CAN LINGUISTIC ANALYSIS IN HISTORICAL JESUS RESEARCH STAND ON ITS OWN? A SOCIOLINGUISTIC ANALYSIS OF MATTHEW 26:36–27:26

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Abstract: This article applies various sociolinguistic and multi-lingualism theories to analyze the linguistic situation of the episodes of Jesus' betrayal, arrest, and trial in Matt 26:36–27:26. It demonstrates that the linguistic complexities of a multilingual society, in which Jesus lived, must have warranted the use of language varieties in various sociolinguistic contexts, in order for people from various social groups to interact with and accommodate each other. Thus, against Loren Stuckenbruck's assertion, in a recent essay "'Semitic Influence on Greek': An Authenticating Criterion in Jesus Research?" in *Jesus, Criteria, and the Demise of Authenticity*, that "For historical Jesus research, linguistic analysis does not and cannot stand on its own" (94), this article otherwise contends that an episode, saying, or action of Jesus, independent of other criteria, may be deemed authentic without resorting to detection of a Semitic *Vorlage* behind the Greek text to signal "authentic material." (Article)

Keywords: Matt 26:36–27:26; sociolinguistics, multilingualism, historical Jesus, criteria, authenticity, language.

1. Introduction

In a recent essay published in *Jesus, Criteria, and the Demise of Authenticity*, Loren Stuckenbruck remarks that "For historical Jesus research, linguistic analysis does not and cannot stand on its own."[1] He argues that the underlying Semitic influence on the

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1. Stuckenbruck, "Semitic Influence on Greek," 94. See also Bird, "Criterion of Greek Language and Context," 55–67, who makes a similar

Greek textual tradition of the Gospels, when examined from a linguistic perspective, poses several linguistically related factors that problematize its use as a criterion for identifying authentic Jesus tradition.[2] Specifically, he states that "these factors alone make it very difficult to apply this notion [i.e., "that Jesus tradition did undergo a measure of oral and written translation during the course of transmission"] *as a guiding principle* for the identification of authentic tradition."[3] To a great extent, this kind of argument is not a novel one. Previous research on the linguistic situation of ancient Palestine has always been confronted with the problem of how to deal with the available linguistic evidence, which tellingly shows that ancient Palestine was a multilingual society.[4] Stuckenbruck's statement seems to imply that these linguistically related factors could not be adequately addressed; hence, the instability of linguistic analysis as an

argument, saying, among other things, that Porter's criterion of Greek language and its context is dependent upon other criteria. Porter, "The Criterion of Greek Language and Its Context" 69–74, responds that Bird appears to have not understood clearly what the criterion is actually attempting to do.

2.   Stuckenbruck, "Semitic Influence on Greek," 93–94, lists such factors as the use of different languages in various geographical locations and socio-economic and religious contexts, the languages Jesus could have spoken, the phenomenon of code-switching, the influence of the LXX tradition on the Greek text, the precise definition and identification of both Hebraisms and Aramaisms in the Greek textual tradition, the "interpretation of transliterated Semitic terms" in the Greek textual tradition, and the "alleged instances of 'Semitic' syntax, phraseology and idioms" that might be found in the excavated Greek literary, papyri, and inscriptional evidence. One other factor that Stuckenbruck mentions—"the possibility of secondary Semiticization of Greek tradition"—appears elusive for the reader to know what is actually meant.

3.   Stuckenbruck, "Semitic Influence on Greek," 94.

4.   Cf. Nicklas, "Alternatives to Form and Tradition Criticism," 717, who states, "Attempts are made on various levels today to 're'-construct this world…[through] social history…archaeological investigations, [and] the embedding of Jesus in Judaism and Hellenism of his time." Few today would (or should) dispute the fact that first-century Palestine was a multilingual community. For surveys of this linguistic evidence, see the bibliographical list in Porter, *Criteria for Authenticity*, 140–41 n. 31 and 32; and Lee, *Jesus and Gospel Traditions*, 106–10, 156–60.

independent authenticity criterion for historical Jesus research.[5] I contend, however, that linguistic analysis for historical Jesus research does and can stand on its own. I also contend that the linguistic evidence we have at hand can be handled and interpreted more accurately, with the use of an appropriate methodology.[6] If one can judiciously demonstrate how the linguistic chemistry and dynamics could have played out in the actual speech communities of first-century Palestine, then it is legitimate to argue that an episode, saying, or action of Jesus may be authentic. This could be done independently of other criteria and without resorting to the detection of a Semitic *Vorlage* behind the Greek text as a signal of authentic material.[7] In what follows,

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5.　　Stuckenbruck banks on the work of Lee, *Jesus and Gospel Traditions*, when he states that "within a context that language contact was not only likely probable, written translation or even oral transmission would not necessarily have been 'uni-directional.' The possibility of *Mischsprache*…bears this out" (Stuckenbruck, "Semitic Influence on Greek," 91). Unfortunately, Lee himself is not altogether clear in his description of the multilingualism of ancient Palestine, such that his suggestion of the "interdirectional" transmission of the Gospel traditions appears purely conjectural. See Ong, Review of Lee, *Jesus and Gospel Traditions*, R124–R128. Moreover, based on the definition of a pidgin (see below) and the linguistic chemistry of Aramaic, Greek, Hebrew, and Latin, the description of what is known as *Mischsprache* (mixed languages or pidgin) does not accurately describe the multilingual situation of ancient Palestine. In fact, Watt, "Some Implications of Bilingualism," 23, says that 'The New Testament situation did not produce pidginization/creolization, or language mixing—there is no 'Jewish Greek' in the New Testament."

6.　　Previous scholarly works for the most part have used such means as logical inferences, identification of linguistic and grammatical characteristics, historical considerations, or a combination of these in their investigation of the linguistic evidence at hand. For an introduction to these kinds of studies, see Porter, ed., *The Language of the New Testament*; Poirier, "Linguistic Situation in Jewish Palestine," 55–134; and Tresham, "The Languages Spoken by Jesus," 71–94. Cf. Stuckenbruck, "Semitic Influence on Greek," 75–93.

7.　　In historical Jesus research studies, Porter is arguably the first one to suggest through his criterion of "Greek Language and Its Context" eight possible Gospel episodes where the words of Jesus could have been spoken in Greek. See Porter, *The Criteria for Authenticity*, 126–80; and Porter, "Greek Language Criteria," 361–404.

I will discuss the concept of "language choice," showing that this linguistic phenomenon is the norm in a multilingual community. Next, I will present and explain some sociolinguistic theories related to multilingualism. These will be applied to the text of Matt 26:36–27:26, identifying possible instances of code-switching as well as episodes where Greek or Aramaic would have been the language selected for use. I will conclude with a suggestion as to how future research could be conducted, with reference to the use of the linguistic criterion in historical research.

My proposition requires, first and foremost, a definition of "authenticity." The notion of "authenticity" as well as its con-comitant criteria is well known, but it is important to note that there are several aspects involved in the discussion of its histori-cal development. With reference to the notion of "authenticity," two recognized trends may broadly represent its historical development.[8] Whereas the first trend sought the recovery of the original sayings of Jesus, the second trend searched for the original manuscripts of the Bible in their appeal to "authentic" materials. Aside from these two trends of development, a dis-tinction is also made between the so-called *ipsissima verba* (the very words) and *ipsissima vox* (the very voice) of Jesus.[9] For the most part, scholars believe that, at best, what we can determine is only an approximation of what Jesus said or may have said.[10] I

8.   See Le Donne, "The Quest for an Authentic Jesus," 6–11, who discusses these two historical trends in the development of the notion of "authenticity" since the nineteenth century. The first trend, which arises from German circles, associates "authenticity" with the concept of "originality." The second trend, which emerges from America, linked "authenticity" with biblical inspiration and inerrancy. Cf. Porter, "Criteria of Authenticity," 695–700, 705–709, who presents development of the criteria from synchronic and diachronic perspectives, as well as the critical periods in treatment of the criteria.

9.   The criterion of Greek textual variance in Porter, *The Criteria for Authenticity*, 181–209 (191), suggests the possibility of recovering the *ipsissima verba* of Jesus on the basis of comparing textual variants. See also Porter and O'Donnell, "Implications of Textual Variants," 97–133.

10.   See Theissen and Winter, *Die Kriterienfrage in der Jesusforschung*, 201; and Sanders, *Jesus and Judaism*, 357 n. 30.

share the view that if we want to keep the business of historical Jesus research running, then we need to continue to look for ways to support the authenticity of the Jesus materials of the Gospels. However, the best that we can confidently offer is perhaps only an approximation of the exact words and actions of Jesus.

Second, my proposition also requires a differentiation between the linguistic context behind the text of the Gospels and the text of the Gospels itself. Even though the study of the languages spoken in first-century Palestine is related to the language of the New Testament, the linguistic chemistry and dynamics of the actual speech communities during Jesus' time (that is, how Jesus, for instance, has socially interacted with various audiences and social groups) is totally different from the linguistic context of the Gospel writers, when they decided to write their own accounts of the Jesus story.[11] Primacy of orality must be acknowledged in the study of the written records, from which original situational contexts are inferred, so as to avoid distorting our conclusions.[12]

Third and finally, my proposition necessitates an appropriate tool for the investigation. A good methodology, from which one can plausibly recover this underlying linguistic chemistry and dynamics behind the Gospel accounts, can be gleaned from the field of sociolinguistics.[13] In the past, most studies have utilized

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11.   It is important to note that treatments of the linguistic situation of ancient Palestine are naturally intertwined with the nature of the Greek of the New Testament. But they must be distinguished, since the latter is a distinct subject that directly deals with various theories concerning the philology and type of Greek of the New Testament. Cf. Porter, *Verbal Aspect*; Porter, *Criteria for Authenticity*, 90; and Silva, "Bilingualism and the Character of Palestinian Greek," 206–7, who itemizes twelve topics that are often considered by scholars in the investigation of the languages of Palestine and who rightly notes that these topics are so intertwined that "viewpoints offered by the scholars involved are not limited to a single, well-defined issue."

12.   Watt, "Implications of Bilingualism," 22.

13.   Sociolinguistics is a fairly new field of discipline that emerged sometime in the 1960s through the pioneering works and efforts of Charles A. Ferguson and Joshua A. Fishman. The field is both interdisciplinary and trans-

social-scientific theories to understand the social world behind the Gospel accounts.[14] In recent years, however, sociolinguistics has shown to be a promising field for the investigation of the linguistic situation of ancient Palestine.[15] Its major advantage over social-scientific theories is seen in its ability to establish the linkages between language, society, and language users. In sum, my objective in this article is, based upon my analysis of how the linguistic chemistry and dynamics could have played out in the multilingual speech community of ancient Palestine, to discover whether the words attributed to Jesus in the series of episodes in Matt 26:36–27:26 can plausibly be traced back to Jesus himself. I begin with the concept of "language choice."

2. Language Choice

Language selection is the norm in a multilingual community.[16] This is so for a number of reasons. First, a multilingual community is composed of different ethnic groups. These ethnic groups may originate from various geographical locations either by migration, imperialism (diplomacy or military force), federation, or border territory interaction, among other factors.[17] It is natural for immigrants, settlers, or displaced peoples to search

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disciplinary, encompassing several fields of research, including linguistics, sociology, social psychology, and anthropology. See Spolsky, "Ferguson and Fishman," 11-23; and Hasan, *Language, Society and Consciousness*.

14.   See, for example, Neufeld and DeMaris, eds., *Understanding the Social World of the New Testament*; Malina, *Social World of Jesus and the Gospels*; Esler, *Modelling Early Christianity*; and Elliott, *What is Social-Scientific Criticism?*

15.   See, for example, Porter, ed., *Diglossia and Other Topics*; Watt, *Code-Switching in Luke-Acts*; Ong, "True Meaning and Purpose of the Lord's Prayer," 98–124; Ong, "Language Choice in Ancient Palestine," 63–101; and Ong, "Aramaic and Greek Language Criteria," 37–55. I see the work of Lee, *Jesus and Gospel Traditions*, as banking on sociolinguistic theories but without clearly showing how they apply to the Gospel texts.

16.   Ong, "Language Choice," 66–73, provides and discusses four reasons why ancient Palestine was a multilingual community.

17.   Fasold, *Sociolinguistics of Society*, 9–12.

for their own ethnic group where they can happily and comfortably interact, so as to have a sense of belonging in that new community. But at some point, they will also need to socialize with the native residents, even though communication between them is difficult due to a language barrier. Unlike these original settlers, however, their children and grandchildren usually become more fluent speakers of the native language, as they, by necessity, are exposed to the wider community, especially at school and with friends. For these reasons, it is apparent that, through time, the intermingling between two monolingual groups (if such a group actually exists),[18] that is, the original immigrant settlers and the native residents, naturally creates a new group known as the multilingual group.[19]

Second, therefore, because multilingual speakers exist, the languages they acquire serve as their linguistic repertoire, and consequently, language selection becomes a linguistic tool for them. This means that a second- or third-generation member of a particular ethnic group will, by default, speak their own ethnic language (mother tongue) with their parents and with friends belonging to their own ethnic group, but will also naturally speak the language of the native residents (the *lingua franca* or the official language of the community; see below) with people outside their own ethnic groups.[20] Depending upon some contextual factors that affect the speech event, a multilingual

18. Thomason, *Language Contact*, 31, says that monolingualism is a myth.

19. The creation of this new multilingual group is of course an idealized notion, explaining how multilingual groups, which are existent in almost every community or country, came to be. The proposal of Chomsky, *Aspects of Syntax*, 3, of a "completely homogeneous speech community" is definitely a theoretical construct that is non-existent in the real world. In fact, Gumperz, *Language in Social Groups*, 101, argues that "there are no a priori grounds which force us to define speech communities so that all members speak the same language." For a good summary of the general concepts and categories of research in bilingualism, see Watt, "Implications of Bilingualism," 11–19.

20. This issue of language fluency relates to what is known as bilingual language proficiency. See Romaine, "Bilingual Language Development," 287–303.

may switch between codes (code-switching), in order to accommodate their audience, to maintain their social identity, or to project a particular 'public face' (about these more will be said below).

Third and last, a social interaction in a multilingual community cannot happen without language selection. When two monolingual groups come into contact, but both choose to speak their own mother tongue, the scenario is obviously such that a social interaction is not actually taking place. However, this is unlikely to happen in actual situations, where a third language, known as "pidgin" (see below), would usually emerge as a medium of communication. Otherwise, it is imperative that a particular language, either the mother tongue or the *lingua franca*, be selected for use to make social interaction happen. And almost always, the *lingua franca* will be the default language of communication. The reason is that the *lingua franca* is the more dominant language between the two on account of it having a much larger number of speakers and of it being the official language of the community.[21]

Given the fact that language selection is the norm in a multilingual community, the question boils down to the language Jesus chose to use in his teachings and daily interactions with various social groups—his family (e.g., Matt 12:46; Mark 3:31; Luke 8:19), his friends (e.g., John 11:5), his disciples (e.g., Matt 4:18–22; Mark 1:16–20; Luke 5:2–11; John 1:35–42), the Pharisees and the teachers of the law (Matt 26:57–68; Mark 14:53–65), the crowds from different geographical areas (Matt 4:23–25), and the Roman officials (Matt 8:5–13; 27:11–26; Mark 15:2–15; Luke 7:1–10; John 4:46–54), among others. It is very unlikely that Jesus would only have used Aramaic to converse with these various social groups. At the least, Jesus must have been fluent in and would have used Greek to communicate with some of them. For this reason, it is critical to our study that we examine briefly the use of languages in an actual community

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21.   Holmes, *Introduction*, 82, says that "A lingua franca is a language used for communication between people whose first languages differ."

from three different perspectives—the society, the speech event, and the language user. More specifically, when and in what circumstances were Aramaic, Greek, and Hebrew spoken in ancient Palestine? To put it differently, what are the status and social functions of each of these languages?

3. Language Varieties in Ancient Palestine—
Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek

From the society's perspective, languages are categorized according to their status and social functions. This categorization can be determined through the application of a set of criteria in describing and classifying a particular language. Typically, there are at least five categories of language varieties.[22] The first category is the vernacular language, which is a non-codified and non-standardized language. A vernacular can refer to either the "first" language acquired at home by a multilingual, an unofficial language or dialect of a country or state, a language or dialect that is used for relatively circumscribed and informal functions, or the colloquial variety used for communication in the home and with close friends. The second category is the standard language, which is one that has undergone standardization and codification.[23] A standard language, then, would have a written grammar and would be the type of language used in dictionaries and books. It is considered the prestige variety of the community, since it is used for more formal functions, particularly in governing institutions, legal courts, and education.[24] The third category is called *lingua franca*, which is usually described as the language of communication between various social groups in

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22. For an overview, see Holmes, *Introduction*, 74–93; Wardhaugh, *Introduction to Sociolinguistics*, 25–87; and Hudson, *Sociolinguistics*, 22–45, 59–68.

23. Standardization goes through several processes. See Haugen, "Dialect, Language, Nation," 922–35; Garvin and Mathiot, "Urbanization of the Guarani Language," 783–90; Garvin, "The Standard Language Problem," 28–31.

24. Holmes, *Introduction*, 78.

a multilingual community. A community's official language nor-
mally serves as the *lingua franca*. The fourth category is the
pidgin, which may serve as a type of *lingua franca*, but with no
native speakers.[25] Pidgins arise when two social groups with
distinct languages attempt to communicate in the presence of a
third dominant language. They are also used for referential rather
than affective purposes and have a limited range of uses.[26] The
fifth and last category is the creole, which is originally a pidgin
that came to acquire native speakers by means of a process
known as "creolization." When a creole undergoes "decreoliza-
tion," it changes into a standard variety.

On the basis of the description of these language varieties,
these ancient languages—Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek—can be
classified into their respective categories. The category under
which we would classify these languages will determine their
status and social functions. The categorization process, however,
cannot be simply evaluated according to how we want to define
each language based upon the available linguistic evidence. Just
because Aramaic, Hebrew, and Greek have been standardized
and codified does not necessarily follow that all these languages
are the *lingua franca* or prestige languages of ancient Palestine.
Jonathan Watt's categorization of these languages may be useful
and helpful for our purposes.[27] His categories are derived from
the application of the concept of diglossia. Originally a concept
developed by Charles Ferguson, diglossia refers to the functional
distribution of two—a high (H) and a low (L)—varieties of a
particular language.[28] The H-language variety is typically associ-
ated with the more standardized, codified, and prestigious type
of variety used in formal functions, whereas the L-language
variety with the more colloquial and everyday type of variety

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25.   It is clear that both the Greek and Aramaic languages have native
speakers. Thus, Stuckenbruck is mistaken in suggesting the idea of a *Misch-
sprache*, which, in Watt's terms, would look like a Jewish Greek language
variety (see n. 5).

26.   Holmes, *Introduction*, 83–85.

27.   See Watt, " Diglossia Studies," 18–36.

28.   See Ferguson, "Diglossia," 232–51.

used in daily and more informal conversations.[29] Applying this concept to classify these languages shows that diglossia, according to Watt, cannot adequately describe the actual linguistic situation of ancient Palestine, even though "The language contact situation of ancient Jewish Palestine is surely diglossic," as Watt contends (and rightly so) in a recent article.[30] The reason is that all these languages have both spoken and written (standardized and codified) forms as shown below.[31]

> High 1 = biblical Hebrew (written)
>
> High 2 = mishnaic Hebrew (spoken, written)
>
> Low 1 = Judean Aramaic (spoken, written)
>
> Low 2 = Galilean Aramaic (distinguishable in speech only)
>
> T1 = Koine Greek (spoken and written)
>
> T2 = Latin (spoken? written?)

Watt's classification correlates well with the available linguistic evidence, and he rightly notes that, strictly speaking, we can only apply the concept of diglossia to Hebrew and Aramaic, and from this, we then need to classify Greek (and Latin) as a tertiary language (T), entering into the picture on the basis of the available linguistic evidence.[32] It is important to note, however, that Greek, as the tertiary language, may as well serve as the L-variety instead of Aramaic. In other words, setting aside and assigning Hebrew as the H-language (but only on the basis of it being used in liturgical and educational contexts),[33] both Greek and Aramaic compete against each other for prestige and for being considered as the community's *lingua franca*. Here the

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29.   Ferguson, "Diglossia," 236.

30.   Watt, "Implications of Bilingualism," 15.

31.   This is a reproduction of Watt's categories (Watt, "The Current Landscape of Diglossia Studies," 34).

32.   See Watt, "The Current Landscape of Diglossia Studies," 32–33.

33.   Hebrew is commonly recognized as predominantly used in liturgical contexts and educational programs during Jesus' time. Poirier, "The Linguistic Situation," 64–102, provides a good discussion.

conceptual distinction between language and dialect becomes helpful. Sociolinguists differentiate the two in terms of size (a language is larger than a dialect) and prestige (used in more formal and public functions).[34] And between Greek and Aramaic, it seems that during Jesus' time, Greek would have been the more prestigious variety than Aramaic, especially as it is most likely the language used in government administration, in education, and in the trade and industry of the time.[35] Based on these theories, the linguistic repertoire of an ordinary ethnic Jew like Jesus would likely have consisted of Hebrew (synagogue and liturgical language; e.g., Luke 4:16–21), Greek (the prestige and contact language with people outside their own ethnic group), and Aramaic (the internal language of the Jews in Roman Palestine). While these categories give us a general scenario of the status of each of these languages, however, in actual speech events, other sociolinguistic factors may affect and disrupt this general scenario. Thus, these languages must be studied in terms of their use in actual speech events or social domains.

5. *Social Domains of Language Use and the Social Dimension Scales*

From the perspective of a particular speech event, the selection of a particular language is directly related to its social domain type. A social domain is a speech event that is constrained and identified by at least four sociolinguistic factors—the setting (where the event is taking place), the topic (what is being talked

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34.   See Haugen, "Dialect, Language, Nation," 922–35. Matthews, *Generative Grammar and Linguistic Competence*, 47, argues that the only distinction that can be drawn between language and dialect is with reference to which one is the more prestigious variety.

35.   For a summative discussion of why Greek is the more prestigious variety, see Ong, "Language Choice," 71–72, 89–90. The extensive and intensive Hellenization program of Alexander and his successors imposed on everyone not only the Greek culture, along with its various social and political institutions, but also the Greek language. See Welles, *Alexander and the Hellenistic World*; and Kurht and Sherwin-White, eds., *Hellenism in the East*.

about) and the purpose (why the event is taking place) of con-
versation, and the participants (who are the speakers, listeners,
and other people involved?).[36] The probability of the selection of
a particular language in a speech event can be measured and
identified by the so-called social dimension scales in conjunction
with the status of that language. The first scale, the social
distance or solidarity scale, evaluates the intimacy or distance of
the participants' relationship. The second scale, the status scale,
assesses more formal and "uneven" (superior-subordinate) par-
ticipants' relationships. The third scale, the formality scale,
assesses the degree of formality of the speech event or the type
of social interaction based on the setting of the conversation
(e.g., law court, public forum, home, street, etc.). The fourth and
final scale, the functional scale, is of two types. Whereas the
referential scale examines the information content of the topic of
conversation, the affective scale evaluates its emotional content
or the purposes of interaction.[37]

Keeping this concept of social domains in mind, it is impor-
tant to understand that, ultimately, the choice of a particular
language over another is contingent upon the language user or
the multilingual. The multilingual has to decide in a particular
speech event which language to use depending upon the four
aforementioned sociolinguistic factors that affect that speech
event. In addition, when a particular speech event occurs in a
chronological episode, where one social domain shifts to a new
social domain due to changes in these four sociolinguistic
factors, the participants involved in the conversation will auto-
matically switch between codes or languages in order for a social
interaction to be successful.

36.   In Ferguson's terms, larger and fixed domains, such as a family con-
versation, a casual talk between friends, a church sermon, a university lecture, a
personal letter, etc., are known as "institutional contexts" (Ferguson,
"Diglossia," 236).

37.   For a discussion of these social dimension scales, see Holmes, *Intro-
duction*, 9–13. See also my extended discussion of these social dimension
scales in Ong, "An Evaluation of the Aramaic and Greek Criteria," 48–49.

6. The Multilingual and Code-switching[38]

While language choice is influenced by the speech event in which speakers are involved, it is simultaneously affected by how speakers want to convey their social identity in relation to their addressees as well as their willingness to accommodate their addressees.[39] The conveyance of a speaker's identity is related to what is known as the speaker's "public face"—"the public image that the speaker presents to the rest of the world."[40] The speaker's public face becomes an "abstract face" that results from the linguistic codes the speaker uses as well as other non-verbal behaviors they exhibit to the world, or more specifically, to their addressees.[41] For example, if speakers wish to show solidarity with their addressees, they will naturally or intentionally choose to "converge" to their conversation partners by using the language of their conversation partners. Convergence is a means by which speakers want to minimize any kind of differences between them and their addressees. On the contrary, when speakers do not want to show solidarity with their addressees, they will "diverge" from them, breaking away from the norm or the social group's behavior.[42]

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38.   Code-switching is understood to be an individual phenomenon wherein multilinguals alternate between languages in their conversations as they intentionally or unintentionally choose to do so, due to various social factors that influence the choice of a particular language. There are several identified types of code-switching (e.g., inter-sentential, intra-sentential, alternation, tag-switching, etc.), and there are also at least three approaches (e.g., structural, psycholinguistic, and sociolinguistic) to the study of code-switching, although code-switching must be distinguished from other linguistic phenomena (e.g., lexical borrowing, calques, nonce borrowings, semantic extensions, mixed languages, etc.). For a good overview, see Bullock and Jacqueline Toribio, eds., *Cambridge Handbook of Linguistic Code-switching*, esp. 1–17.

39.   See Finlayson and Slabbert, "I'll Meet You Half-Way with Language," 381–421; and Giles and Street, "Speech Accommodation Theory," 193–226.

40.   Hudson, *Sociolinguistics*, 230.

41.   Hudson, *Sociolinguistics*, 231.

42.   Cf. Ong, "An Evaluation of Greek and Aramaic Criteria," 46–47.

The application of these multilingualism theories—language varieties, social domains, and code-switching—to a particular speech event can enable one to determine the appropriate language that was used in this series of episodes of Jesus' trial and arrest in Matt 26:36–27:26. By default, "to whom are we talking" will be the strongest indicator or criterion for determining the choice of a particular language. And this, from a society's perspective, is directly related to the social status of a language and to the social functions it serves. However, in the presence of other people, such as spectators and passive listeners (those who are involved but are not speakers), and with the formality of the setting of a speech event, the elements affecting the speech event become more complex. These, with the consideration of the topic and purpose of conversation (although these are of second-level importance unless it is the most salient element of the conversation) must be taken into account when analyzing a particular speech event. In the chronological episode of Matt 26:36–27:26, where one speech event quickly shifts to a new one, a multilingual will have the ability to automatically switch between codes to adapt to a new speech event. I now turn to analyze our unit of interest based on these theories.

7. Analysis of Matthew 26:36–27:26

The pericope found in Matt 26:36–27:26 is a series of six episodes, commencing from Jesus and his disciples in Gethsemane to Jesus' trial before Pilate. While the two episodes of Peter disowning Jesus (26:69–75) and Judas hanging himself (27:1–9) might fall out of the chronology, they nevertheless provide further information about the actual events.[43] In these

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43. I am of the opinion that each account in this series of episodes across the four Gospels, when taken together as a whole, gives us a clearer picture of what exactly happened. I find the literary dependence theories to be an unconvincing explanation for Synoptic relations as well as the origins of the Gospels. For an overview of various theories on the origins of the Gospels, see Linnemann, *Is There a Synoptic Problem?* esp. 145–91; Dunn, *Jesus*

episodes, Jesus encounters various conversation partners, travels
from one place to another, says various things to different
audiences, and defends himself as the Son of God. It is difficult
to imagine that in these episodes Jesus would only have spoken
Aramaic with all his addressees. As I show below, in some of the
episodes, Jesus must have spoken Greek in order for a
productive social interaction to have taken place.

7.1 In Gethsemane (Matt 26:36–46)

The participants in this episode revolve around Jesus and his
own disciples, comprising the Twelve (26:20) minus Judas (see
26:47), since this event occurs right after their last supper
(26:17–35).[44] If there are other disciples with him, they must at
least have been left somewhere else before Jesus takes Peter,
James, and John with him to another nearby location to pray
(26:37). The setting of this event is the garden of Gethsemane,[45]
although, as mentioned in the text, there are perhaps three proxi-
mate locations in the garden that serve as "drop-off points" for
Jesus to leave the rest of his disciples at Location 1 (v. 36, καθί-
σατε αὐτοῦ ἕως ἀπελθὼν ἐκεῖ) and the Three at Location 2 (v. 38,
μείνατε ὧδε) as he goes further to Location 3 (v. 39, προελθὼν
μικρὸν) to pray to the Father. Because there is no indication
(even in the parallel account in Mark 14:32–42) that there are
other people around beside Jesus and his disciples, and because
the setting of the speech event is clearly a private and informal
one, it is highly likely that this episode, as well as Jesus' words,
transpired in Aramaic.[46] I see no reason for the need of Greek by

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Remembered, 192–254; and Westcott, *Introduction to the Study of the Gospels*,
174–216.

　　44.　　For a summative discussion of arguments for and against the
historicity of the Last Supper event, see Marshall, "The Last Supper," 485–576.

　　45.　　The term χωρίον refers to a "land under cultivation or used for
pasture" (Louw and Nida, *Lexicon*, 1:17). Jeremias, *Jerusalem in the Time of
Jesus*, 6–7, suggests that it was a field of olives.

　　46.　　These words are, Καθίσατε αὐτοῦ ἕως [οὗ] ἀπελθὼν ἐκεῖ προσεύξωμαι
(v. 36), Περίλυπός ἐστιν ἡ ψυχή μου ἕως θανάτου· μείνατε ὧδε καὶ γρηγορεῖτε
μετ᾽ ἐμοῦ (v. 38), Πάτερ μου, εἰ δυνατόν ἐστιν, παρελθάτω ἀπ᾽ ἐμοῦ τὸ ποτήριον

virtue of not only the participants involved and the informality of the setting of the event, but also the topic and purposes of the conversations. The topics and purposes of Jesus' conversation with both his disciples and the Father indicate the kinds of conversations that would typically occur between one's intimate friends and immediate family. Such kinds of conversations reveal a high affective content but low information content.[47]

The speeches of Jesus with his disciples show that he was, for the most part, surprised and disappointed with them, asking them why they cannot be strong enough to stay awake with him (vv. 40, 45); hence, his initial instructions for them to "keep watch and pray" (vv. 36, 38, 41) until the time when he tells them "to get up and go," with the arrival of Judas (vv. 46–47). Jesus' intimacy with his inner disciples, who were also his friends, was palpable—"My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death. Stay here and keep watch with me" (v. 38). At the same time, he was also deeply concerned with their spiritual condition—"Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the body is weak" (v. 41). The instruction "watch and pray" (vv. 38, 41) may also tell us about their familiar relationship as teacher and disciples. Similarly, Jesus' prayers to the Father (vv. 39, 42) reveal an even more intimate relationship, as he tells his father what truly was in his mind (notice that at v. 38 he only told his disciples that he was greatly grieved) and pleads with him for help and strength.

τοῦτο· πλὴν οὐχ ὡς ἐγὼ θέλω ἀλλ᾽ ὡς σύ (v. 39), Οὕτως οὐκ ἰσχύσατε μίαν ὥραν γρηγορῆσαι μετ᾽ ἐμοῦ (v. 40), γρηγορεῖτε καὶ προσεύχεσθε, ἵνα μὴ εἰσέλθητε εἰς πειρασμόν· τὸ μὲν πνεῦμα πρόθυμον ἡ δὲ σὰρξ ἀσθενής (v. 41), Πάτερ μου, εἰ οὐ δύναται τοῦτο παρελθεῖν ἐὰν μὴ αὐτὸ πίω, γενηθήτω τὸ θέλημά σου (v. 42), and Καθεύδετε [τὸ] λοιπὸν καὶ ἀναπαύεσθε· ἰδοὺ ἤγγικεν ἡ ὥρα καὶ ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου παραδίδοται εἰς χεῖρας ἁμαρτωλῶν. ἐγείρεσθε ἄγωμεν· ἰδοὺ ἤγγικεν ὁ παραδιδούς με (vv. 45–46). I find it illogical to search for Aramaic elements in these texts of the Gospel writer to argue for the authenticity of the episode. It is more logical to examine the contextual elements of the episode, such as the participants, to argue for the use of Aramaic in this episode.

47. France, *Matthew*, 1002 n. 10, speaks of Jesus' "emotional turmoil" as evidence of his fully human nature.

Shortly before Judas's arrival, however, the words Jesus said contain a high information content—"Behold, the hour is near, and the Son of Man is delivered into the hands of sinners. Rise! Let us go! Here comes my betrayer" (vv. 45–46)! At this junction (i.e., between now and Judas's arrival with the crowd), with this sudden shift of the topic of conversation, the arrival of new participants at the scene (Judas and the crowd), and the change from a more intimate and private social domain to a more public one, there is great possibility that a code-switch must have happened.[48]

7.2 The Arrest of Jesus (Matt 26:47–56)

The participants involved in this episode include Jesus and his disciples, and Judas and the large crowd that came with him. The arrival and involvement of more participants that are considered to be outside of Jesus' circle of friends would naturally make the setting of the speech event become more formal. It is possible that the setting of this event is at Location 2, since vv. 45–47 indicates that Judas and his group arrived at the scene where Jesus had found Peter, James, and John slumbering for the third time (cf. Mark 14:41–43). Both the more formal setting and the additional participants involved in this speech event suggest that Greek must have been the language used in this episode. The use of Aramaic between Jesus and his disciples was perhaps only up to the point when Judas and the large crowd arrived at the scene. Their arrival creates a new social domain with the addition of "outsider" participants (i.e., those who are not Jesus' intimate friends or family). Jesus' address to the crowd at vv. 55–56 as a public defense further corroborates the use of Greek as the language that he used. The higher information content and lower affective content of his message (cf. 45–46)—"for all who draw the sword will die by the sword" (v. 52), "he will put at my disposal more than twelve legions of angels" (v. 53), "Am I leading a rebellion…" (v. 55), and "the Scriptures might be fulfilled"

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48.   Saunderson, "Gethsemane," 224–33, points out Gethsemane, at this time of the Passover festival, might have been a busier place than usual.

(vv. 54, 56)—to the crowd are also noticeable. In fact, vv. 52 and 53 are possible scriptural allusions to Gen 9:6 and Dan 7:10 (cf. 2 Kgs 6:17) respectively. All these elements point to Greek as the language used in this speech event. Nevertheless, it is possible that Jesus' reply "Friend, do what you came for" to Judas in v. 50 was in Aramaic.

Judas's greeting upon seeing his master was in Aramaic, "Greetings, *Rabbi*." The accompanying kiss further supports the use of Aramaic, as it shows, at least on Judas's part (regardless of whether he was faking it), his close relationship with Jesus, since Aramaic was probably their internal and default language. Judas's greeting may also indicate his recognition of Jesus as his teacher and subsequently signal his subordinate status. The question, however, concerns whether Jesus' reply to Judas was in Aramaic. It appears that Jesus' address to Judas as ἑταῖρος (companion), while showing his association with him, reveals a lack of personal affection.[49] This is an instance where a speaker, Jesus, in this case, wishes to demonstrate a "divergence" behavior by refusing to accommodate or converge to his conversation partner. Jesus' divergent behavior may indicate that, even though Judas addressed him in Aramaic, his rejoinder to Judas was in Greek. In fact, Jesus was stone cold and straightforward with his reply: "Companion, do what you came for" (v. 50).[50] Most importantly, immediately after his reply, the men, who were possibly Roman soldiers (with swords and clubs; v. 47), stepped in and arrested him. It is highly unlikely that a Roman soldier would know Aramaic.[51]

49.   This is in contrast to the use of the term φίλος (friend). See Louw and Nida, *Lexicon*, 1.447. But cf. the comments shared by other scholars on this particular address (Davies and Allison, *Matthew*, 3:509; Brown, *Death of the Messiah*, 256–57).

50.   The Greek text reads Ἑταῖρε, ἐφ' ὃ πάρει (Friend, on what *occasion* are you here?). Some scholars have shared the opinion that the tone of this verse is somewhat ironic. Cf. Hagner, *Matthew 14–28*, 789; and Nolland, *Matthew*, 1110.

51.   Marrou, *History of Education in Antiquity*, 256.

7.3 The Sanhedrin Trial (Matt 26:57–27:10)

The Sanhedrin trial in Matthew's account contains three epi-
sodes that may not follow a chronological order.[52] Nevertheless,
whereas the episode of Peter disowning Jesus (26:69–75) gives
us a clue that Peter probably spoke Greek with the men who tried
to identify him with Jesus, the episode of Judas hanging himself
(27:1–10) provides us with several options relating to the chro-
nology of the episodes from Jesus' trial before the Sanhedrin to
his trial before Pilate. The information about the Sanhedrin's
decision in 27:1–2, when joined immediately with 27:11, seems
to give a logical flow to the narrative. If this is the case, the
account of Judas hanging himself (27:3–10) can be taken as an
event that happened at a later time. The reason is that it was
impossible for the chief priests and the elders of the people to be
at two places at the same time. Matthew says that "All (πάντες)
the chief priests and the elders of the people took counsel to put
Jesus to death. And binding (δήσαντες) him, they led him away
and delivered him to Pilate the governor" (27:1–2).[53] If all the
chief priests and the elders were with Jesus on the way to Pilate's
residence, there would have been no one left to deal with Judas's
returning of the thirty pieces of silver. Alternatively, however, it
is equally possible that this Judas event occurred before Jesus
was delivered to Pilate. Matthew tells us that "When Judas, who
had betrayed him, saw (ἰδών) that Jesus was condemned…he
returned the thirty pieces of silver" (27:3). The question now is
what language did Judas speak with the chief priests and elders
in the presence of Jesus and all those who were present in the
assembly.[54]

The participants in this episode consist of Jesus, the arresting
crowd, Caiaphas and the members of the Sanhedrin, false wit-
nesses, the temple guards, Peter (the other disciples had deserted

52.   For a survey of the areas of scholarly debate regarding this episode,
see Bock, "Blasphemy," 589–667.

53.   Both πάντες and δήσαντες agree in case, number, and gender.

54.   While it is not the purpose of this study to determine the language of
Judas here, it is likely that Judas spoke Greek with the chief priests, especially
in the presence of the whole gathering of people.

Jesus already, v. 56),[55] and, possibly, Judas. In addition, Bock points out that during that time "The city was filled with Galilean pilgrims celebrating Passover."[56] The setting of this episode is the Sanhedrin assembly in the temple (27:5), and is definitely a formal setting, especially with the presence of a large gathering of people. There are several reasons, worth highlighting, that would point to the use of Greek in this episode. First, it is highly unlikely that in this kind of formal setting with a large number of participants this episode transpired in Aramaic, even though the conversation was only between Jesus and Caiaphas. Second, it is imperative in this kind of scenario or social domain to use the *lingua franca* or contact language of the community for the benefit of all the participants. Third, Jesus' words also contain high information but low affective content: "You have said so. But I say to all of you: From now on you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Mighty One and coming on the clouds of heaven" (26:64). This is the third time that Jesus announced his messiahship, and this time, it was more explicit than the previous ones (26:45, 53). He will announce his messiahship one final time when he appears before Pilate (27:11). Fourth, the false testimonies brought up against Jesus, along with the high priest's coercion of Jesus to admit that he was the messiah, did not deter Jesus from showing a divergent behavior towards them—"Jesus remained silent" (26:63). This silence on Jesus' part is an outright refusal to accommodate the high priest's question. And assuming the high priests have asked Jesus in Aramaic, Jesus' response in 26:64 would likely have been in Greek. Fifth and last, even the men who accused Peter that "surely you are one of them," may have asked Peter in Greek, as they said to him, "your accent gives you away" (26:73). Did they mean that Peter had an Aramaic or Greek

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55. France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 979, says that from here on the disciples have disappeared and will only reappear after Jesus' resurrection (28:16–20).

56. Bock, "Blasphemy," 606.

accent? The answer to this partly depends upon what Peter's mother tongue was.[57]

Scholars have usually applied the Semitic language criterion to the phrase σὺ εἶ ὁ Χριστὸς ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ εὐλογητοῦ ("Are you the Christ, the son of the Blessed One?") and ἐκ δεξιῶν καθήμενον τῆς δυνάμεως ("seated at the right hand of power") in Mark 14:61–62 (cf. Matt 26:64//Luke 22:67–69) to argue that these phrases are Jewish expressions and therefore can lay claim to authenticity.[58] However, it is important to note that this Semitic criterion is solely dependent upon the belief that both the high priest and Jesus were exclusively Aramaic speakers, that these phrases were originally uttered in Aramaic, that they were in fact Jewish expressions, and that authentic material is one that reflects Aramaic features.[59] But, as I have shown here, that the original and underlying sociolinguistic context of the actual speech event in this episode that parallels Mark 14:61–62 necessitated the use of Greek language instead of Aramaic, we can consequently argue, without relying on these "Aramaic original assumptions" or other criteria, that this event is authentic.

7.5 The Trial before Pilate (Matt 27:11–26)

Following his trial before the Sanhedrin, Jesus was brought to the governor's residence. The participants in this episode are Jesus, Pilate, the chief priests and elders, a large crowd, and

57.   While Vermes, *Jesus the Jew*, 52–54, points out that Peter speaks a different Aramaic dialect different from that of the Judeans, it is important to note that λαλιά (accent) refers to "the particular manner of speech" (Louw and Nida, *Lexicon*, 1:400) of a person and thus may not necessarily refer to a different dialect, which can mean "a particular form of speech." For this reason, it is equally possible that the actual conversation here may have transpired in either Greek or Aramaic.

58.   For arguments against the authenticity of these expressions, see Anderson, *Mark*, 331; and Juel, *Messiah and Temple*, 78–79. For a defense of its historicity, see Shubert, "Biblical Criticism Criticised," 385–402.

59.   Similarly, because these expressions belong to an episode that is well attested in both the canonical Gospels and a number of non-canonical Gospels, the criteria of rejection and execution and multiple attestation have also been applied to this text. See Bock, "Blasphemy," 589–92, 609.

Pilate's wife. The setting, being in the governor's residence, perhaps a palace or a *praetorium* (v. 27), is a formal one, particularly as it was customary during this Festival for the people to gather together to choose the prisoner they wanted the governor to set free (vv. 15–17). The appearance of the people before the city's governor or highest official makes a particular speech event or social domain a very formal one whether today or in Jesus' time. All these factors would suggest the use of the community's *lingua franca* or official language, that is, Greek, as the medium of communication, especially considering that it is unlikely that Pilate would speak Aramaic with Jesus. More likely is the use of Latin, as the short response of Jesus—"you have said so"—may suggest that he did know some Latin.[60] This is not impossible, since, compared to the previous episode, Jesus' reply to the high priest did not end with "you have said so." Instead, he gave an announcement to the public about the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven (26:64). Nevertheless, the continuing discussion between Pilate and the crowd and the chief priests and the elders should mitigate seeing their conversation transpiring in Latin, without necessarily saying that Jesus' reply to Pilate was not in Latin. The use of Latin, moreover, may have largely been confined to conversations among Roman government officials.[61] Even if we suppose that an interpreter was present—although the Gospel narratives make no mention of an interpreter—it is very difficult to see what the sequence of the actual conversation between Pilate, Jesus, the chief priests and elders, and the crowd would have looked like. Presumably, if we stick to the belief that these participants were monolinguals who did not know any other language besides their native tongue, this scenario will have required a number of interpreters.[62]

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60.   Cf. Porter, *The Criteria of Authenticity*, 134, 147.
61.   Fitzmyer, "Languages of Palestine," 129–33.
62.   See Roberts, *Greek*, 161–62.

8. Conclusion

Allowing for the possibility that Jesus could speak fluently in both Greek and Aramaic (including Hebrew) suggests that the recorded Jesus sayings in the Gospel accounts could have transpired in either one of these two languages depending upon the sociolinguistic factors that affected the particular speech event or episode.[63] As such, the search for Semitisms, Aramaisms, or Hebraisms in the Gospel texts, which characterizes most of the scholarly discussions on this authenticating language criterion, becomes superfluous.[64] This is not to say that Jesus was in every way a Greek as he was a Jew. But it is to say that, even though his mother tongue was Aramaic and his cultural and religious background was Jewish, he could and should have spoken Greek by virtue of the fact that Greek was most likely the *lingua franca* of ancient Palestine and that Jesus was a well-known itinerant Jewish rabbi. Without being able to speak Greek fluently, Jesus' mission and his teachings would only have been confined to some particular audience groups and restricted to a few geographical areas in Palestine. But the accounts in the Gospels tell us that this was not the case (see, for example, Matt 4:23–25). Following this line of thinking, I deem it necessary to recalibrate and reformulate this linguistic criterion for authenticating Jesus' words in the Gospel texts. To be sure, the influence of form criticism on approaching the study of the literary forms of the Gospel texts as "individual units" of Jesus traditions invented and developed by the early church as well as on making a strict bifurcation between Jewish and Hellenistic elements must now be abandoned after our investigation of the linguistic situation of ancient Palestine.[65] Jesus lived in a different socio-cultural

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63.   It is likely that Jesus probably read the Scripture in Hebrew or in Greek (LXX) in the synagogue (e.g., Luke 4:16–19).

64.   One of the vehement proponents of the Aramaic hypothesis is Casey, "Aramaic Approach," 275–78; Casey, "Which Language?" 326–28; and Casey, *Aramaic Sources*.

65.   The idea is that the presence of Semitisms suggests proximity to Jesus' historical context. See Jeremias, *The Parables of Jesus*. For a summary

milieu from what we have previously thought. While some scholars like Stuckenbruck might continue to argue that a linguistic criterion cannot stand on its own, I have shown in this article that this is not necessarily true. This type of top-to-bottom approach, where one begins with the Gospel text and works back to understand its linguistic context based upon some authenticating criteria, in my opinion, cannot produce accurate results and can be remedied by a bottom-to-top approach. This alternate approach, which is based upon multilingualism theories from the field of sociolinguistics, starts with an investigation of the linguistic context behind the text in order to understand what is at stake in the Gospel texts.

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of the works of major form critics, see Taylor, *Gospel Tradition*, 11–21. Corollary to this old formulation of the Semitic language criterion is the criterion of dissimilarity (and double dissimilarity), the presuppositions of which are clearly untenable when Jesus' actual sociolinguistic background is taken into account. For a list of reasons why this criterion is extremely problematic, see Nicklas, "Alternatives," 719–24.

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