the fingertips to form a point ^. It is located in neutral space in front of the chest and has the accompanying lip-pattern 'rf'. The shape of the sign reflects the shape of the object; a pitched roof, as is typical in the United Kingdom. In the context of the Gospel of Mark, however, the roof would have been flat. This historical, cultural information, therefore must inform the sign to be used in the BSL text of Mark 2:1-12 and, therefore, the Translation Team employed a suitably modified sign to reflect the flat shape of first century, middle-Eastern architecture.

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[43] Sutton-Spence, R., & Woll, B., The Linguistics of British Sign Language, 1998 (first published 1999), Cambridge University Press, p168

Team members expressed delight in some of the overall visual beauty or poetic forms which they felt had been generated during the drafting phase of translation. Examples they gave included the mustard tree in Mark 4:31-33 which was commented upon as having been particularly beautiful in one of the signed drafts. Another example given was from Mark 4:6, 'when the sun came up, it burned the young plants' GNB. Here the sun and the plant were signed using the same hand shape reflected in each hand; a common device in BSL poetry. Team members remarked on the creativity required of them as they worked to create those visual forms and were quick to point to fellow translators who had shown genuine originality in their approach to the varied tasks. One team member remarked on the potential future importance of poetic forms when the Project starts work on other parts of the Bible such as the wisdom books:

"We've captured some lovely correspondences and those aesthetic properties will be needed later. These sorts of BSL solutions need particularly poetic and creative skills" (02).

b) BSL: A Theological Language

One of the criticisms that have been levelled at BSL is that it struggles to codify abstract concepts. The Deaf community, however, have BSL signs and strategies for a wide range of abstract concepts, with some of which are from highly specialised fields such as that of psychology and theology. Team members did note several concepts that provide representational challenges to the Bible translator when working in an embodied, visual-spatial language. Below are several examples of terms with theological significance or content which surfaced during interview.

> **Repentance**   The concept of 'repentance' can be represented in BSL in a more narrative form as 'putting something aside (in a determined manner) and turning one's full gaze towards God'. It can also be signed using a single sign for 'change direction'. The BSL Bible Translation Project Team have used another accepted sign for this concept which employs the hand-shape and movement of the sign 'change' with the lip-pattern 'repent'. The theological and missiological function of this sign requires that it is produced in such a way as to convey the seriousness, yet positive-

ness of the act of repentance. This requires not only attention to linguistics, including form and speed of signing, but also to stylistic and theological considerations. Discussing one specific drafts of this text, one team member described the issue surrounding this choice:

"It has to be incredibly forceful… but it was also incredibly joyful. The summary of Jesus' message that the presenter gave us was good news (laughs) without losing any of that 'the kingdom is coming and this matters like nothing else this does' and that's what the gospel has got to tell people" (02).

Baptism   Modern practices of baptism with water, whether adult or child baptism, take many forms. In some Christian traditions, the baby is immersed in water three times, in other traditions, babies are sprinkled with water and the shape of a cross made on the baby's forehead. Likewise, adults can be baptised by anointing with water or by immersion. Sometimes the person is physically supported by another adult or adults as they are lowered and raised from the water. In other cases, the baptisee kneels down and goes under the water by themselves. Ancient practice, such as that in first Century Israel, is uncertain.

While those differences may seem interesting yet remote, when working into a visually-motivated language the visual representation of the concept and action of baptism requires that a decision is made. When interpreting 'live' at a baptism service, this is unproblematic as the interpreter simply uses the most appropriate sign or signs as assessed in light of the practice in use on that occasion. In Mark 1, however, the practice used by John is uncertain and so, in verses 4 and 5, a reasonable judgement had to be made in light of historical and theological understanding.

So far, so good.

However, what team members recounted as an additional issue with regard to Mark 1:8, was how to represent John the Baptist's statement; 'I have baptized you with water; but he [who comes after me; Jesus] will baptize you with the Holy Spirit'

NRSV. Here, the translator is faced with a parallel which works in Greek but is far more difficult to achieve in BSL because of the visual-spatial representation of the action; unlike John's baptism, Jesus is not going to 'take hold of people and lean them backwards' into the Holy Spirit. Therefore, John's action of leaning someone over into the water cannot be mirrored by Jesus in the second clause of this verse; it would be a misrepresentation. Alternatively, if John the Baptist has taken water and poured it over people, then what kind of substance is the Holy Spirit whom Jesus is taking hold of to pour out: what shape and weight; where located; what movement should be ascribed? Not only is this an issue of representing substance and action but the team also had to consider the possibility of John's statement being an allusion to the future out-pouring of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, something which occurs after Jesus has physically ascended to heaven. In such a case who and where is the active subject in the sentence?

Team members were keen to ensure that Deaf people were able to access the parallel intended by the author of Mark. However, they noted ruefully that English does not even attempt to translate this term but borrows it whole from the Greek. While that was considered to be a luxury that they might have liked to have had, team members also noted how BSL offered them the opportunity to achieve a more creative parallel[44].

They further reflected on the time, thought and creativity that had been required to bring about the final BSL rendering of the verse. Team members commented on the cost, difficulty and, on occasions, the sheer frustration inherent in the translation work. However, they were equally clear about the value they placed on those deliberations as being rich opportunities for creative exploration and mutual learning

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[44] The solution later settled upon by the team involved the repetition in each verse of a sign that represented the motion of water (or other fluid substance) flowing as if cascading down a person. In the first instance (where this was being used to represent water), the sign was enacted as both hands scooping up and releasing the liquid over the head of a person, then cascading down. When referring to Jesus pouring out the Holy Spirit, this same concept of baptising was enacted as Jesus reaching towards heaven and taking hold of a substance (identified as the Holy Spirit) and, using both hands, releasing this substance over the head of a person. The movement of the hands travelled further down and out in the second instance as an attempt to include the eschatological reference; Jesus will pour out His Spirit on all flesh (Joel 2:28).

as well as being vital aspects of producing a high-quality BSL text. These deliberations were reported as taking place over several sessions, and are about only a single concept; baptism. Finding a quality solution to the various aspects of that concept required a great deal of time. It is worth noting that this was only one concept within a passage of nine verses that must all hold together.

Tempt   In Mark 1, verse 13, an account is given of Jesus being driven out into the wilderness where he is tempted by Satan. Mark's account of that temptation is a single verse. This stands in contrast to the accounts in Matthew and Luke[45]. This is significant from a translation perspective because so little information about the meaning of 'tempt' is present in the Markan text. Many of the team members remarked on how often it was the case that "Mark doesn't say" (03). One of the areas in which team members, translators and scholars, felt they had grown and developed was on their sensitivity to the gaps in the text and the speed with which they could identify questions and information required to facilitate the translation despite those gaps.

In seeking to represent the concept of 'tempt' in BSL, one team member described in detail their journey through several possible strategies, and commented on how long it took to grapple thoroughly with the inherent issues. The team had concluded that the denotative sign for 'tempt' actually refers to the passive tense; of 'being tempted', that is, it acts directionally in relation to that to which a person is being drawn. Semantically, it is very close to the sense of 'being attracted to' or 'fascinated by' something, rather than being able to be used actively to tempt someone else. There was a danger that a simple use of that sign could be interpreted as meaning that Jesus was attracted to Satan himself, rather than to the offers of food and power that Satan was making (recounted in Matthew and Luke but not in Mark). Such a possible interpretation had been theologically unacceptable to the team and they had worked hard to generate alternative texts, settling on a representation of Satan attempting to 'attack' or 'test' Jesus. This avoided the unacceptable potential

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[45] Matthew 1:1-11, Luke 4:1-13. The Gospel of John does not record this temptation of Jesus by Satan.

rendering and made Satan the active agent in the exchange which better matched the original source text.

Betray   Another concept emerged from the data which proved to have had different layers of complexity; the description of Judas Iscariot as the one 'who betrayed Jesus' (GNB, Mk 3:19). This required particular care because of the tense in use in the source text and, as with tempt, because of other ideas with which the most common signs for betray are often associated i.e. being false, tricking someone, being crafty. It was felt that it would be inappropriate to sign this in such a way that it might be interpreted as Jesus being tricked or fooled by Judas. Team members noted with interest that, unlike the English translations which use 'betrayed', the Greek text is a little more neutral i.e. 'who handed him over'. This had allowed the team to consider a wider range of solutions. The team noted that such solutions would not have been available to them had they been working directly from an existing English translation.

While wanting to be seen to be following the source text closely, the team were pleased to note some occasions where the signed form of the BSL text made explicit meanings which were implicit in English, or appeared to have made the text 'clearer'. Examples which emerged during the interviews included 'seeing their faith' (Mark 2:5) and the parallel regarding 'baptism' (Mark 1:8), explored above. Another example discussed was in relation to the whole narrative arc of the opening section of chapter one (Mark 1:1-9) the solution for which draws heavily on the spatial characteristics of BSL production.

Verse 1 introduces the gospel. In verses 2 and 3, Mark quotes a prophecy from the book of Isaiah about a messenger who will come in advance of the Lord to prepare the way for him. Verses 4 to 8, narrate the arrival in the wilderness of John the Baptist who speaks to the crowds and points towards another person who will come soon. Jesus arrives in verse 9. The Good News Bible makes the link between the messenger in verses 2 and 3 with John the Baptist in verse 4 by the use of the word "so". The New Living Translation is even more explicit, stating "this messenger was John the Baptist". However, many other English Bibles, such as the New Revised Standard Version and New Century Version, do not make explicit

the link between the quotation from Isaiah and the ensuing narrative. Because quoting from other written sources is an unusual thing to do in Deaf culture and, therefore, the relevance of the quotation might be lost on a Deaf audience, the BSL Bible Translation Project Team went to great lengths to ensure that this parallel was clearly reflected. In addition to formulating a new, credible way of representing the quotation, they made use of two particular BSL strengths to achieve the parallel: role-shift, which relies on characterisation; and placement, which utilises the spatial properties of BSL. The pertinent features of the structure of the BSL version of Mark 1:1-9 are:

'Open quote: The messenger (v2) takes centre stage, with someone waiting positioned to his right. Using role-shift (that is; becoming the character), this messenger 'speaks' to a large group of people in front of him, warning them to prepare because 'the Lord is coming' (from the right). The narrator closes the quote. John the Baptist then appears centre stage (in role), speaks to a large crowd, and then refers to another person who will come from the right (who will baptise with the Holy Spirit). The narrator then describes Jesus coming from Nazareth from the right side of the signing space'.

Verses 2 and 3 (Isaiah quote):
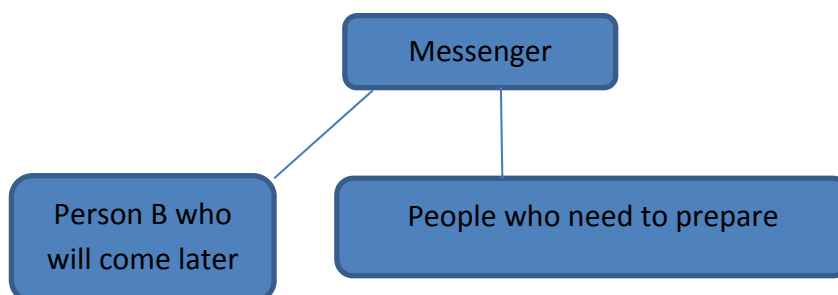
Verses 4 to 9 (Mark's narrative):
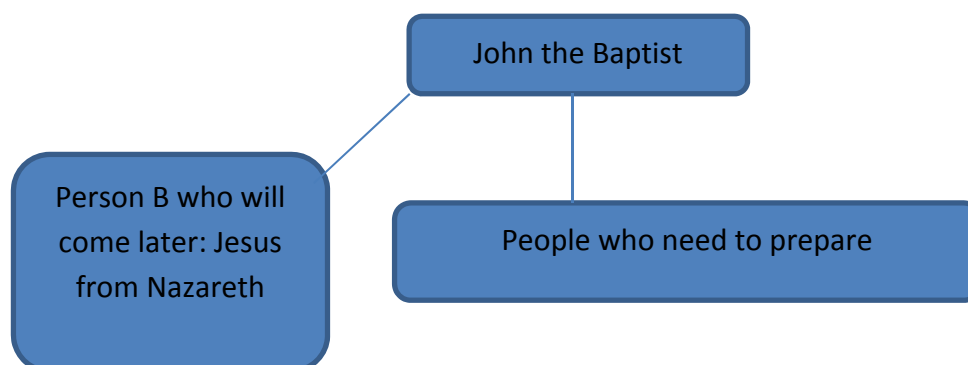
The use of matching locations for the characters in both sections, effectively overlaying the second narrative onto the structure established for the first, was designed by the team to facilitate the reader in drawing the parallel between the quotation (in verses 2 to 3) and the narrative which ensues (from verse 4 to 9). As with other quality BSL pieces of text, once designed and produced, the intricate and painstaking design work which scaffolds the text disappears and the strategy looks to be an obvious one because the text is clear and, therefore, appears deceptively simple.

c) BSL: A Physical, Embodied Language

<u>Register and Style</u>

As with many spoken languages, BSL can generate a range of linguistic forms depending on the required register and function of the text; formal or informal, narrative or informative. Linguistic adjustment for register in BSL is often not only bound up in lexical choice, that is; which sign do I use? It is also closely linked to physical attributes, such as the size, range and speed of the signer's movements, level of use of facial expression and the number of dialogic, rhetorical features employed in the text. These come together to create a particular style of signing, which can be modified to suit the genre, audience and function for which the text is being created.

Team members remarked on a number of issues relating to style, noting that the development of a specific signing style was a significant function of the early work of the project, not least because so few exemplars existed to guide them as to how a signed language Bible could or should look. Additionally, team members commented on the tension they often felt between attending to the intricate detail of the text, and the necessity of taking a wider view during the design and production phases. Both strategies were reported as vital components in trying to ensure that the text did not become stilted or constrained but rather demonstrated a natural, fluent and engaging signing style.

Finding ways to generate coherence across the three presenters was discussed as being an important linguistic issue (pauses in different places give rise to different meanings), as well

as a narrative and theological issue; the representation of a single message. One example cited was how Jesus' speed of delivery needs to be same across the different presenters or it could appear that Jesus is more insistent about something in one passage than in another, when in reality, the tone of the two pieces in the source text appears to be equivalent.

One team member remarked on the additional disjuncture that might have arisen had any of the presenters been left-handed. BSL functions equally well regardless of the left or right hand dominance of the signer. However, a left handed signer will tend to naturally utilise different parts of the signing space and the opposite hand is used when finger-spelling. This could have had two repercussions in the case of this translation project, where coherence of message and style was a significant feature of the team's aspirations. Firstly, placement of characters within the signing space would tend to be different and a strategy of forced coherence might have had to be employed which would have potentially affected the degree of naturalness of the resulting text. Beyond issues of placement, the reader would be aware of the change of orientation of the signs and this could increase the sense of difference between the presenters, risking further injury to the sense of overall cohesion of the text. Additionally, each change of presenter requires a momentary period of 'tuning in' on the part of the reader. Moving from a right-handed to left-handed signer or vice-versa may increase the effort required to read the text with the potential for the reader to miss out on the content or even find themselves disengaged from the text altogether.

Even once a stylistic strategy has been agreed upon, many translation issues remain with regard to the physicality of BSL and the way in which it makes use of the human body to generate linguistic information.

Facial expression

BSL makes use of facial expression, tension and movement of the signer's head, arms and shoulders as both affective and grammatical strategies.

- *Affective use of facial expression*

The information required to make judgements about the affective components of a signed text may be present in the source text but in many cases such information is only implied or even absent. Even knowing that a character is angry, sad or afraid requires careful consideration of the degree of emotion which needs to be conveyed. In a written text those judgements can often be left to the reader by use of ambiguous language. In a signed language text, the translator is usually required to make that judgement as part of the design of the text. An example given by one of the team members was of Jesus' response to being told that John the Baptist had been beheaded. The gospel itself gives us no indication as to Jesus' reaction but to endeavour to create a text without accounting for the emotional content would be wholly inappropriate in BSL. Within this project, the team are making those judgements based solely on what is available to them in the text of The Gospel of Mark.

- Grammatical use of facial expression

Facial expression, including BSL mouth patterns, provides grammatical information in a signed language text. This can be in relation to size, intensity and regularity. Team members discussed how challenging it has proved to be to maintain consistency of expression from one draft to another even when signed by the same presenter, something which is even more difficult when a clip is re-drafted by a different presenter. Establishing a coherent style across the whole arc of the translated material has required high levels of attention to detail and a significant time investment by the team.

<u>Negation</u>

One BSL strategy for negation relies on skilled use of facial expression and timing of signed delivery. It makes rhetorical use of a declarative statement which is then negated such as 'he's the tallest in the class? No, he's not'. The team were keen to not over use this strategy because it 'reads' very differently from English versions. This is a specific example of how the team is constantly working with the tensions around the expectations of the target audience in relation to comparisons that may be made between the BSL text and extant English translations. However, team members are clear that this BSL text is not subservient

to existing English versions and they questioned the validity of such comparisons if they were predicated on any false sense of the 'correctness' of any particular English rendition. For some team members, this was because they understood the way that previous English translations have been constructed and influenced. For instance one team member remarked;

"What the translators of the King James Bible did was to take the various translations that existed and use the best ones. They were saying 'which are the best solutions?'" (02).

For other members of the Project Team, the key factor governing the design of the text was the audience for whom it was being created. The primacy of designing the BSL text for those Deaf people who have previously not had full access to it through English is summed up in this comment:

> You know, all those things we've been through…and I think the biggest criticism sometimes is going to be 'it's too BSL'. Well, if you think it's too BSL, that's probably because you know the Bible, and so you've got an advantage over those who haven't got access to the written English, so let's make sure they get caught up (03).

Eye Gaze

As has been remarked upon recently, sign language researchers are "increasingly aware of the great importance of the eyes in the production of sign languages" (Sutton-Spence & Napoli, 2010, p. 455). BSL uses eye gaze as a grammatical feature to indicate how a verb is operating (from, to or by whom) and can also indicate where someone or something may be located. Eye gaze is also used as a narrative feature by reflecting the actions of the characters in the passage of text.

One example of these uses was discussed during interview and relates to Mark chapter 2. Jesus watches the man being lowered through the roof (here eye gaze is being used as part of the characterisation of Jesus). He then looks up at the friends who have lowered him down (here eye gaze is still being used as part of the characterisation of Jesus but it is additionally being employed as a linguistic strategy to locate the other characters). This

particular passage is also an example of where the BSL text marks explicitly something which is easily missed when reading the linear, printed versions; that Jesus makes note of the friends' faith before he speaks to the man.

Team members remarked on the care which they felt has had to go into the design of the text to ensure that eye gaze has been used appropriately both with regard to characterisation and grammatical use; ensuring that the eye gaze always matches where something has been set up by the signer in a specific location. They also remarked upon the importance of designing the text to ensure that the presenters' eye gaze reaches through the camera to the intended audience at appropriate points in the narrative because "this is a key component of a BSL text; that the reader feels engaged with and part of the dialogue" (01).

Getting it right in one go

In sharp contrast to writing with pen and paper or employing a typewriter, one of the wonders of modern computing technology is the ability to edit text on screen instantly, making any number of amendments to a piece of text without having to begin again from scratch. Signed language texts rely on the signer's ability, with or without cue, to memorise a portion of text and deliver it without error in a single video take; something which requires significant levels of skill and hours of practice. In the case of the BSL Bible Translation Project, the longest video clip is almost four minutes in length. The inability to edit out a single error imposes significant pressure upon the presenters, something which was remarked upon by members of the team.

Although the team are aiming for a text which is perceived as 'natural BSL', the clip may in fact include unusual constructions or signs which have been intricately designed in light of linguistic, historic, cultural or theological considerations. Team members remarked upon the significant cognitive load that this imposes on the presenter. This is an issue not only in relation to the huge volume of data being processed by the presenter but also because the physical effort of sustaining such a high level of cognition over several minutes can become evident on the presenter's face. This may be in the form of stress, or through appearing to

be reading from a text, or through the presenter having a flatter, less expressive demeanour, all of which can render the clip unusable. They described the need to ensure that presenters have sufficient pauses between takes to gather themselves in preparation for their next attempt. Another related issue which team members described was the difficulty of presenting a fresh rendition of the text on the fifth or sixth take rather than it becoming stiff and unnatural which would seriously affect the reading quality of the text. This is something which is qualitatively very different from a written or word processed text.

Signing Space and Placement

BSL makes use of a specific signing space which is to the front of the presenter, a little more than shoulder width, no more than an arm's length from the signer's body, and spanning from the level of the waist to roughly four inches above the signers head. People, places, things and concepts can be 'placed' at specific locations within the signing space and then referred to throughout the ensuing narrative; such placement can be topographic (map-like; reflecting actual relative locations) or syntactic (a grammatical feature of signed languages). The references to placement within the interview data were largely indirect. Therefore, to illustrate some of the issues for the unfamiliar reader, I have included below an example of the value of topographic use of placement that emerged during my time with the team as participant observer:

> During the drafting phase, most presenters had their cue on paper. During one interview we discussed an incident where, on one occasion, a presenter's cue included a list of names. As they signed to camera, they used a BSL sign in between each name that means 'next down on the list'. This highlights the subtle yet very strong influence of English structures even when being employed by highly skilled BSL-users. The presenter amended the cue to put the names in an arc, reflecting a possible topography of the location of the characters. This produced a much more natural BSL text.

Team members often referred to placement as having been one of the issues with which they have struggled as they have sought to create a readily understood text. They

highlighted the fact that passages of text which include lots of different characters or places have the potential to crowd the limited signing space and thereby risk the passage of text being misunderstood. Good use of the signing space, with clear and consistent use of placement was regarded by team members as an identifying feature of a quality signed text. Deployed effectively, as described with regard to Mark 1:1-9, it can also be a useful strategy to reinforce parallels and can function to enable the narrative to continue flowing without constantly referring to names and places. Team members were keen to ensure that the BSL Bible text, as produced, met the appropriate standards and utilised this feature of BSL to its fullest.

One team member explained that placement had facilitated the team's development of an alternative sign for 'disciple'. The signs for disciple which were in use within the Deaf community reflect different aspects of its meaning; friend, servant and follower. However, as they were exploring the placing of the disciples of the Pharisees, John the Baptist and Jesus in Mark 2:18 that they realised that 'group of those closely around Jesus' was another way of expressing part of this idea. It also changed easily into the existing sign 'followers' which allowed for the disciples to move with Jesus, where the text required it. This development is an example given by members of the Project Team of the productive capacity of BSL; using existing signs or hand-shapes in new ways to generate new expressions to signify existing or new meanings.

Written Form

There is no standard written form of BSL and yet the demands of drafting, reviewing and publishing text requires that detailed records are kept, such as which signs have been rejected and which are recommended for use in any particular text. Presenters in the team each described having their own systems with which they make written notes and diagrams to cue their signed texts. These are held by the individual presenters rather than by the team who rely on the video drafts with additional written and signed notes to guide them as they work to finalise the texts for publication. Team members expressed concern with regard to ensuring continuity between drafts and the implementation of required

amendments, noting that this can be difficult to achieve and to have confidence in, partly because of the lack of written form or of a centralised library of cue material.

5.5.2 A Filmed Text

To create a filmed text requires a text to be designed, a presenter to sign the text and the facilities to film them. Most presenters working to-camera recounted using some form of cueing mechanism; paper with diagrams/words; a video clip; or a professional autocue which usually uses a word processed text.   For the professional studio, each presenter had created their own autocue text, using whatever English words, symbols and letters that they felt necessary to cue their BSL production effectively.   During the drafting phase, most presenters had their cue on paper. Learning to use the autocue was reported as one part of the studio filming experience; rather than the presenter using a foot-pedal to advance the autocue, another member of the team operated this.

Eye contact with the 'reader' and use of eye-gaze as a sign language feature are both affected by the text being filmed rather than being delivered in a 'live' situation. Team members explained that they had been advised to adjust the locations they used to place people in the narrative to be just either side of the straight line between the signer and the camera. Because the presenter is signing to camera, rather than to a person face-to-face, placing people or things in the signing space immediately in front of the signer would have proved to be problematic. Team members explained that this would have interfered with use of eye-gaze by preventing a clear distinction being made between eye-gaze used to locate characters, and the presenters' use of eye-gaze to make eye-contact with the 'reader' at times when the presenter was not in role-shift but was taking the role of narrator (the focus of the eye-gaze would be too similar). Another related feature was the fact that a live presentation has visual depth of field; it is 3-D (and happening in real time, therefore, 4-D). Team members were aware of the way in which the depth of field was reduced in a filmed text and, therefore, the positioning of the signer in relation to the camera, and the design of the locations and placement features in the text had all needed meticulous attention to detail to adjust for this reduction.

Another filming feature was the pressure experienced by the presenters when working in front of the camera and hot lights. This was reported as being an additional fatiguing factor; something which affected how long the presenter could work at any one time. Team members remarked on the importance of suitable breaks being planned in to future filming sessions.

Team members discussed the role of the BSL-monitor during the filming. This role was considered to be of vital importance and a number of reasons were given for this. At the first two-day session, the presenters signed to camera with one of their fellow presenters acting as the BSL-monitor. This proved to be an unwieldy way of working, as taking turns in acting as both presenter and monitor during the first filming session was experienced by the presenters as disruptive; the additional pressure meant that they were not able to concentrate completely on their own material and preparation. Therefore, at the second two-day filming session, a dedicated BSL-monitor was in attendance. This freed the presenters to concentrate on their own material rather than providing critique to their colleagues. The presence of the dedicated BSL-monitor was commented upon as significantly improving the smoothness and efficiency of the filming process and appeared to be a valued feature of this team's practice.

The production company had offered to supply a member of their staff to act in this role. However, the Project Team had decided that the required level of understanding with regards to the target text was far too detailed, and thus anyone external to the Project Team should be precluded from undertaking the role of BSL-monitor. The function of the BSL-monitor was framed by team members as being not only in relation to accuracy but also as reflecting Deaf culture and signed language use which, in its natural setting, is invariably dialogic in nature.

The BSL monitor, was reported as acting not only as part of the checking mechanism during filming; they also appeared to function as a representation of the audience to whom the signer was delivering the text. This was experienced by presenters as a key feature because "otherwise, when working alone to camera, [the signing] becomes flat and expressionless" (01). The monitor's role appeared to go beyond that of audience and auditor, however.

Sometimes the BSL-monitor would also act as part of the presenters' cueing mechanism; providing prompts to assist the presenters in keeping the text flowing forwards. Another feature of the monitor's role which emerged was to identify when the presenters were becoming fatigued and, therefore, they had acted as part of the management of the filming process.

5.5.3 A Digital Text

As discussed earlier, the BSL Bible has the form of a digital video text, thus permitting its publication in a number of different media; DVD, web-based hypertext, MP4 or mobile phone application. During interview, Project Team members actively welcomed the possibility of a range of supplementary material being made available alongside the Bible text such as existing commentaries, maps and historical images, and other information. However, team members were of the opinion that, particularly in light of the limited finance available to them, such work must be left to others and they must concentrate on the production of the Bible text itself. The glossary and additional notes, however, were not framed as being a luxury but were regarded as a necessary part of the Bible product, as reflected on earlier (section 5.4.5 The Bible as 'remote, foreign, yet familiar').

The digital video disc format of this text raises practical issues about navigating the text. Unlike in a bound book where pages simply have to be turned, the DVD text must be navigated via menus and then using verse numbers and titles. The re-structuring of the verses described above means that the video text is presented in sections, rather than verse by verse. For the first pilot DVD, the team had not added titles such as 'the baptism of Jesus' and, therefore, each section is referenced by the first and last verse number rather than by individual verses e.g. a menu heading of Mark 1:1-13. No further numerals are displayed on screen during playback to indicate the individual verses. Verse numbers are a later addition and so this could be seen in part as a return to something nearer the form of the original Greek. The team reported that they are keen to gather feedback from the Deaf community about this strategy to inform the production of the next section to be published.

5.5.4 Geography

Some geographic issues emerged from the interview data. One issue raised by team members was the location of translation days. Another was in relation to the physical geography of the layout of the room where the translation and review sessions occurred.

a) Siting of Translation Days

The BSL Bible Translation Project draws its translators from across the country; London, the South-west, Greater Manchester, Yorkshire and elsewhere. This was reported as important for at least two reasons. This was regarded as a strength in so far as it helped to ensure that a variety of regional flavours of BSL were represented, thereby guarding against any one dialect gaining dominance during the translation process. Furthermore, drawing from as wide a geographical area as possible was seen as reflecting the project's focus on quality of personnel to be recruited, rather than on personnel who were simply nearby.

In the early years of the project, translation days were convened in a variety of locations around the country, depending on where the team members were travelling from. This was possible because, in the initial stages, only draft quality filmed clips were required and, therefore, members of the team brought cameras and laptops to the venue. As the work progressed, the team realised that drafted clips needed to be of a good enough quality to show to focus groups and this required the use of better lighting and recording facilities. Such facilities were made available to the team by the University of Manchester and from 2008, translation, review and drafting predominantly took place in Manchester. At interview, some team members reflected with concern that this had perhaps limited the recruitment and utilisation of translators to only those who live within a reasonable traveling distance of Manchester. However, they also acknowledged the necessity of having the necessary facilities to produce video clips of sufficient qualitative merit, noting that this was particularly important because of the visual nature of the language medium in which they were working.

b) Physicality of the Room

Another geographic feature, albeit a small-scale one, that emerged from discussions about the move to the university premises, related to the physical features of the room where the translation sessions are held. The rooms most commonly used are small meeting rooms furnished with tables and chairs. The tables are useful during the review stages of the process because they allow the Translation Team members to have the necessary paperwork in front of them (back-translations, scholar comments). More physical space, with uninterrupted lines of sight might better reflect Deaf cultural norms. Team members tentatively raised the possibility that this could affect the signing used in any amended clips because they were being designed in a physically more constrained environment.

5.6 Resources for Translation

Translation into BSL is still an emerging phenomenon and, therefore, there are few precedents as to how it is carried out[46]. The BSL Bible Translation Project was officially launched in September 2006 and by the summer of 2009 the team had drafted around two-thirds of Mark's Gospel. The first product (which is only of Mark 1:1 – 3:6) was made available to the public in May, 2011 – some five years after the translation work began. The team are very aware that the production of the BSL Bible DVDs is taking a considerable length of time. This is seen by Project Team members as a product of the interplay of several factors: the demands inherent in any Biblical translation; the specific demands of the translation process as conceived of and as implemented by the team; and the availability of the necessary resources such as skilled personnel and access to finance. This section, therefore, begins by examining team members perceptions of the group itself as a resource and then goes on to explore other resource issues.

5.6.1 The BSL Bible Translation Project Team; The Group as a Resource

An interesting and central feature of the BSL Bible Translation Project's praxis is that the text is being designed and generated by a team of translators, rather than by a single individual.

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[46] Recent work includes: Stone C., 2009, *Towards a Deaf Translation Norm*, Washington: Galludet; Rogers, K. et al, 2012, *The British Sign Language Versions of the Patient Health Questionnaire, the Generalized Anxiety Disorder 7-item Scale; and the Work and Social Adjustment Scale*, Journal of Deaf Studies and Deaf Education.

This endeavour is being undertaken by both Deaf and hearing people with a range of linguistic skills (English, Greek and BSL) who are drawn from across a spectrum of theological and denominational backgrounds, and whose roles in relation to the Deaf community are very varied. The assumptions and approach of individuals within that team are, therefore, equally diverse. Despite that diversity, and in some ways because of it, all of the team members commented on this process of co-working as both taxing and highly valued. Team members particularly valued features such as learning from one another, and shared creativity and expertise. They were very positive about the overall participatory framework within which the translation task was being undertaken.

This collaborative translation approach, however, has not been without its challenges and all team members reflected upon inherent difficulties. They self-consciously discussed their experiences during translation discussions of divesting themselves of their own assumptions and understandings of the texts in order to reach decisions as a team; learning to let go of things they felt very strongly about in order to come to an agreed position. This was expressed not only in terms of Deaf or hearing, culture or language, but was also linked to roles which team members had within the project but which were external to their role within the Translation Team on the day, such as trustee or advisor.

"It's important that people with official roles in the project don't decide everything; that status has to be divested in those meetings" (01).

"It is not possible to advocate a particular position and be a facilitator; it is really difficult to do both" (02).

The translation sessions themselves are not chaired by an individual but led by the team. While this was described by some as being a strength in the project's practice, this also appeared to have created difficulties such as discussions becoming protracted and, on occasion, difficulties in coming to decisions which would allow the work to move forward. A small number of instances were recounted where the problems appeared to be down to individual personalities or agendas. However, the overall sense that emerges very strongly from the data is that team members all shared a desire for convergence and agreement.

As alluded to earlier, team members appeared to be uncomfortable overtly assuming the role of expert. This was sometimes because they were aware of the limitations of their own knowledge in a particular area and sometimes for more political or theological reasons. Both Deaf and hearing team members expressed having experienced reservations about offering critique to one another or suggesting alternative signed renderings of text, feeling that they needed to do so with sensitivity. Factors that were reported as having assisted them in more readily engaging critically in translation discussions and deliberations included: time spent together which increased the level of relationship and trust between team members; aspirations linked to the quality of BSL text desired; and a strong focus on the functional objective of producing something which would be of value to the Deaf community. Chapter 7 reflects in some detail on the factors influencing and being generated by the way in which group members see themselves as acting as a joint resource.

5.6.2 The Translation Process – Other Resources

I am presenting here resource-related data under four headings; facilities, specific personnel, finance, and time[47].   The data clearly highlight the inter-connectedness of these various resources available to the project to undertake the translation work, with different aspects of those resources often being discussed closely together and/or off-set against one another. The picture that emerges from the data is of a project which has access to significant resources, such as the many people with the necessary skills who give their time to take the work forward. However, the lack of a predictable income stream of a sufficient level appears to be hampering their efforts to move the work forward effectively.

a) Facilities

In order to do the translation work, the Project Team needs a place where they can gather. They also need filming and editing technologies such as cameras, lighting, and computers with digital editing software. The team reported meeting in someone's home, in conference centres, churches, and in facilities provided by the University of Manchester. Team members showed concern to keep the cost of facilities to a minimum to allow finance to be

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[47] Team members' explorations of the linguistic resources available to the team are laid out in section 5.6

spent on other aspects of the translation work; employing translators and producing text. However, ensuring that they had the right equipment to ensure that the video clips produced were of sufficient visual quality was considered to be an equal priority. Team members recounted how, earlier in life of the project, poor quality video clips had caused difficulties for back-translators and focus groups, who had struggled to read the linguistic information because the poor visual quality of the clips had hampered their concentration. Ensuring quality control in the early stages of drafting was reported as one way of saving money by not wasting focus group sessions with material that would have to be re-filmed.

b) Specific Personnel

The BSL Bible Translation Project is a registered charity overseen by a group of Deaf and hearing people[48]. The work of the project is carried out by a mix of volunteers and people who are remunerated for their time. A number of people are paid for some of their work for the project but also give additional hours on a voluntary basis. The range and quality of knowledge and skills represented across the BSL Bible Translation Project team are considerable: skills in BSL, English and Greek; translation and presentation skills; Biblical scholarship; digital filming and editing; other IT-based skills such as website management; publicity, marketing and fund-raising skills; as well as financial management, governance and administration. Everyone involved in the project combines their time supporting the project with other commitments such as other paid/voluntary work, study and family. Some team members saw this multiplicity as valuable because they were able to draw upon their experience from other fields of work and life to inform their work with the project. Several wished they could commit more of their time to the translation task. As one team member remarked: "Ideally, we would retire and do it every day" (05).

Team members also reflected on the fact that there are other people who have not yet been recruited to the project but who could make a significant contribution. Some people had simply felt that they were already fully committed elsewhere. Others were willing to join but this had not been possible because the BSL Bible Translation Project Team were still

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[48] Registered Charity Number: 1119990 Company Limited by Guarantee and Registered in England & Wales Number 06278694

working on how they might best induct new members into the work of the project. A further issue around recruitment and deployment which team members discussed was the difference between working in single days or in blocks of time, perhaps over three consecutive days. Depending on personal circumstances (family and other work commitments, distance of travel), some people were more able to work single days for the project. Others were able to work on consecutive days (when project finance allowed), something that was reported as generating a richer sense of continuity and momentum. Block sessions had the noted additional benefit of creating 'down-time' where team members could develop their relationships, something which was commented upon as having a marked benefit to the actual translation work that subsequently took place. It was suggested that a long-term strategy might be for a team of six translators to be allocated for each book, with any four of them being convened on any particular translation day. This was seen as offering a good balance between continuity and flexibility.

c) Finance

The BSL Bible Translation Project has received a small number of larger grants but is funded mainly through donations from individuals who support their aims and goals. While Project Team members clearly valued the support given to the project and were seeking to use those funds wisely, all referred to ways in which limited and/or intermittent available finance affected the project, such as by disrupting effective, long term planning and by pitching the various needs in the project against one another for priority. Discussions took place around the following issues:

<u>Recruitment and deployment of staff</u>

Many of the people working on the project are paid for their time, usually on a sessional basis. Many people also give additional support to the project in a voluntary capacity such as by acting as trustees and advisers, undertaking administrative tasks and providing IT support. Project Team members reflected on the way in which uncertainty about the on-going availability of funds has meant that it has rarely been possible to have a rolling programme of sessions for translation or filming, noting that on occasions there have been

no translation sessions for a period of several months. After such a gap a significant amount of time is lost because the staff are re-orientating themselves to both material and procedures, something that is exacerbated if there is a significant change in personnel.

<u>Website development and utilisation</u>

The Project Team were keen to make use of the many opportunities which web-based facilities can offer members of signing communities. The team had prioritised using funding to enable translation days, filming and production of DVDs (much of the pre-production work and all of the distribution of DVDs was undertaken by the Project Team itself). However, they were aware that, with investment, the website could facilitate fundraising, as well as be a more interactive interface between the project and the Deaf Community and other interested parties(such as through regular BSL newsletters and for generating feedback about the BSL texts). This was something that the team were keen to pursue.

d) Time

One of the undercurrents throughout the data presented in this section is a strong desire across the team to develop a greater sense of forward momentum, to find ways to work efficiently and effectively in order to make best use of resources and to generate a rolling programme of translation and publication of BSL Bible text. Such a way forward appeared to be something that the team were still reaching towards, rather than this being fully achieved by the time of this review period.

Team members reported that the initial approach was that the translation should take as long as necessary to do a good job; thoroughness and rigor were the priority. Reviewing the original translation process chart (appendix x), reveals that it was originally envisaged that each passage of text would take approximately twelve weeks from initial drafting to being accepted for the archive, ready for final filming. This has proved to be very far from the case. Team members reflected with some consternation on the way in which attention to detail and a desire to engage with the complexities of the task resulted in many hours of discussion occurring over months and years. For example, the first drafts of Mark 1:1-8 were

created in 2006 and only finalised in 2010. Additionally, no regular programme of focus groups had been established to enable clips to be reviewed on a regular basis.

Team members reported that, as their increased experience, they had found several ways to increase efficiency: they were better at spotting potential problems in the source text; they had been through the process of translation, review, and approval several times, so this was much clearer now; a distinct signing style has been developed; and the sign glossary was emerging with agreed new signs and signing strategies.

5.7 Issues still in Flux and Recommendations

As outlined in the introduction to this chapter, the five interviews with the team members took place at a particular juncture in life of the BSL Bible Translation Project. Specifically, they took place during a moment of pause following the production of their first DVD of Biblical text, Mark 1:1 – 3:6, before the team embarked in earnest on the next phase of the work. The interviews, therefore, were largely reflective and evaluative in nature and content. The data presented thus far reflects the exploratory tone of the interviews; data showing team members' deliberations regarding their own practice along with inherent aspirations, joys and constraints, including descriptions of a variety of features of the project's practice. In this section, I have brought together instances where practice appeared to still be in flux and/or awaiting clearer resolution. Because this thesis aims to facilitate reflection by, and inform the future practice of the Project Team, I have also included data where team members made specific recommendations about that practice. To provide continuity with the material above, these are arranged thematically.

5.7.1 Drafting

a) Communication Strategies

Several team members remarked upon their preference for the presence of a dedicated interpreter during the translation meetings (for the Bible scholar). This was recognised as increasing the cost of meetings but it was seen as vital that translators were working in a single language, BSL, rather than switching between languages in order to interpret

into/from English. Team members noted that any interpreter working in the project needs to be experienced in working with Biblical texts and ideas.

b) The Initial Spark

In each of the five interviews, some discussion took place around how to begin to generate new text, including finding ways to exploit the rich creative potential of BSL while balancing this with the need for accuracy. One conundrum explored was whether or not to begin with group work (the project's current way of working). One question around which there was some discussion was whether the Translation Team should continue to start with detailed exploration of the source text (function, theology and linguistics), or ask one or more Deaf team members to come to the session with a creative BSL rendering prepared, ready to sign to the team. Team members were of the opinion that maximum room should be given to generating creative, naturally expressive BSL texts, even if some tightening of the detail needs to happen to ensure that it is an accurate, as well as a natural, translation from the Greek. Team members seemed to be saying that they would like to try this approach as a counter-balance to the necessary focus on precision. It was also suggested that the skills and experience which had been accrued by team members, along with the prototype texts on the DVD, now published, meant that the style of the final text had been to some degree established. This, therefore, might allow the team to take a more experimental approach during the drafting phase.

Team members identified a potential problem with such an approach; that the Translation Team would find themselves constrained by the proposed text. This could occur because the quality of the text might close off other equally viable possibilities. Another potential area of concern was how Deaf team members would feel about any modifications suggested by the team. One team member suggested that this might depend on which individuals were involved; translators and presenters currently on-team were familiar and comfortable with this process of refining the text. Newcomers might find such a high degree of auditing and amendment of their text to be a new, and potentially unsettling, experience. This underlines the contrast between the project's process of collaborating to meticulously design a BSL text, and more general interpreting and translation work where a little more

flexibility is often permissible and where Deaf translators might not find themselves open to such detailed and personal critique. These discussions led to team members reflecting on their need to develop a clearer strategy for the induction and training of new translators.

c) Drafting to Camera

One strategy which the team had been experimenting with was having a camera, available to the team, in the translation meeting room. This allowed a more meticulous, verse-by-verse draft to be created during the team's discussions, to inform the presenter's preparation of the actual draft which would be filmed in the on-site studio. This was something that team members commented as a useful facility that they would like to keep for future work. This slower draft could also be of help to the other team members while they were monitoring the on-site studio filming.

A second feature of the draft filming which team members commented upon was the need for presenters to come out from their signing position (in front of the camera) to receive feedback on their performance. This was reported as allowing them to take on board any comments and prepare more fully, thereby increasing the likelihood of being able to deliver a 'fresh' rendering of the text.

d) Names of Draft Clips

One team member particularly remarked on how confusing their process can appear to outsiders because the team continually talk about 'draft' clips, when they are actually referring to clips at very different of stages of development. The framework suggested during interview was:

- Initial Draft: this would be the first draft created in-team, following discussion of theological, historical and linguistic considerations.
- Working Draft: this draft has been reviewed by the team at a later date and is considered to be of sufficient merit to be sent to focus groups, back-translators and for Biblical scholar comments.

- Approved or Final Draft: approved by the team, following detailed review of feedback and comments. This BSL text to be archived, ready for final filming preparation.

- Cue, Production or Pre-film Draft: created by the final presenter based on the Approved/Final Draft, and incorporating any additional notes generated earlier by the translation/review team. This would be the draft text which the presenter would then practice and memorise. It could also be used by the BSL monitor during final studio filming.

e) Continuity of Presenter across Drafts

Several team members expressed the opinion that changing the presenter from one draft to another increased the length of time which that passage would take to move from initial to final draft. This was seen as a product of several factors, such as changes in style/speed of presentation of the text, or presenters' comfort or lack thereof regarding particular signs which meant that changes or errors sometimes crept into the text. The BSL Bible Translation Project's method is predicated on the premise of being able to ask one signer to reproduce a draft created by another signer both accurately and with a fresh delivery, i.e. demonstrating a genuine sense of ownership of the text.

The data seems to show that the Project Team was still unsure how realistic this expectation is, despite having worked through the first section of Mark's gospel in this way. One team member suggested that further work was needed to confirm the viability of this method and suggested finding a particular clip to use as a test piece with a wide range of people who currently work as presenters, within and beyond the project, to establish the validity of the premise. If the team were to conclude that this was an unreasonable request, then they realised that their systems would need to change by establishing who would be presenting sections of text far earlier in the process than is currently the case.

5.7.2 Reviewing

a) Quality Control

Team members commented on the need to ensure that any video clip sent for review (back-translation, scholar comments and focus group feedback) is of sufficient quality to warrant the effort and cost of that review. A 'cooling off' period between initial drafting and in-team approval was seen as important as this meant that team members were able to bring fresh critical eyes to the piece. The Project Team were experimenting with using web-based data storage to enable team members to view the clips remotely, with the aim of increasing the efficiency of the review process.

Another important feature of the review process was ensuring that the clip had no more than three comments from the team regarding minor amendments required in any subsequent drafts. This was something that was commented upon as being an important maximum number; any more than this created difficulties in amalgamating everything correctly. When shorter clips are put together to create a longer flow of text, there is an accumulation of any various notes for amendments e.g. four clips with three notes each would mean that the presenter must make twelve amendments across the full piece of text. For future practice it was suggested that, prior to final studio filming, each presenter should have the opportunity to work with a colleague from the project on the creation of a final 'cue' draft which would incorporate all the necessary amendments. This person might then continue to act as the dedicated BSL monitor for that presenter for the final studio filming. As mentioned earlier, concern was expressed that there should be parity between the different presenters with regard to speed and intensity of signing. This specific feature might need to be incorporated into the team's work as all the draft clips are checked for continuity issues in the run up to the final production stage.

b) Back Translation

Some clips are short sections from a much larger piece of text. In such cases, the required context can be absent or difficult to deduce. A strategy for noticing when this is the case,

and for providing sufficient information for the back-translators was something which it was felt needed to be developed. Again, team members commented on the need to find more efficient ways for back-translators to access the video texts. This had proved difficult because of the data size of the video clips (too large to simply email) and because of concerns regarding security of information. One suggestion was to recruit someone with IT skills who could take responsibility for managing the movement of and access to the various edited clips and who might also manage their website.

5.7.3 Filming at Studio

a) Location

It had proved costly in time and finance to take a team of five people to London for two two-day sessions for the final studio quality filming. Team members felt that an alternative venue needed to be found for future filming; one that was geographically more convenient for the team. They saw this as offering several benefits to the team through reduced costs with regard to finance, time, and the physical demands of travelling.

b) Use of Auto Cue

Team members commented on the effectiveness of using an electronic autocue, rather than a paper system of notes and diagrams. They particularly valued the flexibility inherent in such a system to amend text, change font size, line spacing and speed of travel of the text. This allowed them to create a prompt that suited their individual requirements for sign production, and could be tuned to the needs of each passage of text, depending on the various demands of each clip. Team members contrasted this with the hours that it had previously taken to amend paper systems and draw new diagrams. They expressed the hope that electronic autocue facilities could be acquired for the Manchester filming room as this would greatly facilitate their future work.

5.7.4 Functionality of Product

For several team members the additional notes and glossary were remarked upon as being a very important feature of the BSL Bible text. This was something that enabled the team to

explain terms that were historically, culturally or theologically remote, and to provide greater context for the reader as to how concepts used in Mark related to other ideas and use in other parts of the Bible. What appears to still be unresolved is how large a resource the team want and are able to create; was this to be based on providing the minimum necessary for context and understanding, or a larger resource that would be more like a study Bible with commentary or encyclopaedia? This was described by team members as a compromise between factors such as technical skills, time and money, and the usefulness of such a resource in the opinion of the Deaf community. Ensuring that the Deaf community had the opportunity to comment upon the functionality of the text, as packaged, was reported as a high priority for the coming months. Establishing a more fluent, rolling programme of focus groups was also seen as a key item for development.

5.8 Summary of Data

As outlined in chapter 3, this study is a systematic exploration of, and reflection upon, the translation work of the BSL Bible Translation Project Team, charting new territory by examining the collaborative, hermeneutical text-design processes used by the team. This chapter, in conjunction with chapter 4, has sought to evidence the processes and practices of the BSLBTP team as understood and reflected upon by the members of the Project Team themselves. The data show the translation work being undertaken by the project to be a complex interweaving of practical, linguistic, epistemological, theoretical and theological influences and considerations. The data also show the Project Team to be working on the boundaries of what can be said to 'known' about signed languages and signed language translation, particularly with regard to Bible translation.

These data are offered for consideration by members of the Project Team itself and by other interested parties others such as translators, theologians, and colleagues from the social sciences and beyond. Reflections upon specific aspects emergent from the data follow below in Section 3.

Section 3 Reflections and Explorations

Having laid out the data generated at interview according to the themes that emerged inductively during the process of data analysis, this section seeks to reflect in depth on several aspects of those data. Great care was taken during the data analysis phase to ensure that those codes emerged inductively and genuinely represented nodes or mapping-points around which the concerns of the Project Team members themselves coalesced. Utilising those mapping-points or themes, a coherent presentation of the data was constructed from the various fragments and multiple topics that had been generated during the interviews, with the goal of enabling readers from within or beyond the project itself to learn directly from those data. This presentation was intended as a performative speaking about the project, that is, that the presentation itself would show ways in which the BSL Bible Translation Project is already theology in practice (Graham, 2002).

Having been immersed in the world of those data, I have had the opportunity to reflect over several months on a wide range of implications that might arise from them. Many of those reflections have been linguistic and practical, as might be expected from a review of a process of translation. Many translator-researchers also look beyond the linguistic, emphasising the multi-faceted nature of the translation task and highlighting social, political and technological dimensions that are inherent in any piece of translation work (Baker, 2006; Spivak, 1988; Cronin, 2002). However, the data presented above hold further implications arising from the material nature of signed texts and, therefore, these material aspects must also feature in these reflections.

Reflecting on the relationship between the translator and the tools and technologies available to her, Michael Cronin argues that

> In a properly integrated approach to translation, it is necessary to consider not only the general symbolic system (human language), the specific code (the language(s) translated), the physical support (stone, papyrus, paper, film), the means of transmission (manuscript, printing, digital communication) but also how translations are carried through societies over time by particular groups (Cronin, 2002).

The data presented in section two clearly shows team members reflecting upon: the nature of language; the relationship between the three specific languages across which they are working; issues of embodiment and transmission of texts; and the way in which Bible knowledge has been passed on within the Deaf community. The reflections which follow here also draw on several aspects identified by Cronin as they examine what the data above might have to tell us about:

1. principles that underlie text-design in British Sign Language –

    a. a proposal regarding cinematographic strategies in BSL text design

2. team translation method – exploring the use of Deaf space

3. the embodiment of messages and meanings – sacramental theology.

Chapter 6: BSL Text Design – the Cinematographic Principle

The data presented above show team members repeatedly commenting on the meticulous and collegiate manner in which the BSL Bible Translation Project Translation Teams have proceeded as they endeavoured to implement the hermeneutical and text design processes necessary to achieve a quality text in BSL. At various times and from a number of perspectives, they discussed the ways in which they were working to create a text that was consonant with the Greek source while also communicating in a natural and communicative manner in BSL. In particular, the data are rich with specific examples of intricate text-design choices being made by the Translation Teams which are influenced by the linguistic and material properties of BSL[49].

These features, either employed at the level of individual words or employed as larger scale narrative and discourse devices, foreground the way in which BSL takes on the role usually taken by that of the reader – that of visualisation of the picture or message which the source text is designed to generate. In some ways all translators take on the reader's role as they seek to unpack and repackage the source text. What we see from the data generated by this research is the way in which translators working into BSL find themselves visualising and embodying that picture in very concrete and strategic ways in order to address inherent visual, spatial and iconographic requirements.

From my earliest days as a student of BSL, my teachers tried to impress upon me the need to create a mental picture of what I was trying to say in order to frame the BSL text which I was seeking to generate. This was suggested as a clue to the kind of hand-shapes I might employ and in relation to grammatical features. A pertinent example would be the creation of an utterance about a man crossing a bridge; when drawing, one would usually draw a bridge and then add the man, likewise in BSL – first sign the bridge and then the person(s). However, a picture (or a map) is a static device, whereas SL-users create texts which are fluid and which change their focus and angle of view. To describe signed languages as pictorial or even iconographic only takes us part of the way.

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[49] See particularly section 5.5.1

Internationally, Signed Language research studies have examined many individual linguistic features such as: the use of classifiers (hand-shapes which act in the place of an aspect of a person or object) (Wilbur, Bernstein, & Kantor, 1985); prosodic markers (Ormel & Crasborn, 2012); and the use of numerals within signed utterances (Scott, 1996). Some studies have examined texts to see which and how many of these individual features might be utilised by different signers or storytellers to generate: characterisation (Rayman, 1999); anthropomorphism (Sutton-Spence & Napoli, 2010); and other narrative devices. What I wish to propose here is that many of these individual features come together in the hands of an author[50] creating a BSL (or other SL) text under an over-arching strategy or paradigm which I term the 'cinematographic principle'[51]. I would define this term, adapted from sources I will describe below, as:

> a specific approach to text-design, often acting sub-consciously, in which the centrality of the cinematographic as an underlying principle is assumed and which, therefore, acts to govern subsequent text-design choices.

This next section explores the etymology of my use of this term and then goes on to explain in detail what is meant by the term 'the cinematographic principle' and how this has emerged from and is evidenced by the data presented in section 2 of this thesis.

6.1 Cinematographic Features: The leap from literary and film studies to SL studies

The authorial use of the cinematographic imagination is something that is beginning to be studied by academics from the field of literary and translation studies. My first contact with this concept was through a conference presentation given by Karin Littau entitled 'Translating between Media'[52]. Within her wider discussion, she explored the use of the cinematographic imagination by a variety of authors of written texts. She gave examples of poems and prose where the author facilitates the reader's access to the world intended by

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[50] I am using the term 'author' here to refer to both an author of an original text and the work of a translator whose task can be framed as that of re-authoring a given text into a new language or medium.

[51] A compound from 'cinematic' – associated with film and moving pictures, and orthography – the material processes associated with writing, scribing and printing, or in this case, embodying.

[52] Presentation given as part of the conference 'Translating and Interpreting Across Media: Exploring the Relevance of (Inter)mediality for Language Pedagogy' held at The Manchester Conference Centre, 16 May, 2013 run by The Higher Education Academy in conjunction with The University of Manchester.

the writer by means of long-shot and close-up descriptive devices similar to those that would be associated with the medium of film. My instinct, from watching native BSL-users generating a range of texts (descriptive, instructional, narrative and poetic texts), was that cinematography might prove to be a useful framework to explore what takes place in the mind of an author who is working in a signed language.

Within the Gospel of Mark, cinematic devices as described by Littau such as long-shot and close-up are clearly evident. For example, in Mark 1:5, the narrator explains that people came from many different places (wide camera shot of the whole region), followed by direct dialogue enacted in first person (narrower shot, focussed on a smaller space: the River Jordan, perhaps a few hundred square metres). Simultaneously, the author of Mark makes use of a third-person narrator and then switches to first person narrative. At interview Translation Team members actively reflected on the ways in which the BSL Version is able to incorporate these features using very effective long-shot and close-up representational strategies, and by applying third person description and then enactment using role-shift and characterisation.

The strong relationship between the visual and the linguistic is no surprise to practitioners and academics working in the field of Signed Languages. Jennifer Rayman (1999), for example, highlights the way in which a Deaf person's adaptation to the world around them is shaped by the primacy of the visual. In her comparative study of story-telling strategies employed by hearing users of English and Deaf users of American Sign Language (ASL), she demonstrates the greater use of characterisation and manner of action in the narratives created by the users of ASL. She asserts that "this visual orientation to the world shapes their culture and the modality of their language that may in turn promote the value of vivid depictions in storytelling" (Rayman, 1999, p. 80). As the data from this research study demonstrates, BSL shares this same drive towards characterisation, towards the depiction of the manner of actions, and the explicitation of the relationships between characters, be they concrete or metaphorical.

Bauman and Murray (2010) likewise commend the cinematic nature of signed languages in the hands of fluent users, who they conceive of as film makers who are simply working in

the medium of Signed Language; utilising the human body, rather than film. They cite examples of a concrete biological process and a philosophical concept where the visual and spatial characteristics of signed language, ASL in their case, facilitate their representation. Interestingly, this is noted to be of use to both teacher and student because the teacher is able to provide a 'linguistic re-enactment' of the processes under discussion, thus benefitting the student by giving them access to the visual and spatial nature of what is taking place rather than relying on linear description.

However, not only is the teacher's work facilitated by the visual-spatial and representational characteristics of ASL, the authors also point us to an additional benefit accruing from the student's subsequent signed description of the process; that this would go some way to demonstrating the level to which they have grasped any number of aspects of the process, and thereby enable the teacher to give additional instruction, where necessary. In contrast, they note that a student's spoken response gives no such clues as to the detail of the student's actual understanding of the topic: "the speaking student could say, 'the chromosomes split,' whereas the signing biology student would reveal the internal mental images of her conception of how the chromosomes split visually and spatially" (Bauman & Murray, 2010, p. 218).

These story-telling features can all be viewed as one available strategy among many which lend support to the translator working in BSL as she seeks to represent any cinematic features present within any given source narrative. However, along with Stokoe (1960), I propose that these various features being employed by Signed Language users are actually specific out-workings of an over-arching principle: that of cinematography.

6.2 Cinematographic Features in the BSL Bible Translation Project Data

If we turn for a moment to the world of film and cinema and consider particular features which we might describe as cinematic, then long-shots, close-up-shots, and cuts from character to character or location to location spring to mind. Along with these come aspects within shot such as overall mood, affective attributes for specific characters, spatial relationships such as who is sat next to whom and so on, and the nature of any clothing and

artefacts occurring within the scene. Returning to the data presented in section 2, the parallels almost speak for themselves: within the framework of cinematography, the data from the BSL Bible Translation Project clearly show a range of BSL strategies employed in signed language text design which are inherently cinematic. Stokoe proposed that "the essence of sign language is to cut from a normal view to a close-up to a distant shot to a close-up again … exactly as a movie editor works" (Stokoe, 1960 cited in (Sacks, 1990, p. 90)). That is, signed language texts are characterised by an inherently cinematographic approach to text design and production.

What I have identified from my contact with this research data is that the cinematographic features being utilised by native sign language users as they create BSL texts coalesce around four very specific foci or ways of looking. I propose that these are:

1. use of large scale cinematic devices (long/close/pan-shot);
2. visualising a specific scene (who is sat where? what's the geography [physical, topographic, and political]?);
3. story-boarding through the scene as to which characters will be in-shot at any one moment (known as 'coverage'[53]) and for how long (a type of 'editing'); and
4. attention to intricate details, such as of the shape and size of a particular artefact, or the subtleties of an emotional response within a given interaction or scene.

The data show that, although Team Members did not use the actual terms 'cinematic' or 'cinematographic', BSL Bible Translation Project Team members were aware of the authorial use of some cinematic devices in Mark's gospel. Furthermore, the data show that they were enthusiastic about the suitability of BSL as a visual-spatial medium for translating the linear forms of the Greek source into such cinematographic features with great efficacy. They described ways in which they were exploiting the visual and spatial features of BSL to render in 4D, what often appears quite flat when rendered in linear forms of language, such as English or Greek. Examples from the data cover each of the four cinematic foci described above:

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[53] Gabriel Moura: http://www.elementsofcinema.com/directing/coverage.html, accessed 05/11/13(15:23)

1. Use of large scale cinematic devices (long/close/pan-shot). Mark 1:4-8 is a long-shot description of an area of wilderness, Judea (the area), Jerusalem (a city in Judea), followed by close up of John the Baptist by the River Jordan speaking to the crowds; Mark 6: 31, 32 – Jesus speaking to his disciples, followed by them setting off across a lake in a boat.

2. Visualising a specific scene (physical and political topography).

    a. Physical geography:

        i. large scale – Mark 1:4-9 'wilderness, Judea (the area), Jerusalem (a city in Judea), Nazareth (in Galilee)'; Mark 5:1-20 – Jesus and the disciples arrive by boat at Gerasa - lakeside area with hills and tombs beyond.

        ii. small scale – difference in eye-gaze for 'teaching' in synagogue (Mark 1:21) and in someone's home (Mark 2:2);

    b. metaphoric or political geography: location of various groups who were opposing Jesus' ministry (Mark 3:6); 'you' (disciples) cf. 'others ' (Mark 4: 11).

3. Story-boarding though the scene as to which characters will be in-shot at any one moment: on-going decisions throughout, including specific considerations about managing reported speech, such as when to stay in narrator and when to enact in first person;

4. Attention at the level of intricate detail (physical/emotional): 'took her by the hand', Mark 1:31; 'grain – thirty, sixty and a hundred grains', Mark 4:7; 'a lamp', Mark 4:21; 'beloved' and 'pleased', Mark 1:11; the manner of Jesus' preaching in Mark 1:15; his response to the Pharisees and to the man with the withered hand in Mark 3:5 .

By exploring the interview data using this cinematographic framework, it becomes clear that such features are central to text-design in BSL. Additionally, what these devices can accomplish in a BSL text is to create a rendering of the source which has a fundamentally different texture when compared against a written text.

In Mark 3:8, for example, the written text gives a rather long, linear list of places from which many people came (Judea, Jerusalem, Idumea, beyond the Jordan and the region around Tyre and Sidon). The data shows how a BSL version is able to use topographic mapping across the signing space to create a clear representation of the relative locations of each of those places, including any difference in height above sea level. Worth noting is that this particular example helps to reinforce the author of Mark's message that people came from great distances, in all directions, making explicit that these are not simply a list of the nearby villages. Additionally, this provides a potentially clearer link to Mark 1:45 'people came to him from every quarter' because BSL can employ the same directions for the people coming in both of these verses; the repeated visual information, potentially reinforcing the coherence of the message across the longer arc of the textual discourse. In other parts of the BSL Bible text we can clearly see whether the terrain was climbing gently up away from the coast (Mark 4:1), a cliff edge (Mark 5:13), a flat plain (Mark 1:5), or hill country (Mark 5:5). Team members commented positively on the way in which this spatial-mapping feature of BSL has the potential to restore some of what may well have been known to the first audience of the gospel texts but which is lost to modern understanding when the place names are simply delivered as a linear list.

In an example from phase one of this study (my time working with the team), Mark 4:11 was being discussed, where Jesus is contrasting what is being revealed to the disciples against how much is being revealed to the crowds. The BSL Bible text allows for this to be contrasted spatially in two ways: firstly, the disciples and some other followers are placed nearer to Jesus, showing them to be those who were called to be with him or were responding to his message, with 'them/others' placed at a greater distance; secondly, a degree of intimacy is created by use of eye-gaze, body movement and repetition to show Jesus imparting something over time to those seated near to him, contrasted with Jesus teaching 'them/others' with facial expression designed to denote their failure to comprehend. This shows the BSL Bible Translation Team finding ways to clearly denote the author of Mark's metaphorical contrasting of the two groups and re-posing the author's question as to which people received Jesus' message or were insiders or outsiders to God's kingdom; a key discourse for this gospel (Hooker, 1991).

Reflecting on the fourth way of looking described above 'attention to detail', BSL's ability to visually encapsulate artefacts which are foreign or remote from our modern, western industrialised culture also provides opportunities to re-capture, redeem and re-present various aspects of the culture in which the source text was created. In Mark 1:44, Jesus directs the man who had been healed to show himself to the 'priest'. The modern BSL sign for priest is visually linked to a white dog-collar as might be worn by a member of the clergy. Jewish priests in the first century would not have worn such an item. The BSL Bible text has used a sign which utilises a visual reference to the breastplate worn by the Jewish high-priest. While this was not considered to be ideal, the sign referenced an artefact that was historically and culturally accurate and also referenced a visual image of which some members of the Deaf community would be aware through coming into contact with visual images of first century Jewish priests during church services and Bible study groups. As with many decisions in the field of translation work, this was seen by Team members as a 'best fit' compromise to the issue; avoiding the dog-collar image and offering a hint of the religious and cultural context for the use of the term 'priest' that is not available to readers of English Bible texts. Other examples of historical and cultural artefacts which emerge from the interview data include 'lamp', 'roof', and 'net' (data section 5.5.1).

What this exploration shows us is the way in which the Translation Team members have been employing all four of these cinematographic perspectives or strategies as they have collaborated in the design of the BSL Bible texts. The data is replete with direct and indirect references to the meticulous and often time-consuming process that was required to bring together various team members' sometimes very disparate visualisations of various aspects of the scenes (along with all the necessary religious and cultural information) in order to create an agreed text. This mirrors the detailed work of the directorial and cinematography team as they negotiate the overall look, expected average shot-length, particular material aspects of the film, lighting, colour palette and so on, and agree the actual storyboarding for the film.

What was identified by Project Team members was the way in which the process was enabled and enriched by those Project Team members with high level BSL poetic skills; Deaf

people who, as described by Jennifer Rayman, "through … precise performance, [can] animate space and imbue it with symbolic content, enacting spatial relationships in ways beyond simple assertion" (Rayman, 2007, p. 77).

At this point, it is important to note that my use of the term cinematographic does not infer that BSL text-design is simply a 'picture-language' or about acting/mime, nor should it detract in any way from the fact that BSL is first, last, and always, a language. Having reflected on the data generated during this research study, my assertion is simply that I believe that native BSL-users instinctively create texts under the governance of a cinematographic principle. As a consequence of their own visual-orientation in the world and with an equally visually-orientated reader in mind, they employ *as standard* the various features explored here because they are fundamentally necessary. That is to say that many of the grammatical features of Signed Languages, including BSL, have been understood individually (classifiers, directional verbs, prosodic markers), without the understanding of the underlying principle which governs their utilisation. The data presented here appears to indicate that grammatical features such as hand-shape, orientation, movement, placement, role-shift and so on all serve the SL author in accomplishing a produced text that is governed by an over-arching, inherently cinematographic principle.

6.3 Cinematographic Features: Implications for Interpreter Training and Deaf Education

6.3.1 Implications for Interpreter Training

It is obvious to even the most untrained eye that BSL makes use of hands and bodies moving through space to create something that resembles a 'picture'. The vast linguistic and creative resources being utilised by the author of a BSL text continue to be uncovered as Deaf people, often in liaison with non-Deaf people, examine and reflect upon those text-design processes. Opponents of Signed Languages have often conceptualised these texts as the equivalent of simple line drawings such as those which might act as a pre-cursor to writing. What becomes clear in light of the data presented here is that the structure and content of signed language texts is designed far more intentionally and generated more strategically than has often been appreciated, in a deliberate and multi-layered authorial

process that mirrors the very detailed work of the film director, editor or cinematographer. Furthermore, the texts thus created can be highly sophisticated narrative devices, as can be seen from the BSL Bible texts generated by this project[54].

Deaf participants in Christopher Stone's research (2009) commented on the marked difference they perceived to exist between the mental pictures which they believe Deaf and non-Deaf people generate in response to a source text. In particular, they expressed concern for the limits which those mental pictures, influenced by life in an aural-oral rather than a visual-spatial cultural context, then place upon a non-Deaf person's ability to generate a target text of sufficient 'naturalness'. Stone goes on to argue for the introduction of Deaf models of translation practice within training curricula for both Deaf and non-Deaf translators and interpreters. He posits that this would "facilitate T/Is, both Deaf and hearing, in relating to the Deaf audience (television or otherwise) and situating themselves as understanding and presenting Deaf thinking in their signed language TL[55]" (Stone, 2009, p. 172). Following his argument for greater focus on Deaf translation norms, the systematic use of the cinematographic principle which appears to be in operation within the BSL-using community may prove to be one useful tool if it can be instrumentalised in the training of interpreters and translators and for second-language learners of BSL. Employing a structured approach to target text design which specifically utilises the four strategies identified above may provide students with new conceptual tools around which to structure the design and production of their target texts. That is, the use of cinematography as the basis for the analysis of BSL texts and as a purposeful strategy within text-design, rather than simply aiming for the creation of a series of static pictures, should facilitate second-language BSL-users in their production of BSL texts which should, in turn, exhibit a greater degree of consonance with texts that would be produced by native-users.

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[54] I believe that this principle is generalizable across register and discourse types, however, variations in the degree of complexity remain to be explored.
[55] TL: Target Language

6.3.2 Implications for Deaf Education

Within the field of Deaf education, a cinematographic focus for text production could prove to be a productive and affirming literacy strategy. Students could reflect on their own stories or those of others, examining these for particular features drawn from the four-fold typology given above. These explorations could then be used to facilitate the children's own text production. A further extension of this could include the use of graphic techniques such as drawing and mapping, through the use of pencil and paper or by utilising 3-D imaging software. For example, 3-D modelling programmes such as 'sketchup'[56] allow the user to create virtual worlds which can be manipulated on-screen to vary the size and relative location of any objects or persons with which the frame has been populated, including the facility to change camera angle and relative closeness of shot. These allow the students to manipulate the image and explore the implications for their BSL text designs.

Teaching strategies which take as their launching point the cinematographic, 4-D visual world of the d/Deaf child, may well prove fruitful for facilitating d/Deaf children in their explorations of the underlying building blocks of narrative structure while simultaneously affirming the validity of their ontology as primarily visual beings in the world. Other benefits of such an approach would accrue, including providing strategies and opportunities for bridging the gap between their mental film- and image-making processes and the signed or written text.

What such proposals require, however, is that those involved in creating the curricula and lessons to implement such a strategy have a significant level of understanding of the narrative frameworks that would be indigenous to a visual-spatial world-view, along with the ability to reflect on their own BSL text production from a cinematographic perspective. Considering that the majority of Teachers of the Deaf in the UK are themselves drawn from the non-Deaf community and, therefore, lack the indigenous understanding necessary, this is a big ask. It is possible to qualify as a teacher of the Deaf in the UK with minimal BSL skills

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[56] http://www.sketchup.com/

and qualifications[57] which would not equip one with the necessary skills or understanding to undertake the significant shift in approach which would be required. In contrast, Kristin Snodden, reporting on research work in Canada, has evidenced the valuable role which native sign-language-users can occupy in relation to the advancement of a range of aspects of d/Deaf children's literacies (Snodden, 2010). Although in Snodden's research, Deaf people were instrumentalised as part of a wider strategy to bring together linguistic and technological resources, Deaf Teaching staff could certainly take the lead in devising and implementing a cinematographic approach within the curriculum for the education of d/Deaf children (perhaps also drawing on the work of Deaf poets, story-tellers and presenters)[58].

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[57] For example, the MA Deaf Education (Teacher of the Deaf) qualification offered by The University of Leeds requires students to attend a course which is the equivalent of CACDP Level 2 (http://www.education.leeds.ac.uk/postgraduates/taught-postgraduates/ma-deaf-education-distance-learning-teacher-of-the-deaf-qualification/). This is GCSE-equivalence at best and, therefore, provides a basic grounding of "functional communication in BSL about a range of real life, routine and daily experiences" (www.signature.org.uk/british-sign-language#L2). Other institutions require only Level 1 which is a basic introduction to conversational use of BSL, see http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/postgraduate/courses/distance/edu/teachers-hearing-impairment.aspx#LearningAndTeachingTab).

[58] See also Ladd, forthcoming, *Seeing Through New Eyes: Deaf Pedagogies and the Unrecognised Curriculum*, New York: Oxford University Press.

Chapter 7: A Deaf Pedagogy of Translation

Having explored the data from the perspective of a visual-spatial linguistic framework (the cinematographic principle), this next chapter seeks to step back a little further from the 'what' and the 'why' of specific translation decisions. It reflects on some of the 'how' of the BSL Bible Translation Project Team's working practices, exploring the social, theological and political drivers which seem to be at work, and considers the implications of/what we can learn from the team's praxis. The data presented above show that BSL Bible Translation Project Team members were acutely aware of the political, linguistic and even existential debates within which their work was taking place. In this section, I will seek to lay out some of the ways in which the practices of the BSLBTP can be seen to be influenced by and acting to challenge those debates.

The BSL Bible Translation Project: a Deaf Space?

The working environment of the BSL Bible Translation Project is a place of collaboration between Deaf and non-Deaf professionals[59]. The working practices of the project have been purposefully constructed in relation to language use and cultural norms; primacy of use of BSL and the expectation of working face-to-face in ways which reflect and affirm Deaf culture. Taken together these features of the Project Team praxis resemble what Liberation Theologian, Hannah Lewis refers to as 'Deaf space'; where primacy is given to both the language and culture of the Deaf community and where "Deaf people feel safe to be and find themselves" (Lewis, 2007, p. 180). Within the specific context of translation, Lewis believes that a further feature of Deaf space should be that "hearing people will give extra weight to the view of a Deaf person in discussion about sign language and translation" (Lewis, 2007, p. 180).

Baumann and Murray also reflect upon the notion of Deaf space, recommending this as a potentially rich field for future academic enquiry. They describe Deaf spaces as being designed to facilitate signed language use and to embody Deaf cultural aesthetics – with

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[59] See data; section 5.3.2

consideration given to such features as quality of light, proximity of signers and visual reach (Bauman & Murray, 2010).

7.1. Language Use

What emerges very clearly from this data is that the way in which the BSL Bible Translation Project Team negotiates and functions with regard to the languages employed by them has been a significant feature of the project's praxis. BSL is not only the target language into which they are working but is employed as the primary language during team meetings and discussions. It is evident from the data that this is more than a pragmatic concern to facilitate the quality of the target text by working in the target language. It appears to be a conscious decision born out of the epistemological commitment of the Project Team; the belief that the language we use shapes what and how we know and that BSL must be, therefore, the language of use if all team members are to be able to bring themselves fully and equally to the meetings. Its primacy of use across the project, including during translation sessions, appears to be designed to re-balance the historic oppression of that language and its users.

In the data above, Team members describe how they had tried to ensure that everyone's opinion was heard; that individuals had been willing to divest status from their other roles within or beyond the project, such as a trustee's opinion carrying no greater weight than that of any of the other translators. They recount how hearing members of the team pro-actively sought to defer to Deaf team members with regards to the subtle intricacies of BSL, so that they were the final arbiters of the text. That is, that they would actively challenge drafts that seemed "clunky," overly influenced by English, or to not fully represent the source, while self-consciously seeking to work in such a way as to ensure that the status of Deaf team members was always that of the primary source of knowledge for how something should be signed. Working in this way hierarchies appear to be minimised and respect is fostered for each member's particular skills and command of language(s), thereby liberating those skills to be brought to bear equally upon the translation task. Consequently, their implementation of this policy both honours Deaf people as the prime carriers of BSL, and

demonstrates that BSL is sufficient to the varied and demanding tasks of strategic project management and of theological and linguistic discussion.

7.2 Deaf Cultural Norms

Another related feature of the translation discussions is that the geography of their working practice is culturally informed[60]. That is, the translation discussions take place in-person, and in rooms set up to facilitate face-to-face, signed communication; in an arc or circle of chairs, with or without tables (depending on the need to utilise printed materials). Team members noted that the translation project could have been set up in such a way as to actively minimise face-to-face working and to do the majority of its work online; acting much more in the role of editor of community-generated signed language texts, rather than seeking to generate its own material. They also reflected on the significant cost savings that could be generated by working more remotely, via web-based technologies such as video-conferencing and digital file-sharing. However, the translation work has been set up to be undertaken face-to-face, allowing for quality person-to-person encounter, and thereby reflecting Deaf norms.

7.3 Deaf Space: Examples from other settings

Academics reflecting on problems of relative language status with regard to bi-lingual education have described how, "in the vacuum created by the absence of any proactive validation of their linguistic talents and accomplishments, bilingual students' identities become infested with shame" (Cummins, 2000, p. 13). Barbara Kannappell also identifies this problem and offers a solution. She notes how Deaf people's linguistic identity is often determined by the requirements of the non-signing majority. "The word "English" is strongly attached to [a] hearing person, so a deaf person tries to communicate on a hearing person's terms - using voice or signing in English order or both" (Kannapell in Wilcox, 1989 p.27). She further argues that Deaf people need to "respect ourselves as deaf persons and respect our language first, [then] we can share what the deaf world means to us with other deaf and hearing people" (Kannapell in Wilcox, 1989 p.27). In their reflection on their

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[60] See data; section 5.5.4

experience of working bilingually and bi-culturally to teach English, Humphries, Martin and Coye (1989) remark on the transformational nature of collaborative spaces; those that genuinely seek to empower each member of the team, regardless of first language or second language status. Humphries *et al* reported their Deaf students developing new understandings of themselves, not as 'different, handicapped, or deficient' but as competent language learners and users when learning in an environment that fully acknowledges the difference between languages while working hard to ensure equality of status (Humphries et al, in Wilcox, 1989 p.131). When a Deaf person joined their teaching team, they "began to model cross-cultural interaction [which] went far beyond simply always signing to each other. What [they] were able to model is how deaf and hearing people can accept and respond to differences" (Humphries, Martin, & Coye, 1989, p. 130).

They reported that "students began to talk about English as a skill they need, not an imposition they must resist" (Humphries, Martin, & Coye, 1989, p. 132), something that contrasts sharply with much that is reported about d/Deaf children and adults' attitude to English[61].

7.4 The BSL Bible Translation Project: Deaf Space - Facilitating Meta-linguistic Reflection

The approach of the BSL Bible Translation Project Team has been a self-consciously liberatory one: to value BSL and even give it superior status, thus demonstrating what De Clerck posits as one form of Deaf epistemology; "emancipation oriented, and motivated by the wish of deaf people to live equal lives and to live up to their potential" (De Clerck, 2010, p. 436). The journey towards emancipation - coming out from under the hegemonic narrative of the Deaf self and Deaf language as somehow 'less than'- is a thread which has been interwoven throughout this research and will be re-visited in the next chapter in relation to the suitability of Deaf bodies to mediate the holy. Here, it is worth noting that the data from this project, along with the experiences of other practitioners such as Kannapell and Lewis, show us that the journey towards positive self-identity and agency can

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[61] For example, see: Sutherland H, and Young AM, *'Hate English! Why…' Signs and English from deaf children's perception. Results from a preliminary study of deaf children's sign bilingual education*, 2007, Deafness and Education International, vol 9 (4), 197-213; Harmon, K., *Writing Deaf: Textualising Deaf Literature*, Sign Language Studies, vol 7 number 2, Winter 2007, 200-207 Gallaudet.

be facilitated by the creation of Deaf spaces such as that hoped for by Lewis and others and found in the BSL Bible Translation Project.

The Project Team's approach to the work of translation (paying deliberate attention to the linguistic and cultural environment in which it takes place) was remarked upon by team members as both demanding and transformative: demanding cognitively, emotionally and financially; and transformative –generating new learning by individuals and by the team. Indeed, the data is clear: both Deaf and non-Deaf team members remarked that they had experienced personal growth and even transformation as a result of being a participant in the life of the project.

Theologian Emmanuel Lartey asserts that "one of the best ways, in theological terms, of gaining clear sight is *collective seeing* or *comparing visions*" (Lartey, 2000, p. 173). The data from the BSL Bible Translation Project clearly support that assertion. However, this is more than simply a 'two heads are better than one' scenario. Throughout the text-design processes occurring within the project, team members have demonstrated linguistic self-awareness, creativity and purposefulness of the highest order. Such competencies resonate with the work of Paul and Wang who define literate thought as "the ability to think creatively, logically, rationally and reflectively" (Paul & Wang, 2012). The data indeed show Deaf people's capacity to reflect upon, analyse and critique their own use of language from both a meta- and micro-linguistic perspective. They are working with narrative arcs, issues of translation of remote cultural concepts and artefacts, representation and characterisation, the construction of forms of negation, finding solutions for the use of the vocative case, and making distinctions between very subtle differences in the semantic range of phrases and signs that they are employing to meet the needs of a particular section of text, along with a myriad of other fine details. All of this is taking place in a language with no written form, within the theological arena of the translation of sacred Biblical texts from an ancient Greek source. Having considered all those things, the Project Team are then wrestling with filming and technological aspects of their work – all through the use of BSL as the medium and language of reflection and discussion.

In conclusion, the data from this research gives us a glimpse into the high levels of literate thought and linguistic creativity extant within the Deaf community in the UK. It also highlights how effectively those skills can be brought to bear within a non-oppressive working environment. Such detailed, deliberate and self-conscious reflection on language use emerges from the interplay of the requirements of the translation process itself, and the quality of the space which the Project Team appears to create; a generous space which facilitates creativity, being and learning.

Thus far, this thesis has focussed upon the processes involved in the specific context of the BSL Bible Translation Project. This next chapter seeks to contextualise Signed Language Bible Translation and the texts produced thereby, through the exploration of some of the material issues that are brought to the fore by the embodied nature of the translation processes and the resultant texts.

Chapter 8: Text and Sacrament – Mediating Grace

Throughout Christian history, theologians have wrestled with the relationship between the *logos*, (word, message of God, second person of the trinity), the historical person of Jesus Christ, and the status of the orthographic and oral presentation of the words of the Bible (*biblios*). For theologians such as Rudolph Bultmann, Christ is present in the preached word. For others, Christ is present in the liturgical life of the assembled people of God (e.g. Second Vatican Council, 1962). Having come from the Evangelical wing of the church, I have always believed that there was a strong correlation between the printed words and the speaking of God. This chapter does not seek to solve this issue definitively but rather seeks to explore what the existence of Signed Language Bible texts might add to our understanding of the material nature of God's self-expression which comes to us through the created order, through people, and through the Bible.

8.1 God Who Comes To Us

God's self-disclosure is foundational to Christian Theology. As Gerald O'Collins summarises, "Christians believe that through the history of the Old and New Testaments the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit are *disclosed* as a God who cares for us with an infinitely merciful love. Christianity is a *revealed* religion" (O'Collins, 2001, p. 54) (emphases mine). Despite God's transcendent nature, Christians believe that God chooses to communicate himself to us as a generous act of invitation to person-to-person encounter. In this, God is always the initiator; the trajectory always begins in the triune heart of God. As John Macquarrie reminds us "in any encounter with God, he has the initiative" (Macquarrie, 1997, p. 6). These next sections explore that revelatory trajectory, God's self-disclosure, in relation to the created order and human beings, Jesus Christ and the Bible.

8.1.1 The Created Order: Things and People

The Bible tells us and the catholic creeds affirm that "God created the heavens and the earth"[62]. Christians believe that God expresses something of his very nature by the creation *ex nihilo* of the material world of which we find ourselves a part, including that which is seen and that which is not. William Temple, former Archbishop of Canterbury, articulated an important balance to be maintained in our thinking about God when he stated that God "is *transcendent* over the universe, which owes its origin to his creative act, and which he sustains by his *immanence* in it" (Temple, 1940, p. 478). The created world is thus understood to be valued by God and sustained by him moment by moment. Likewise, the salvation which God has effected and is effecting will benefit the created world as well as the people on whom God has set his heart[63]. This understanding of Christian doctrine is important for this thesis because it highlights of the value that God places upon that which is material and reminds us of the dangers of teachings which would urge us to shun the material, including the very bodies which God has woven for us.

Human beings are made in the image of God, yet are bound to and part of the temporal, material world which God has created; bearing the *imago Dei* yet not divine. At various times throughout Christian history, the human body has been the locus of suspicion and its status as a source of spiritual revelation has been the subject of fierce theological debate. For some, such as the Gnostics and the Ascetics, the body is something to be shunned in order to more effectively pursue the spiritual life. Orthodox Christianity (by which I mean the centre-ground of Christian belief) has always argued that the body is an integral part of human experience of life and, therefore, of our encounter with God. With the renewed interest in Sacramental Theology during the 20th Century, theologians have begun to affirm afresh the importance of the body as the means by which all experience of God and other is mediated to us. As Louis-Marie Chauvet explains, "what is most spiritual always takes place

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[62] Gen 1:1, and affirmed in both The Apostles and the Nicene Creeds, see:
http://www.vatican.va/archive/ccc_css/archive/catechism/credo.htm
[63] Salvation that was effected by the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, continues to be effected and will be brought to fruition at the *parousia*.

in the most corporeal" (Chauvet, 2001, p. xii). Therefore, our bodies can be "open to the possibility of transcendence" (Brown, 2007, p. 12).

8.1.2 The Incarnation

This thesis began with prayer and scripture that celebrated the Incarnation: the *logos,* the very Word of God who has come-in-person in Jesus Christ "who became human for our sake and adopted a bodily identity that continues into his present existence" (Brown, 2007, p. 427). The Chalcedonian Definition of 451 CE declares the person of Jesus Christ to be "fully human and fully divine". The incarnation, then, is an integrative act; bringing together perfectly the material and the divine without conflating either. Christ's passion, his dying, his entombment and resurrection, were supremely physical and spiritual events. While Jesus himself said that it was good for us that he physically leave us to return to the Father (and, thus send the Holy Spirit to lead us into all truth), he instituted the Eucharistic celebration as the corner-stone of on-going Christian practice; a practice that is both deeply material *and* spiritual.

21st Century Catholic theologian, Edward Schillebeeckx, argues that the sacraments of the Church act as the "earthly prolongation of Christ's glorified bodiliness [and are, therefore,] not things but encounters" between humanity and the glorified Christ (Schillebeeckx, 1963, p. 44). In thinking about the nature of sacrament, a distinction needs to be made between the general notion of sacramentality that can be found in hymns and in other religious and philosophical thought, and the specifically Christian understanding of Sacraments. For the Christian, a sacrament is understood as being "an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace"[64]. John Macquarrie explains that "the goal of all sacramentality and sacramental theology is to make the things of this world so transparent that in them and through them we know God's presence and activity in our very midst, and so experience his grace" (Macquarrie, 1997, p. 1). This points us towards sacraments not as channels of the substance known as 'grace' but rather that they are liminal or 'thin' spaces of encounter where a blurring of the edges and distinctions between the material and the spiritual occurs.

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[64] http://anglicansonline.org/basics/catechism.html

After all "'grace' is not some subtle substance but is 'God's presence and his very self' in his outreach towards us" (Macquarrie, 1997, p. 18).

8.1.3 The Bible – a Text in Motion

The opening chapter of this thesis suggested that the Bible is not as frozen a text as it might at first appear. After Brodie (2013), I posited the notion that it might constitute an originarry text which has experienced a whole sequence of fresh iterations across many centuries. Each new iteration has drawn upon the linguistic resources available within the various target languages in the attempt to re-present these ancient biblical texts to their new audience.

Gordon Oliver summarises the view of many Christians when he tells us that the Bible is "the Word of God in human words … human as well as holy and this simple fact raises lots of questions about what kind of thing the Bible is and how the Word of God and the words of scripture relate to one another" (Oliver, 2006, p. xv).   In trying to explain the relationship between the human writers of the Bible and the Divine, he points us to the notion of superintendence; that God has watched over/inspired the writers and collators of what currently constitutes a 'Bible'.

In his lecture on the materiality of writing (May, 2010[65]), Peter Stallybrass pointed us to the paintings of Caravaggio to illustrate how the inspiration of the Bible has been understood historically. In Caravaggio's original, intimate painting 'St. Matthew and the Angel', St. Matthew is depicted as a rugged man whose hand is being guided by an angel as he forms the letters and words on the page with the angel effectively breathing the words into his ear[66]. Considered to be far too fleshy and unrefined an image, he was asked to create a second painting. In this version, an angel can be seen dictating to St. Matthew and enumerating on his fingers what presumably are the stories that need to be told or the points that need to be made[67].   Alternatively, Albrecht Durer's picture of St. John receiving

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[65] Lecture given in the series 'Materials and Materiality' at The University of Manchester, 05 May 2010.
[66] http://www.oilpaintingexpress.com/content/10-lost-paintings-9-caravaggios-saint-matthew-and-angel
[67] http://www.artbible.info/art/large/206.html

his revelation depicts him eating a scroll and the words then being transferred onto a book at his feet[68].

These images, though metaphoric in nature, show us something about some of the historic understandings of how the Bible came to us; through the work of human beings who were divinely inspired by God directly or through his agents, the angels. What they show is that, despite the word-centric, orthographic fixation of more recent centuries, there has always been the need for a human intermediary, a body, a person to act as the bridge or mediator between the intention and expression of God and those who are to receive or encounter that expression. Those intermediaries have included saints, prophets, scribes, priests and Biblical scholars along with many others such as translators, printers and creators of digital Bible versions.

8.2 God Who Comes to Us: The Enfleshed Word

What this survey has traced is the way in which God's expression of self has taken many forms such as the created order, the lives of human beings (many ordinary and one uniquely human and divine), and through the scriptures (passed down by word of mouth and eventually committed to scroll, to paper and to digital forms). Rather than a Bible being a frozen text, it has been re-breathed and re-animated across the centuries, moving at last into Signed Language forms such as that of the texts produced by the BSL Bible Translation Project Team.

The work of the BSL Bible Translation Project Team and the existence of other Signed Language Bible texts (American SL, Japanese SL, Spanish SL and so on) unsettle any tendency towards a purely word-centric, orthographic approach to our understanding of the self-expression of God. Too often arguments have become polarised between Word and Sacrament, speech and embodiment, and the written and enacted or performed Word. Louis-Marie Chauvet (2001) argues for a rich appreciation of the inter-relatedness of each - word, sacrament and action, reminding us that "the scriptures are his (God's) spokesperson, his representative, therefore, his sacrament" (Chauvet, 2001, p. 28). While Chauvet argues

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[68] http://www.royalcollection.org.uk/collection/800141/the-apocalypse-st-john-devouring-the-book

for these three concepts to act as poles with space between within which the Christian has space to act, the data from this research indicates that such distinctions may in fact be more descriptive than real. That is, the embodied nature of Signed Language Bible texts brings together all three concepts – word, sacrament and action – in one single, integrative event. Here the 'word' is expressed (by a single person on behalf of the interpretative community) in a visual-spatial, corporeal medium that acts to mediate the speaking of God to those who receive the message[69]. In Signed Language Bible texts the speaking of God becomes once more a text-in-motion.

The net effect of such a theological understanding of Signed Language Bible texts is to raise the status of Deaf bodies, which have historically been pathologized, to their rightful dignity as entirely fitting material to carry both the image and the speaking of God. Returning to the work of Caravaggio, his first image of St. Matthew was rejected because of its rugged physicality, a rejection that resonates with d/Deaf and disabled people's experience; that 'perfect' bodies have been considered worthy to represent God's working in the world, while d/Deaf and disabled bodies have not (Lewis, 2007). As Nicola Slee reminds us, although the gospels are generally uninterested in Jesus' physical appearance, over the centuries "we have tended to project onto Christ cultural assumptions of beauty, so that Christ has usually been depicted in terms of idealized human – and particularly - masculine form" (Slee, 2008, p. 37). In Signed Language Bible texts we see the affirmation of Deaf bodies and Deaf lives as worthy mediators of God's word. Deaf bodies,

> *wherein the glory of thy power shineth*
> *… limbs rarely poised and made for heaven*
> (Brown, 2007, p. 12).

Such enfleshed texts disturb our word-centric approach to the Bible and cause us to re-consider the relationships between the material and the spiritual, and where the balance

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[69] As one of the Vatican II documents states "He is present in his word since it is himself who speaks when the holy scriptures are read in church" (Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, no 7 in Vatican ii, *The Basic Documents,: Constitutions, Decrees, Declarations*, rev. trans. In inclusive language, ed. Austin Flannery (Northport, NY: Costello, 1996, p.121) cited in Chauvet (2001), p.28.

may actually lie between and within Chauvet's three categories of word, sacrament and action.

8.3 In Conclusion: Incarnational and Sacramental Texts?

Signed Language Bible texts bring to the fore the sacramental nature of the word of God because they offer a fresh iteration of God's Word that bring together the human and the Divine and mediate the speaking of God. Such texts can, therefore be said to be incarnational and sacramental.

Chapter 9: Conclusion

This research has sought to explore and evidence the work of the BSL Bible Translation Project Team, as a means to future growth and development within the team and for the benefit of others who may find themselves engaged in similar work. My hope is that the data-set presented in section 2 of this thesis will act as a useful resource to facilitate reflection within and beyond the Project Team.

This study has provided clear evidence of high-level literate thought taking place not in spoken or written English but in British Sign Language. This literacy is evident in the creativity and reflexivity demonstrated by Team Members both during translation sessions and at interview. It has also highlighted afresh the cinematographic nature of Signed Languages and has sought to offer a typology for future exploration and study of the text-design processes utilised so effectively by native users of those languages.

The data show a team of people who have gone out of their way to create an authentic Bible text which is equally authentically a Deaf text. The Project Team have gone about this task in a rigorous and collaborative way. As Jim Cummins has noted, when language practice and pedagogy are utilised to "affirm the experiences and cultures of the students and communities who speak those languages, this in itself challenges the discourse of superiority and devaluation that characterizes social relations between these communities in the wider society" (Cummins, 2000, p. 10). Consciously or not, the work of the BSL Bible Translation Project Team reflects a trinitarian approach where unity is both assumed at the start and is the end-point towards which we strive (Cantalamessa, OFM Cap, 2007).

Having explored the means by which the BSL text is generated, I conclude that the BSL Bible text certainly appears to have the capacity to carry the gospel message. How it is received and used by members of the Deaf community falls outside the purview of this research. My research work with the Project Team enables me to recommend the text to the Deaf community as one which has been meticulously and lovingly crafted. May it bear Christ's message to you.

Appendices & Accompanying Material

Collaborative Doctoral Studentship Bid

BSL Bible Translation Project/Doctor of Practical Theology, University of Manchester

Project Title
Study and evaluation of a process of Biblical translation and itsimpact on community identity: a case-study in contextual hermeneutics.

Outline of Proposed Project

The BSL Bible Translation Project
British Sign Language (BSL) is the preferred language of 50,000–70,000 Deaf people, for whom English may be a second or third language. At least 250,000 hearing people who have a proficiency in the language also use it. BSL is a visual/spatial language, which is governed by its own grammatical rules, using hand shapes, hand movements and facial expressions to convey meaning. More people (Deaf and hearing) use BSL than speak Welsh or Gaelic. On 18 March 2003, BSL was recognised by Parliament as a national minority language of the United Kingdom. Deaf people in the UK exist within the majority culture, but are also part of their own community, with its own language and culture. This Deaf community varies in its ability to access the written English of wider society. Deaf people often refer to the period from the late 1960s onward as a 'renaissance' of Deaf culture, as they have become more involved in challenging wider societal discourses. This has found expression in linguistic and, more recently, cultural research into Deaf people's language and community and helped to improve access to services and provision in sign language.

Deaf Christians in the UK have never had access to the Bible in their own language. They rely on interpretations from English, largely done 'on the spot' in Christian gatherings. Deaf people are becoming more involved in mainstream Church life and as their confidence in their language and skills increase, so does their need to be equipped to reflect theologically on their own sacred texts. At present this has to take place entirely in what could be considered their 'second' language, and so the BSL Bible Translation Project will give the UK Deaf community a Bible in their own language, for the first time. The Project aims to produce a translation acceptable to all major Christian denominations. The Deaf community will lead and be stakeholders in the process to ensure a translation that is linguistically accurate and culturally aware. Translation will be done by teams of experienced Deaf and hearing translators who are bilingual in both English and BSL, advised by experts in Biblical hermeneutics.

BSL is a naturally evolving language of the Deaf community with no written form. This means that the Bible in BSL will be produced in digital video form and delivered through a range of media, which is likely to include Internet, DVD, personal computer and mobile technologies. This Project has developed a business plan which sets out workable

stages: the initial objective of the project will be to translate the Gospel of Mark into BSL by the year 2011 (to coincide with the 400th anniversary of the translation of the King James Bible). In addition to this, a book from the Hebrew Bible will be translated, and work on these first two books will establish the formal process of the bulk of the project work beyond 2011. The cycle of translation and consultation is implemented on a 10-12 week cycle, including all the steps of community consultation within the translation process.

The research project
The proposal is for a collaborative research studentship to study and evaluate a process of Biblical translation and its impact on community identity as a case-study in contextual hermeneutics.
The research project has strong correspondence with aims and themes of the Religion and Society programme and it offers the following: a unique case study of the impact of a sacred text on a minority community, and that community's impact on the interpretation of the text; an investigation of a methodology for the analysis and visual representation of sacred texts; a development of user-led research; a development of interdisciplinary themes and approaches in the fields of linguistics, cultural studies, translation theory, theological and Biblical studies and technological applications and in the emerging field of Deaf Studies; a contribution to public awareness in wide consultation using existing networks and new ones, and in the dissemination of the Project's product.

The research project lies within the research theme 'Texts, Spaces, Rituals and Objects' (with some crossover in aspects of Identity and Community, Religion and Media, and Education and Socialisation). It offers the opportunity to review and critique the methodologies of biblical translation and end-user involvement within the BSL Bible Translation Project, as a case study in the relationship between sacred texts and cultural identity. The intellectual issues to be addressed include the hermeneutical approaches that are used in translating from a written and spoken language into a visual-spatial language; the relationship of a somatic, embodied text and the 'performative' theologies of Deaf Christians; and impact on cultural identity when individuals and groups receive texts for the first time in their own language. The study may also include a comparison between the particular reading strategies of Deaf Christians and other liberationist and practical theologies which stress the theological significance of context and experience.

As a participant and observer in a number of regional translation teams, and as a member of the panel reviewing the reception of the work, the researcher will have an overview of the translation and reception of the whole of the first book (the Gospel of Mark) in the Project, and of the pilot stages of a book of the Hebrew Bible throughout September 2007-August 2010. The ongoing dissemination to a network of BSL users (using a dedicated web-site and an e-mail discussion group) of the researcher's critique, in consultation with other academics and practitioners in the Project, will be part of the evolution of the Bible Translation Project.

The researcher will be enrolled on the Doctor of Practical Theology (DPT) programme at the University of Manchester. This is a ground-breaking initiative in doctoral study, being one of a new breed of 'professional doctorates' rapidly gaining currency in the arts, humanities and social sciences. It is a practice-based research degree aimed at candidates from a range of professional and voluntary contexts. It is therefore ideally suited to meet the expectations of the collaborative arrangement, since it emphasises the importance of building advanced skills and capacities in 'action-research' of the very kind proposed within this bid. Since the DPT is assessed by means of a portfolio of work (including a literature review, research proposal, publishable articles and extended dissertation), it provides a phased and managed route through the research process as well as offering a structured programme of research training via four residential seminars per year. The doctoral candidate will therefore benefit from participation in a cutting-edge research initiative, tailor-made to the practice-based nature of the research project. The emphasis within the project on reflective practice - via journaling, the use of qualitative and collaborative research methods, and the stress on producing publishable material - represent tangible opportunities for evaluating the 'added value' of the research project not only for the researcher, but in his/her wider professional context, for participants from Deaf communities, as well as the various academic disciplines represented.

The DPT at Manchester has already received recognition as a 'flagship' PGR programme: Professor Graham (Programme Director of the DPT and Lead Supervisor for this project) is in receipt of £20k over three years from the Centre of Excellence in Enquiry-Based Learning (one of the HEFCE CETLs) to develop enquiry-based learning through developing practice-based research at PGR level. The Lead Supervisor from the BSL Bible Translation Project has considerable professional experience in project management and in academic supervision. There is crossover in the membership of academics on the advisory board for the research project (see 6 above) and membership of the regional translation teams and the management group. The involvement of the British and Foreign Bible Society supports the expertise in translation studies.

What new and original contribution to research in this area will this project make?
 This research is unique in its analysis of the correlation between a visual-spatial language and its embodied and performative representation in the context of corporate ritual.
 It also provides a case-study in the linguistic and hermeneutical issues presented by the transition from written script to visualspatial medium.
 The project will shed new light on strategies used in Black, feminist and other liberationist hermeneutics whereby a marginalized community looks for itself in its sacred scriptures, and the consequent emergence of a vernacular, contextual theology by and for Deaf people.
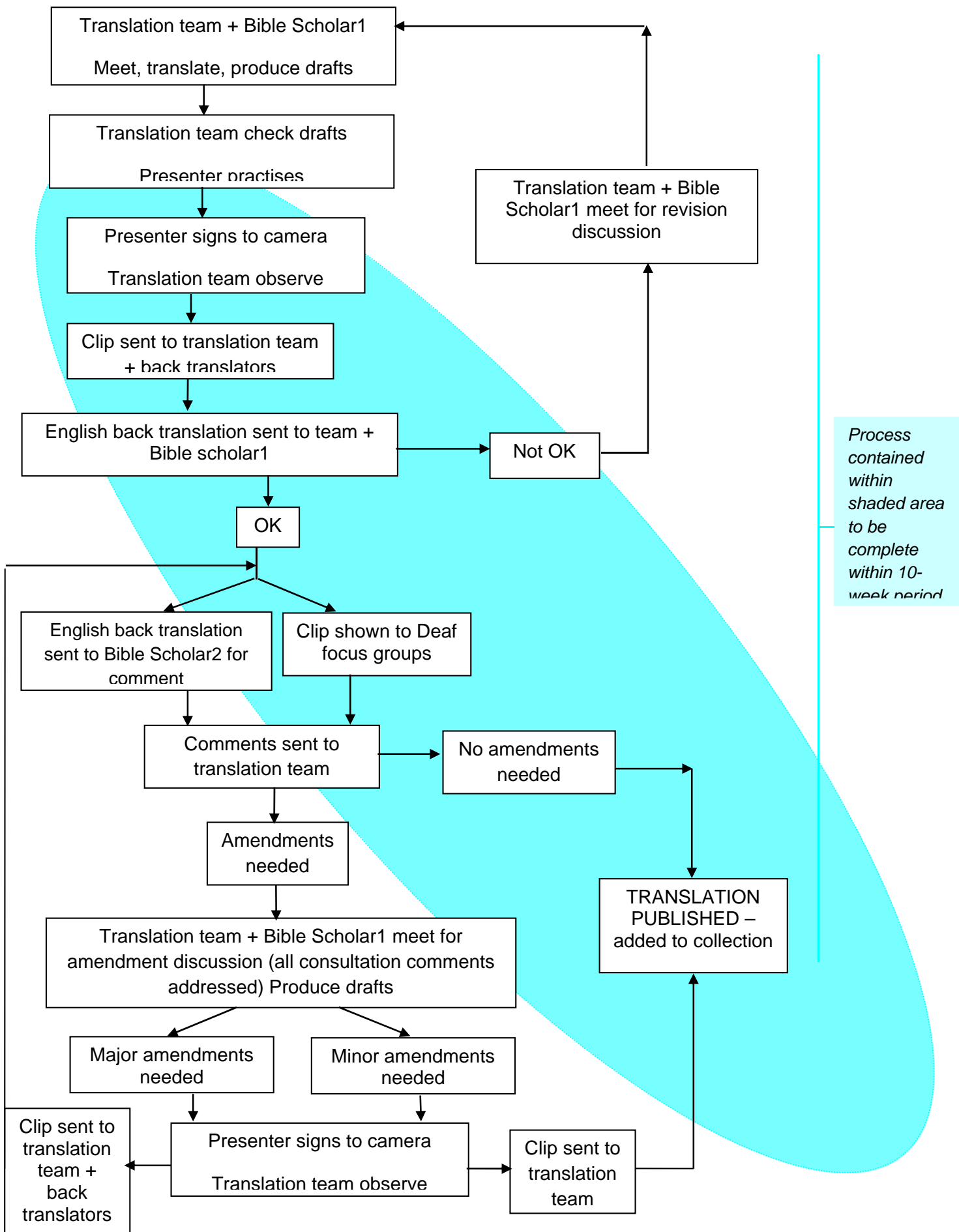January 2007

Sample Source Text in Use in the BSL Bible Translation Project

(including the 27th edition of the Nestle-Aland *Novum Testamentum Graece* and the 4th

Revised Edition of the United Bible Societies' Greek New Testament (as used by recent
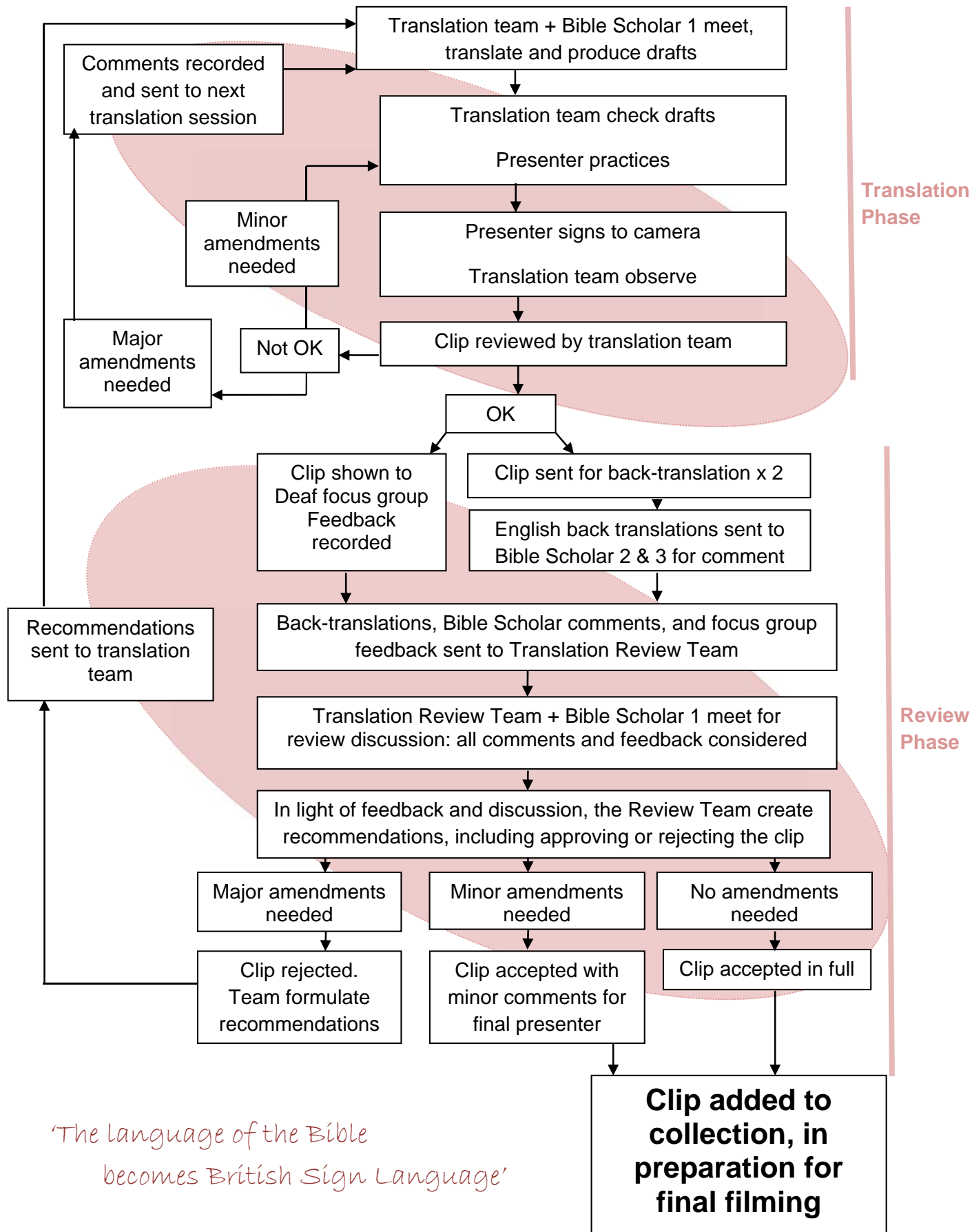
versions of the New Testament).

NRSV	Mark 8.1-21	GNB
1 In those days when there was again a great crowd without anything to eat, he called his disciples and said to them,	1 Ἐν ἐκείναις ταῖς ἡμέραις πάλιν πολλοῦ ὄχλου ὄντος καὶ μὴ ἐχόντων τί φάγωσιν, προσκαλεσάμενος τοὺς μαθητὰς λέγει αὐτοῖς·	1 Not long afterward another large crowd came together. When the people had nothing left to eat, Jesus called the disciples to him and said,
2 "I have compassion for the crowd, because they have been with me now for three days and have nothing to eat.	2 σπλαγχνίζομαι ἐπὶ τὸν ὄχλον, ὅτι ἤδη ἡμέραι τρεῖς προσμένουσίν μοι καὶ οὐκ ἔχουσιν τί φάγωσιν·	2 "I feel sorry for these people, because they have been with me for three days and now have nothing to eat.
3 If I send them away hungry to their homes, they will faint on the way-- and some of them have come from a great distance."	3 καὶ ἐὰν ἀπολύσω αὐτοὺς νήστεις εἰς οἶκον αὐτῶν, ἐκλυθήσονται ἐν τῇ ὁδῷ· καί τινες αὐτῶν ἀπὸ μακρόθεν ἥκασιν.	3 If I send them home without feeding them, they will faint as they go, because some of them have come a long way."
4 His disciples replied, "How can one feed these people with bread here in the desert?"	4 καὶ ἀπεκρίθησαν αὐτῷ οἱ μαθηταὶ αὐτοῦ ὅτι πόθεν τούτους δυνήσεταί τις ὧδε χορτάσαι ἄρτων ἐπ᾽ ἐρημίας;	4 His disciples asked him, "Where in this desert can anyone find enough food to feed all these people?"
5 He asked them, "How many loaves do you have?" They said, "Seven."	5 καὶ ἠρώτα αὐτούς· πόσους ἔχετε ἄρτους; οἱ δὲ εἶπαν ἑπτά.	5 "How much bread do you have?" Jesus asked. "Seven loaves," they answered.
6 Then he ordered the crowd to sit down on the ground; and he took the seven loaves, and after giving thanks he broke them and gave them to his disciples to distribute; and they distributed them to the crowd.	6 καὶ παραγγέλλει τῷ ὄχλῳ ἀναπεσεῖν ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς· καὶ λαβὼν τοὺς ἑπτὰ ἄρτους εὐχαριστήσας ἔκλασεν καὶ ἐδίδου τοῖς μαθηταῖς αὐτοῦ ἵνα παρατιθῶσιν, καὶ παρέθηκαν τῷ ὄχλῳ.	6 He ordered the crowd to sit down on the ground. Then he took the seven loaves, gave thanks to God, broke them, and gave them to his disciples to distribute to the crowd; and the disciples did so.
7 They had also a few small fish; and after blessing them, he ordered that these too should be distributed.	7 καὶ εἶχον ἰχθύδια ὀλίγα· καὶ εὐλογήσας αὐτὰ εἶπεν καὶ ταῦτα παρατιθέναι.	7 They also had a few small fish. Jesus gave thanks for these and told the disciples to distribute them too.
8 They ate and were filled; and they took up the broken pieces left over, seven baskets full.	8 καὶ ἔφαγον καὶ ἐχορτάσθησαν, καὶ ἦραν περισσεύματα κλασμάτων ἑπτὰ σπυρίδας.	8&9 Everybody ate and had enough—there were about four thousand people. Then the disciples took up seven baskets full of pieces left over. Jesus sent the people away
9 Now there were about four thousand people. And he sent them away.	9 ἦσαν δὲ ὡς τετρακισχίλιοι. καὶ ἀπέλυσεν αὐτούς.	
10 And immediately he got into the boat with his disciples and went to the district of Dalmanutha.	10 Καὶ εὐθὺς ἐμβὰς εἰς τὸ πλοῖον μετὰ τῶν μαθητῶν αὐτοῦ ἦλθεν εἰς τὰ μέρη Δαλμανουθά.	10 and at once got into a boat with his disciples and went to the district of Dalmanutha.

1

BSL Bible Translation Project: Translation Chart, Nov 2006

Translation team + Bible Scholar1

Meet, translate, produce drafts

Translation team check drafts

Presenter practises

Presenter signs to camera

Translation team observe

Clip sent to translation team + back translators

English back translation sent to team + Bible scholar1

Translation team + Bible Scholar1 meet for revision discussion

Not OK

OK

English back translation sent to Bible Scholar2 for comment

Clip shown to Deaf focus groups

Comments sent to translation team

No amendments needed

Amendments needed

TRANSLATION PUBLISHED – added to collection

Translation team + Bible Scholar1 meet for amendment discussion (all consultation comments addressed) Produce drafts

Major amendments needed

Minor amendments needed

Clip sent to translation team + back translators

Presenter signs to camera

Translation team observe

Clip sent to translation team

Process contained within shaded area to be complete within 10-week period

BSL Bible Translation Process, July 2010

Translation Phase

Translation team + Bible Scholar 1 meet, translate and produce drafts

Comments recorded and sent to next translation session

Translation team check drafts

Presenter practices

Minor amendments needed

Presenter signs to camera

Translation team observe

Major amendments needed

Not OK

Clip reviewed by translation team

OK

Clip shown to Deaf focus group
Feedback recorded

Clip sent for back-translation x 2

English back translations sent to Bible Scholar 2 & 3 for comment

Recommendations sent to translation team

Back-translations, Bible Scholar comments, and focus group feedback sent to Translation Review Team

Review Phase

Translation Review Team + Bible Scholar 1 meet for review discussion: all comments and feedback considered

In light of feedback and discussion, the Review Team create recommendations, including approving or rejecting the clip

Major amendments needed

Minor amendments needed

No amendments needed

Clip rejected. Team formulate recommendations

Clip accepted with minor comments for final presenter

Clip accepted in full

'The language of the Bible becomes British Sign Language'

Clip added to collection, in preparation for final filming

Participant Information Sheet – Individual

The BSL Bible Translation Project: An Evaluative Review

Introduction

After four and a half years of translation work, The BSL Bible Translation Project is about to publish a pilot Sign Language text; a section of The Gospel of Mark. This will be offered to the Deaf Community with the hope that they will feedback to us about how useful it is to them, how easy it is to watch and any changes or additions they would like to see in the final version. This feedback will be used to inform how the rest of the Gospel of Mark is translated and produced.

The Project would also like to gather the views of many of the people who have been involved in the creation of this pilot text; people like yourself who have experiences and opinions about how we have achieved this first milestone. You may also have ideas about how we could go forward in ways that are more effective or more ethical. The project would like you to share those experiences and ideas with us.

Between February and July 2011, our Student Researcher, Tracey Raistrick, will be working with us in team meetings and one-to-one sessions as we evaluate our work. These will be times where we can think about our journey thus far and begin to plan for the ongoing work of the project as we move into the next phase of translation work.

Tracey will gather our thoughts together to create a report for the BSL Bible Translation Project trustees, ready in the autumn of 2011. She may also publish some of the findings in academic or professional journals and use them as a basis for her Doctoral thesis.

What will I be asked to do if I take part?

The BSL Bible Translation Project will be setting aside time during their regular meetings for this evaluation to take place. Some additional sub-groups meetings may also be arranged. For those people who don't attend our regular meetings, Tracey will arrange one-to-one sessions (between one and two hours per session) so that you can contribute fully to the review. During those sessions you will have opportunities to share your views and experiences of working in or with the BSL Bible Translation Project. If you agree to take part, the comments you make will be included in the information we use to write the final report.

Do I have to take part?

No. If you are not interested in this research you do not have to take part. If you decide to take part and then change your mind, you can drop out at any stage.

Will I be paid to take part?

No. Travel expenses can be claimed from the project in the usual way for additional sessions.

Will any information I give be kept confidential?

Yes. The on-to-one meetings will be filmed, transcribed and kept as both a video and a written record, without your name attached. Only Tracey will see the film. She will do the transcription too, so no interpreters will see the film. Tracey will make sure that any information shared cannot be connected to any individual person.

If we wish to use any quotations from your interview, we will do this either in English (without your name attached) or with a member of the research team or an actor signing. If you would prefer that we do not use quotations from your interview, we would still like you to take part in the evaluation/review.

What will happen to video and English records of my involvement in the review?

Video material and any transcriptions will be destroyed 5 years after publication of the research findings.

What are the benefits of being involved in the review?

By being involved in the review, you will help the BSL Bible Translation Project team members to better understand their own work and, therefore, be able to plan their future translation work more effectively. Publication of the findings may be of benefit to the Deaf Community as more people understand about their language (BSL). It may also help other translators working in signed languages in other countries.

Who is the lead researcher, Tracey Raistrick?

Tracey has been working with the BSL Bible Translation Project since October 2007 as a researching professional funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC). She is a qualified Sign Language Interpreter (UCLAN, 2007) who is also studying for a Professional Doctorate in Practical Theology at The University of Chester. She is a member of the Social Research with Deaf People research group at the University of Manchester. She has two supervisors; Professor Alys Young, a signer who has many years of experience of research with members of the Deaf Community, and Professor Elaine Graham, who is a highly regarded Practical Theologian.

Where can I contact you if I have a question during or after the review?

E-mail:

Tracey Raistrick
Social Research with Deaf People
4.313 University Place, Oxford Rd
Manchester M13 9PL

Photo of interviewer here

This project has been approved by the
Faculty of Humanities Research Ethics Committee,
University of Chester, Parkgate Rd, Chester, CH1 4BJ

Consent Form: The BSL Bible Translation Project: An Evaluative Review

	Please circle
I have been given information about the study in my preferred language (BSL/English) by the research team.	YES/NO
I consent to take part as a volunteer.	YES/NO
I understand that I am free to drop out at any time without giving any reason and without negative consequences for myself.	YES/NO
I understand the risks & benefits involved in taking part in the study. These have been explained to me.	YES/NO
I consent to the interview being filmed/audio recorded for the purposes of the study and understand that it will only be viewed/heard by members of the research team.	YES/NO
The research team may use anonymous quotations from my interviews either …...in written English or in BSL, signed by themselves or by an actor	YES/NO YES/NO
I understand that the tapes of the interview and any transcriptions will be destroyed 5 years after publication of the research.	YES/NO

I confirm that I will provide accurate and impartial information, to the best of my knowledge and ability.

Signed...Date............................

NAME (BLOCK LETTERS)...

I confirm that I have provided signed and/or written information that fully explains the purpose of the investigation and the risks involved. (for office use only)

Signed..Date.............................

NAME ……………TRACEY RAISTRICK....   (Lead Researcher)

This project has been approved by the
Faculty of Humanities Research Ethics Committee,
University of Chester, Parkgate Rd, Chester, CH1 4BJ

NVIVO Coding: Initial codes

Nodes

Name	Sources	References
Aspirations	4	25
Bible	5	34
Bible As Source	4	8
Bible as Target	4	18
Dark Matter	4	22
Emotions	4	12
Evaluations	5	161
Expectations (Process)	5	11
Expectations (Product)	3	6
Finance	5	19
Group features	5	94
Group decision making	5	42
Group norms and culture	3	9
Interdependence	4	17
Wider Deaf Community	5	21
Materiality	5	16
DVD Bible Text	1	1
Person as Text	5	15
Non-Product-Based Outcomes	5	20
Personal Changes	2	3
Skills development	3	14
Physical and geographic	5	7
Role	5	29
Skills and Experience	4	30
Technological	4	19
Theories	5	51
Time	5	28
Visual Language	5	39
Cognition	1	5
Lexis	4	5
Visual Features	4	11

Digital Material

CD1:   Th8002: Literature Review

Th8003: Publishable Article

TH8004: Reflection on Practice

TH8005: Research Proposal

CD2: The Gospel of Mark – 1:1-3:6

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