

## **Negotiating Power and Translation in a Bilingual (British Sign Language/English) Rehearsal Room**

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### ABSTRACT

*Deaf* people are typically encouraged to participate in theatre through the medium of sign language interpreted performances, translation events that the majority of *deaf* spectators do not consider effective in providing accessibility. This article draws on doctoral research that interrogates theatre-making techniques that might provide equality of participation in performances for *deaf* and *hearing* people. Drawing on Participatory Action Research and Applied Theatre methodologies, *deaf* and *hearing* actors create bilingual (British Sign Language and English) performances without pre-existing source texts, a process that is dependent both on the translation strategies employed within it, and on the societal conditions of *deaf-hearing* inequality. A socio-analysis of the power dynamics within two examples of practice is facilitated by conceptualising *deaf* and *hearing* as Bourdieusian *fields*. The analysis suggests that, whilst it is possible to over-ride the impact of hierarchies within such a translation event, more typically societal inequalities that impact negatively on translation processes are maintained.

Keywords: Deaf; Bourdieu; Freire; Applied Theatre; Translation; Interpreting