

Sang-Il Lee

Jesus and Gospel Traditions in Bilingual Context

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A Study in the Interdirectionality of Language

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For my family,
Lee, Seong-Hwa (이성화)
Noh, Geong-Ae (노경애)
Chae, Soo-Jung (채수정)
Lee, Un (이은)
Lee, Sol (이솔)

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Bilingualism is everywhere in my life. My daughters who were born in UK and grew up in USA are early bilinguals in English and Korean. My parents under Japanese colonial domination became late bilinguals in Korean and Japanese. They had to use both Korean and Japanese names under the Nation Obliteration Policy of Korean culture and language. Both Durham Korean Church in Durham, UK and Korean Presbyterian Church of Purdue in West Lafayette, IN, USA where I have served are bilingual Christian communities like Christian churches in Jerusalem and the Roman Near East in the first century AD. Such linguistic-related situations inspired me to make an attempt to write this topic.

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ἐξ αὐτοῦ καὶ δι' αὐτοῦ καὶ εἰς αὐτὸν τὰ πάντα·
αὐτῷ ἡ δόξα εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας,
ἀμήν.

Yong-In, Korea
Dec. 2011

Sang-Il Lee.

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Abbreviations

The following abbreviations are in addition to those found in Patrick H. Alexander et al., eds., *The SBL Handbook of Style: For Ancient Near Eastern, Biblical, and Early Christian Studies* (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 1999).

<i>Bap. Inst.</i>	Harkins, Paul W. (translated and annotated) <i>St. John Chrysostom: Baptismal Instructions, Ancient Christian Writers</i> (Westminster, Maryland: Newman Press, 1963)
<i>Beg.</i>	Foakes-Jackson, F. J. and Kirsopp Lake (eds.) <i>The Beginnings of Christianity Part 1: The Acts of the Apostles</i> 5 Vols. (London: Macmillan, 1920–1933).
CESG	Kiraz, George Anton <i>Comparative Edition of the Syriac Gospels: Aligning the Sinaiticus, Curetonianus, Peshitta and Harklean Versions</i> 4 Vols. (NTTS 21/1-4; Leiden: Brill, 1996–2004)
<i>CIJ</i>	Frey, J.-B. <i>Corpus Inscriptionum Judaicarum</i> 2 Vols. (Roma: Pontificio Istituto di Archeologia Cristiana, 1936–1952)
<i>ESE</i>	Lidzbarski, Mark <i>Ephemeris für Semitische Epigraphik</i> 3 Vols. (Giessen: Alfred Töpelmann, 1900–1915)
<i>Fraser</i>	Fraser, P. M. <i>Ptolemaic Alexandria</i> 3 Vols. (Oxford: Clarendon, 1972)
<i>GLAJJ</i>	Stern, Menahem <i>Greek and Latin Authors on Jews and Judaism</i> 3 vols. (Jerusalem: Publications of Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities, 1974–1984)
<i>GLICM</i>	Lehmann, Clayton Miles and Kenneth G. Holum <i>The Greek and Latin Inscriptions of Caesarea Maritima</i> (ASOR 5; Boston, MA: ASOR, 2000)
<i>IGCH</i>	Thompson, Margaret, Otto Mørkholm, and Colin Kraay (eds.) <i>An Inventory of Greek Coin Hoards</i> (New York: American Numismatic Society, 1973)

JIGRE	Horbury, William and David Noy <i>Jewish Inscriptions of Graeco-Roman Egypt: With an Index of the Jewish Inscriptions of Egypt and Cyrenaica</i> (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992)
K-G	Kühner, Raphael and Bernhard Gerth <i>Ausführliche Grammatik der Griechischen Sprache</i> 2 Vols. (Hannover: Verlag Hahnsche Buchhandlung, 1976)
Liddell-Scott	Liddell, H.G. and R. Scott <i>Greek-English Lexicon</i> (Oxford: Clarendon, 1940)
LJNLA	Ilan, Tal <i>Lexicon of Jewish Names in Late Antiquity Part I Palestine 330 BCE – 200 CE</i> (TSAJ 91; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2002)
P. Col.	Westermann, W. L., E. S. Hasenoeuhl, C. W. Keyes, and H. Liebesny (ed.) <i>Zenon Papri: Business Papers of the Third Century B.C. Dealing with Palestine and Egypt</i> 2 Vols. (NY: Columbia University Press, 1934-1940)
Schürer	Schürer, Emil, Geza Vermes, Fergus Millar, and Matthew Black <i>The History of the Jewish People in the Age of Jesus Christ</i> 3 Vols. (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1973–1987)
Vaganay-Amphoux	Vaganay, Leon and Christian-Bernard Amphoux <i>An Introduction to New Testament Textual Criticism</i> (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991)
VGT	Moulton, James Hope and George Milligan <i>The Vocabulary of the Greek Testament Illustrated from the Papyri and Other Non-Literary Sources</i> (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1959)
Wadd.	Waddington, W. H and Philippe Le Bas <i>Inscriptions grecques et latines recueillies en Grèce et en Asie Mineure</i> (Paris: Firmin-Didot frères, 1870)
W-H	Westcott, Brooke Foss and Fenton John Anthony Hort <i>The Greek New Testament with Comparative Apparatus Showing Variations from the Nestle-Aland and Robinson-Pierpont Editions with Greek Dictionary Revised and Expanded from a Pocket Lexicon to the Greek New Testament by Alexander Souter</i> (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2007 [1885])
Zeraim	Epstein, Isidore <i>The Babylonian Talmud, Seder Zeraim</i> (London: Soncino Press, 1948)

1. The Directionality of the Transmission of the Jesus and Gospel Traditions: A History of Research

When biblical scholars investigate major issues of gospel studies, many of them assume three unidirectionality¹ hypotheses of transmission of Jesus and gospel traditions. According to traditional wisdom, Jesus and gospel traditions were unidirectionally transmitted from Judaeo-Palestinian tradition into Hellenistic tradition (i.e. geographical unidirectionality), from oral tradition into written tradition (i.e. modal unidirectionality), and from Aramaic tradition into Greek tradition (i.e. linguistic unidirectionality), and never *vice versa*.² These three might be called the unidirectionality hypotheses of the transmission of the Jesus and gospel traditions.³ Scholars have supposed that the former three

-
- 1 The terms, “unidirectional” and “unidirectionality” are drawn from one of five principles of grammaticalization (§6.2.2.2).
 - 2 Kilpatrick’s remark, for instance, demonstrates this view. He (1970:170) mentions that “*it is generally agreed* that the tradition about Jesus made two *migrations* in this order: first there was the *migration* from Aramaic to Greek and, second, the *migration* from oral to written form” [emphasis added]. Also, Cadbury (1958:62) writes that the Gospel of Luke “or at least much of it, has passed through two other processes—transfer from oral to written form, translation from Aramaic to Greek...” Further, he (1958:27-8) suggests, “The gospel was transferred not only from Aramaic to Greek – but from Palestine to Europe, and from Jews to Gentiles.” Criticizing the “transfer” used by Cadbury, Sanders (1969:196) convincingly argues that “No doubt Cadbury actually does not think that the gospel left Palestine when it entered Europe, but that notion springs up here. It seems to lie hidden under the thinking of many scholars.” For Sanders’s detailed criticism, see §1.5.3.
 - 3 In addition, there is the unidirectionality hypothesis of the length of the Jesus and gospel traditions. It is usually assumed that shorter tradition developed into longer tradition. In other words, the shorter, the earlier. Bultmann (1961:41-2) considers “increasing” as a law governing the transmission of tradition. He explains, “Whenever narratives pass from mouth to mouth, the central point of the narrative and general structure are well preserved; but in the incidental details changes take place, for imagination paints such details with increasing distinctness.” Jeremias (1967:89-90; cf. 1971:195; cf. §1.4.1.3), for instance, supposes that “according to all that we know about the tendency of liturgical texts to conform to certain laws in their transmission, in a case where the shorter version is contained in the longer one, the shorter text is to be regarded as original.” On the other hand, Vincent Taylor

traditions (i.e. Judaeo-Palestinian, oral, and Aramaic) are earlier than the three later traditions (i.e. Hellenistic, written, and Greek). The geographical, the modal, and the linguistic unidirectionality hypotheses are based on the chronological unidirectionality hypothesis: the earlier, the more original. Contrary to this consensus, this study will expose the deficiencies of these presuppositions and, thus, rethink the chief principles of Gospel criticism.

When the bilingualism of first-century Palestine and the Roman Near East is considered seriously, it must be granted that the Jesus and gospel traditions were interdirectionally transmitted. In other words, there was a complex and interactive relationship between Judaeo-Palestinian and Hellenistic tradition, between oral and written tradition, and between Aramaic and Greek tradition.

In this chapter, three hypotheses of unidirectionality will be examined. First of all, Gunkel, as the progenitor of unidirectionality, will be investigated (§1.1). I will then discuss the three hypotheses of unidirectionality: *Sitz im Leben* unidirectionality (§1.2), modal unidirectionality (§1.3), and linguistic unidirectionality (§1.4). Finally, I will propose an alternative to these by introducing a hypothesis of interdirectionality (§1.5).

1.1 Herman Gunkel

Herman Gunkel was the first to introduce form criticism and the concepts of oral tradition and oral transmission in a full-dressed debate. Gunkel was the foremost scholar of the *religionsgeschichtliche Schule*. Although his major publications in his later years centered more on Old Testament Studies,⁴ his methodology was highly influential in New Testament scholarship as well.

(1935:124) wrote, "The experiments show that the tendency of oral transmission is definitely in the direction of *abbreviation*. Additions are certainly made in all good faith through misunderstandings and efforts to picture the course of events, but almost always the stories become shorter and more conventional [emphasis in the original]. However, Charlesworth (1994:2-3; here 2) persuasively argues, "My study of the transmission of early Jewish writings ... reveals *no rule* that texts, including liturgical documents, are *expanded* through transmission" [emphasis in the original]. For a detailed criticism of Bultmann's law of increasing distinctness, see Keylock 1975:193-210. Also, for criticisms of the unidirectionality hypothesis of length, see Farmer 1964:230; Sanders 1969:246; in relation to the Gospel of Thomas, see McArthur 1960:67; Frye 1978:263; Meier 1991:132.

4 Known as an Old Testament scholar, Gunkel started his academic career as a New Testament scholar and continued to deal with New Testament literature throughout

Above all, Gunkel detected that there was something “original” behind a text itself. He thought of the original as the oral tradition of the biblical narratives in the *Sitz im Leben* of ancient Israel. This attempt to locate the original diverted New Testament scholars’ concern from the texts themselves to something behind the texts. Form critics sought to find tradition that was “closer” to this oral tradition behind the Synoptic Gospels themselves (§1.2). Bultmann (1934:1) clearly states that the purpose of form criticism is to investigate the development of the oral tradition before the written documents. The Scandinavian school (which stood in opposition to form critics; cf. Sanders 1985:14) was thoroughly shaped by Gunkel’s method concerning oral transmission before the written tradition (§1.3.1; §1.5.2.3). As a consequence, the chief teachings of Gunkel are still reflected in contemporary New Testament publications regarding oral tradition and oral transmission.

Despite his enormous contribution, many scholars discussing oral transmission and oral tradition neglect to mention his publications directly.⁵ Ironically, form critics soon dismissed the significance of the oral tradition when dealing with the transmission of the Jesus and gospel traditions.⁶ Although New Testament scholars have disregarded Gunkel for approximately a hundred years, it is Gunkel who should occupy a prominent place when discussing the idea of something

his life. His contribution to New Testament studies is discussed in detail in Kümmel 1972:217-8, 230, 248-53, 257-9.

- 5 Despite Gunkel’s tremendous contribution to oral tradition in relation to New Testament scholarship, New Testament scholars who deal with oral tradition have by no means held a debate on Gunkel’s works in their major publications on the oral tradition: Bryan 1993; Byrskog 2000; Millard 2000; Dewey 1989; 1994a; 2001; 2008; Dunn 2003; Fowler 1991; Henaut 1993; Horsley 1999; 2001; Kelber 1983; Riesenfeld 1970; Taylor 1956. Kelber notes Gunkel twice (1983:96, 107) in order to reinforce his argument, but does not pay careful attention to Gunkel’s view of oral tradition. Millard (2000:186, 197) and Horsley (2001:151) simply mention the point that form critics were influenced by Gunkel. Henaut (1993:28-9) also summarizes Gunkel’s theory briefly by citing McKnight (1969). It is regrettable that the rest of the above mentioned scholars have not been more attentive to Gunkel’s publications. Also, Gunkel’s proposition that “retelling generates variants” is repeated in modern scholars’ arguments; David Parker (§1.5.2.2), Samuel Byrskog (§1.5.2.3), and Harry Gamble (§1.5.2.4), however, do not cite Gunkel. However, credit is due to Culley and Güttgemanns. Culley (1986) summarizes Gunkel’s arguments in relation to the *formgeschichtliche Schule*. When Güttgemanns (1979:235-57) criticizes the arguments of the *formgeschichtliche Schule* in detail, he convincingly rebuts Gunkel’s arguments.
- 6 Bultmann (1968:6) comments that “it is at this point a matter of indifference whether the tradition were oral or written.” Also Dibelius (1934:10) claimed that “it is of little value to distinguish these processes simply by the index word ‘oral tradition’.”

original behind the texts. With this in mind, my history of research will begin with him.

In the late nineteenth century, source critics like Wellhausen claimed that the Pentateuch developed from previous documents. JEDP became shorthand for the four major sources that were supposedly combined and edited by later writers.⁷ Gunkel, however, argued for a precompositional stage before the documents were fixed. In the introduction to his ground-breaking commentary on the book of Genesis (1997:vii-lxxxvi), he explained the major characteristics of the oral and written traditions of the Old Testament.

Above all, Gunkel drew a sharp contrast between oral and written tradition. According to him (1997:viii), narratives of Genesis preserved a form called the “legend,” which was to be distinguished from “history” because the legend was usually derived from an oral tradition, whereas history is a written form. He (1997:viii) supposes that oral tradition was not a satisfactory vehicle for history since “oral tradition cannot remain pure over time.” The oral tradition was ultimately produced within the *Sitz im Leben* of the community of ancient Israel (1997:xxvi-xxvii).

In this respect, oral tradition produced variants. He (1997:lvi) pointed out that oral retelling often generated narrative variations. When tradition was orally circulated in the community of Israel through various times, it would have changed in each retelling. He (1997:lvi) asserted that “the legend exists in variants, as do all oral traditions.”⁸ However, he (1997:lvi) argued that even though the oral tradition caused minor variations, the variations often still agreed in overall outline, even sometimes in wording. Regarding the proposed various solutions to the synoptic problem, he (1997:208) insightfully commented that scholars have paid more attention to the writings that fixed the tradition than to the oral tradition so that the synoptic problem became complicated in modern biblical exegesis (see n. 25).

What is more, Gunkel was concerned about the relationship between oral and written tradition, which has had a significant influence upon gospel studies. He claimed that the oral tradition and the written tradition did not interact with each other. He (1997:lxix) presumed that during oral transmission, many collectors already had begun the very long process of the documentation of the oral legends, when they

7 Despite his rejection of the methodological presuppositions of the *religionsgeschichtliche Schule*, Wellhausen (1905:3, 43, 51-2, 94, 97-8, 107, 113-5) consented to Gunkel's position; cf. Kümmel 1972:282, 445.

8 Ironically, oral tradition was more original but more fluid, which leads to Bultmann's skepticism of history including the historical Jesus (§1.2.2).

feared that the oral tradition would disappear. When the writers as collectors assembled previously-existing oral traditions that were isolated and independent, they created only connecting pieces linking the oral traditions together. Furthermore, Gunkel (1997:lxix) assumed that the fixed written form of the oral tradition would have terminated "the other surviving remnants of oral tradition." Thus, his assertions diverted scholarly attention away from literary sources and towards the oral forms behind the fixed written forms.

Gunkel's views of the oral tradition warrant several challenges. First of all, Gunkel classifies several oral genres within the Old Testament narrative and thus sets the oral traditions against history, as if there is a necessary dichotomy between them. However, why should the oral traditions not be regarded as "historical"? As to the "historicity" of oral tradition, Byrskog (§1.5.2.3) persuasively argues that "oral history" should be understood as oral stories which interact with history in first-century Palestine as well as in ancient times. Another of Gunkel's weak points lies in his view of the relationship between the oral and the written tradition. He insisted that the oral traditions died out with the written documentation of the biblical narratives. In his view, textual tradition was intended to supplant oral tradition, not to supplement it. The relation between orality and textuality is not that of a partnership but rather of a competition. However, according to recent studies in orality and literacy in ancient times, Greek textuality played a role supportive of orality (cf. §1.5.2). Furthermore, as Gunkel assumed, once oral tradition is changed into written tradition, it is not necessarily so that the written tradition still remains in the written form without oral re-performance. Rather, it is natural that the written tradition is changed into another oral tradition through oral performance again. If we assume that the primary method of human communication in ancient times was orality rather than literacy, it should be thought that the directionality of the transmission of the biblical narratives is not "unidirectional" from oral to written, but "interdirectional" between the oral and the written tradition.

Accordingly, there is a serious problem with Gunkel's two assumptions, that is, with his concept of the oral tradition and his view of the relationship between the oral and the written traditions. This problem lies in the fact that the directionality of the transmission of the biblical narratives was seen as "unidirectional." In other words, he saw it as moving only from oral tradition to written tradition and never *vice versa*. Consequently, the unidirectionality (that is, the unilinear and

teleological view⁹) of the transmission causes both Old Testament and New Testament scholars to focus on the written traditions as their final fixed forms. In this sense, Gunkel is the progenitor of the unidirectionality hypothesis of the transmission of the biblical narratives. These chronic obstacles that Gunkel could not iron out in his publications left his successors to be heirs to the same problems repeatedly in their publications.

1.2 *Sitz im Leben* Unidirectionality from Judaeo-Palestinian into Hellenistic Tradition

Form and redaction critics have emphasized *Sitz im Leben* unidirectionality. Furthermore, they presuppose two other kinds of unidirectionality: modal unidirectionality and linguistic unidirectionality, although they have tended to assume that *Sitz im Leben* unidirectionality is more important than the other two. Here, three representative scholars will be discussed: Martin Dibelius (§1.2.1), Rudolf Bultmann (§1.2.2), and more recently, Gerd Theissen (§1.2.3).

1.2.1 Martin Dibelius

Borrowing the overall conception of oral tradition from Gunkel,¹⁰ Dibelius applied form criticism to analyzing “purer forms” behind the gospel tradition. In his *From Tradition to Gospel* he used three key dichotomies to sift single discrete “traditions” from the “Gospel.” He set oral tradition, Aramaic tradition, and eyewitness testimony in opposition to written tradition, Greek tradition, and eyewitness preaching. In his view, the first three traditions are transmitted to the latter three counterparts in a unidirectional way. Consequently, the first three traditions are more original. When dealing with sayings by Jesus and stories about Jesus, Dibelius argued that the first three manifestations represented purer forms than their counterparts.

Dibelius (1936:28) assumed that single discrete traditions by and about Jesus were circulated in oral form before the Synoptic Gospels

9 Kelber (1983:8) considers Bultmann’s view “teleological.” Also criticizing Bultmann’s argument, Güttgemanns uses “linear.” He (1979:100; cf. Kelber 1983:8) says, “The evangelists are only the last link in the chain of a linear development over a longer period of time.”

10 Dibelius (1934:3-7) admitted that he borrowed basic conceptions such as “smallest details,” “form criticism,” and “*Sitz im Leben*” from Gunkel.

were written down in the fixed form unidirectionally. His argument of unidirectional transmission started with the illiteracy of Jesus' disciples and eyewitnesses. (i) Because of their social status as indicated by their occupations, he supposed that Jesus' disciples would not write down the Jesus tradition, but simply deliver it orally.¹¹ (ii) He (1936:35) also considered that "the eye-witnesses of this life were not writers, and we cannot presume that they had any desire to hand down a history of what they had seen."

Interestingly, his assumption of their illiteracy might stem from his view of the Aramaic archaeological findings of his day. According to the evidence available to him, Dibelius (1934:32; cf. 1935:74) thought that the Aramaic tradition was not long in existence, since the Aramaic written tradition was not attested in the first or second century. The fact that the Nazarene Gospel for Aramaic speakers in Syria was translated from Greek implies that "there was no Aramaic source of the life of Jesus." Dibelius' presupposition about the Aramaic tradition might be well exposed when he mentions that "the formulation in Aramaic did not become very firm and was never ready for writing down." Accordingly, it seems that his contemporary archaeological evidence caused him to make a sharper distinction between Aramaic and Greek traditions; Aramaic was associated with the oral tradition, whereas Greek was associated with the written tradition. In other words, he (1934:32-5; 1935:73-6) assumed that the oral tradition was circulated in Aramaic and then was written in Greek in a unidirectional way.

As to the rendering of the Jesus tradition from Aramaic into Greek, he dealt with procedure, accuracy, and style in detail. As to procedure, interestingly, he (1949:25) observed that the translation is carried out not in "a single unified process" but in "a multiple process." He (1934:34; 1949:25) illustrated two instances of the translation of Aramaic into Greek tradition. Jewish people who could understand stories about Jesus in Aramaic in the Jerusalem church most likely passed them on in Greek at their own home in Syria. Also, bilingual evangelists from Jerusalem might have delivered the stories in Greek to Phoenicia, Cyprus, and Antioch (Acts 11:19-20). Regarding the quality, he takes for granted that the translation was carried out with great fidelity to the testimony of living eyewitnesses. He (1949:32) wrote, "They, especially the personal disciples of Jesus, would have been in a position to correct any

11 He (1939:125) stated: "one must remind himself who these disciples were: for the most part Galilean fishermen, tax gatherers, perhaps also farm-labourers, unfamiliar with the literary practices of the world and probably not even accustomed to writing..." For discussion of bilingualism of disciples, see §3.2.6.

egregious misrepresentation." In terms of the style of the Greek traditions, he conceded that the Gospels have some solecisms. However, he (1934:34) did not regard Semitisms as defective translations except in incidental cases of wrong translations. Rather, he (1934:35; 1935:74-5) raised three possibilities for the Semitisms: unconscious dependence upon the diction of the Septuagint, conscious imitation of the style of the Old Testament, and the development of later Greek in general (see chapter 1 n.14; cf. §6.1.5). On this basis, he (1934:35) asserted that "it is impossible to solve the problem of the existence and nature of an Aramaic tradition by the evidence of Semitisms." Accordingly, Dibelius (1934:32; 1935:73-4; 1936:46; 1949:31) concluded that the Aramaic tradition is of little theological significance. Also, he (1934:10) argued that "it is of little value to distinguish these processes simply by the index word 'oral tradition.'" Then, he directed his attention from the linguistic and modal transmissions to the issue of *Sitz im Leben*, that is, the change from "testimony" to "preaching" by the eyewitnesses.

Dibelius (1936:52) suggested that "unnamed and unknown" eyewitnesses played a significant role in the transmission of the Jesus tradition. He (1934:182-3; 1935:80; 1936:49-50) enumerated two instances of eyewitnesses from the Gospel of Mark. One is the youth who fled naked after leaving his linen cloth (Mk 14:51-52); the other is Simon of Cyrene who carried Jesus' cross (Mk 15:21). He (1936:50; 1949:32) supposed that before the composition of the Gospel of Mark, a passion narrative originated among eyewitnesses who orally circulated this story in Christian communities when numerous witnesses of these events were still alive. According to Dibelius (1934:183-9; 1936:47-8), long before there was a written gospel, the earliest Christians began to read Old Testament passages into the passion of Jesus on the ground of their Easter faith, so that the story about his passion has been formed in the course of the "preaching" of public worship. He (1936:47-8) posited that these "preachings" of interpretations of passages in the Old Testament became more persuasive to the churches than the simple "testimonies" of the eyewitnesses, such as the women who were stunned or the disciples who were frightened away by their enemy. As a consequence of this, the testimonies of eyewitnesses have been interpreted in a different way in the process of the preaching by eyewitnesses.

Dibelius took "preaching" seriously in his argument. On the basis of the Lukan prologue (Lk 1:1-2) he (1934:12; 1936:52) observed that, from the beginning, the unnamed and unknown eyewitnesses of Jesus were at the same time missionaries, preachers, and teachers who preached the gospel of the Christ. He (1934:14-5; cf. 1934:26-7) claimed that "preaching" should be regarded as "all possible forms of Christian

propaganda" such as "mission preaching, preaching during worship, and catechumen instruction." On this score, the preaching of eyewitnesses makes a significant contribution to the formation of the traditions of the Synoptic Gospels. This is because the evangelists were only collectors or redactors of the preaching.¹² Accordingly, Dibelius suggested that the gospel tradition was formed in the process of the preaching in the *Sitz im Leben* of the earliest Christian communities.

Dibelius, in large part, accepted Gunkel's insight into the oral tradition and the oral transmission behind the fixed texts. In doing so, he made a great contribution to gospel studies but he also repeated Gunkel's mistakes. In terms of the transmission of the synoptic tradition, he affirmed the unidirectional hypotheses of the Jesus traditions from oral into written tradition, from Aramaic into Greek tradition, and from Judaeo-Palestinian into Hellenistic tradition.

Dibelius has some deficiencies due to his commitment to the unidirectional hypotheses. First of all, he failed to iron out Gunkel's ambiguous understanding of "the oral tradition." He assumed that the Jesus tradition was transmitted unidirectionally from oral into written tradition on the basis of apocalyptic considerations.¹³ However, Dibelius deserved the same criticism that I leveled against Gunkel: *Should we suppose that the written tradition fixed on the basis of the oral tradition also no longer continued to change into the oral tradition repeatedly?* Furthermore, his concept of "preaching" was unclear. Stendahl (1968:14) persuasively argued that "the ambiguity of the word 'Predigt' has led to ambiguity in Dibelius's train of argument." In his view, missionaries, preachers, and teachers preached about Jesus and shaped the tradition accordingly. This preaching, such as missionary preaching, preaching during Christian worship, and catechetical instruction had to have been delivered in oral forms again. This implies that we cannot make a dis-

12 He (1936:52) mentioned, "Even before the Gospels in our sense arose, anonymous gatherers of tradition made beginnings of small collections which afterwards entered into the more inclusive works of the Evangelists and which, therefore, were no longer separately preserved. It was not the purpose of these collectors to write books, but to pass on tradition. Even the earliest Evangelists really intended nothing else. Thus the tradition of Jesus only gradually became literature, and this took place not on account of the literary ability of any author but by virtue of the significance of its content."

13 He (1934:9) remarked that "The company of unlettered people which expected the end of the world any day had neither the capacity nor the inclination for the production of books; we must not predicate a true literary activity in the Christian Church of the first two or three decades." For a criticism of this apocalyptic view, see Ellis 1978:243; 1999b:53-4; Millard 2000:198-9. For more discussion of the earliest written tradition in parallel with oral tradition, see §1.3.3, §1.5.2.5.

inction between the oral tradition before the textual composition and the oral tradition after the textual composition. Rather, his concept of “preaching” lends support to the interdirectional hypothesis because, after the oral tradition was documented, the written materials most likely were used as “various kinds of preaching” in oral forms again.

Second, as to the linguistic transmission from Aramaic to Greek,¹⁴ Dibelius (1934:34; 1949:25) argued that bilingual Christians took significant roles in linguistic transmission of the Jesus tradition in Phoenicia, Cyprus, and Syria (e.g. Antioch). There are two problems here. (i) He presupposed that Syrian Jews spoke Greek at home. However, although the linguistic milieu of Syria was bilingual Aramaic and Greek, it seems that Aramaic was still used dominantly in the home, whereas Greek was employed as a public language (§4.3). (ii) He (1949:25) argued that it was at Antioch in northern Syria that the Jesus tradition was translated from Aramaic into Greek because there were many bilingual members in Antioch. Also, he (1934:20) mentioned that bilingual Antioch “was obviously a much more significant starting-point for missionary activities than Jerusalem, which was relatively uni-lingual.” However, his argument would have been more persuasive if he had taken the bilingualism of first-century Palestine and the Roman Near East more seriously (cf. chapters 3 and 4). I will propose that the bilingual situations imply that the Jesus tradition was translated into Greek during Jesus’ ministry (chapter 3) as well as in the earliest Christian community in Jerusalem (chapter 5).

Third, one of Dibelius’ faults is his assumption on the basis of his contemporary archaeological evidence that Aramaic is to be seen as the oral vehicle, whereas Greek is to be seen as the vehicle for literacy. On this account, he appears to claim that the transmission of the synoptic gospels was from oral into written and from Aramaic into Greek in a unidirectional fashion. In a series of his assumptions, he thought that since Jesus and his disciples used Aramaic, they were not literate, and the eyewitnesses who spoke Aramaic in Palestine would not even have thought about writing. Furthermore, because of his assumption that Q was a document, he postulated that it was highly probable that it was written in Greek rather than in Aramaic. Accordingly, his commitment to unidirectionality was in close connection with his presupposition of Aramaic as an exclusively oral language (for the same view of other scholars, see chapter 1 n.24). However, Dibelius neglected the pervasive

14 Dibelius interestingly suggested that some solecisms should be regarded as Septuagintalism and that some solecisms could be due to later syntactic change of Greek language; for detailed discussion, see §6.1.5.

biliteracy of first-century Palestine, as shown by Aramaic written materials like the Qumran documents (§2.3.4; cf. §1.5.2.5). Fitzmyer's criticism (1979a:39) merits attention here:

Since the discovery of the Qumran material, it is now evident that literature was indeed being composed in Aramaic in the last century B.C. and in the first century A.D. The number of extant Aramaic texts of a literary nature is not small, even though the fragments of them found in the various Qumran caves may be. ... then one must beware of exaggerating theoretically the difference between the literary and spoken forms of the language.¹⁵

The fact that no Aramaic written Gospel has yet been found does not prove that it did not exist. Aramaic tradition continued in oral and written forms alongside Greek tradition in oral and written forms. It is more proper that the traditions should be circulated in four forms such as Aramaic oral tradition, Aramaic written tradition, Greek oral tradition, and Greek written tradition before the compositions of the four gospels (cf. §1.5.2.5). What is more, even after the composition of the four canonical Gospels, as archaeological evidence indicates, Aramaic composition was active. As Targumic tradition shows, the Greek Gospels could have been translated into Aramaic in places where Aramaic was used. So it is possible that four kinds of Gospels might have been circulated: Aramaic oral Gospel, Aramaic written Gospel, Greek oral Gospel, and Greek written Gospel. At this point, I will take the full bilingualism of Greek and Semitic seriously as shapers of the Jesus tradition during Jesus' ministry and as shapers of the gospel tradition during the compositions of the four canonical gospels in the first century and continuing thereafter.

On the basis of this analysis, it seems that the transmission of the Jesus tradition and the gospel tradition is not unilinear but hybrid, not teleological but circular. In addition, the transmission was not unidirectional but interdirectional. Therefore, the hybridity, the circularity, and the interdirectionality of the transmission of the tradition in the four gospels indicate that the traditions such as the oral tradition and the Aramaic tradition are not always earlier than the traditions such as the written tradition and the Greek tradition respectively. Further, the former two traditions are not always closer to the historical Jesus than the latter two traditions. Although Dibelius developed the discussion

15 Millar (1993:5) observes: "There is ample evidence that a number of Semitic languages were spoken, and mostly also written, in the Roman Near East: Aramaic, Hebrew, Phoenician, Nabataean, Palmyrene and Syriac, as well as the language known as 'Safaitic' attested mainly by large numbers of graffiti from the outer edges of the steppe region." For detailed discussion, see §2.3.

about something original behind the fixed Greek text in many parts to a great extent, he made some fatal mistakes. The contrasts he makes between the oral tradition and the written tradition, between the Aramaic tradition and the Greek tradition, and between the testimonies of eyewitnesses and the preachings of eyewitnesses are too sharp. Moreover, he relies too heavily upon assumptions of Aramaic illiteracy and a unilinear, unidirectional, and teleological view of transmission. Despite these serious drawbacks, his views continue to be highly influential upon New Testament scholars.

1.2.2 Rudolf Bultmann

Bultmann maintained the three key unidirectional hypotheses of the transmission of the Jesus and gospel tradition. In his view, the traditions were transmitted from oral to written form, from Aramaic to Greek, and from Judaeo-Palestinian to Hellenistic tradition in a unidirectional way. He (1968:6) called this unidirectional concept "laws govern[ing] the development of material." Like other form critics, he considered the *Sitz im Leben* transmission from Judaeo-Palestinian to Hellenistic tradition the essential factor in deciding upon modal or linguistic transmissions.

As for the modal transmission, Bultmann using form criticism, granted, above all, the modal unidirectionality hypothesis that an oral tradition is unidirectionally transmitted into a written tradition. He (1934:1) asserted, "The purpose of Form Criticism is to study the history of the oral tradition behind the gospels."¹⁶ However, he (1935:12-4) suggested that there were two layers of the oral traditions in the process of the transmission of the Synoptic traditions. One is the oral tradition of the historical Jesus; the other is created or modified in the *Sitz im Leben* of early Christian communities in and out of Palestine.

Bultmann paid attention to a peculiar characteristic of oral tradition itself. Following Gunkel's argument, he assumed that the oral tradition

16 Dibelius (1929:187) expressed earlier: "Die Formgeschichte hat es bekanntlich nicht mit den abgeschlossenen literarischen Werken zu tun, sondern mit den kleinen Einheiten, die in mündlicher oder schriftlicher Ueberlieferung weitergegeben werden, deren Kenntnis wir aber freilich aus Büchern schöpfen, in die sie Aufnahme gefunden haben." Subscribing to Dibelius' remark, Bultmann (1968:4) posits that the purpose of form criticism is "to rediscover the origin and the history of the particular units and thereby to throw some light on the history of the tradition before it took literary form." Dodd (1938:78) introduced form criticism to English readers by explaining that form criticism is to seek "to reconstruct the oral tradition lying behind the proximate written sources."

was fluid, whereas the written tradition was fixed. He (1961:47; cf. Gunkel 1997:lv) suggested that “whenever narratives pass from mouth to mouth the central point of the narrative and general structure are well preserved; but in the incidental details changes take place.” Also, the oral tradition was not a vehicle settled enough to preserve the original tradition of the historical Jesus. His skepticism in regard to the oral tradition of the historical Jesus is also shown by his separation of the *kerygma* from history.¹⁷ He proposed that the oral tradition of the historical Jesus was more original but can hardly be traced.¹⁸ Furthermore, he (1961:42) considered that the primitive Palestinian Christian church was already steadily forming new sayings of Jesus as oral traditions. He (1934:64-6; cf. 1968:60) supposed that the oral traditions, as faithful expressions of the early Christian community, were in circulation for cultic purposes such as public reading for worship, edification, or preaching in the Hellenistic world. Consequently, he maintained that the oral tradition produced in the *Sitz im Leben* of Palestinian and Hellenistic Christian communities should be distinguished from the oral tradition uttered by the historical Jesus. Adopting modal unidirectionality from oral to written forms, Bultmann (1968:239; cf. 1968:6, 87, 88, 321) argued that “this distinction [between oral and written tradition] is in my view relatively unimportant for the gospel tradition.” Instead, he continued, “Much more important is the *distinction between the Palestinian and Hellenistic stages of the tradition*” [emphasis in the original]. Accordingly, he proposed that the *Sitz im Leben* generally determines whether an oral tradition was produced by the historical Jesus or earliest Christian churches.

Bultmann (1935:12-3; 1934:15) also endorsed the hypothesis of linguistic unidirectionality—that an Aramaic tradition was unidirectionally transmitted into a Greek tradition. As he insisted on two layers of the oral traditions in the process of the modal unidirectionality, so he divided the Aramaic tradition into two layers. One was the original tradition that may originate from the historical Jesus. The other is the secondary Aramaic tradition which betrays the specific interests of Palestinian or Hellenistic Christian churches. On account of this, the Aramaic tradition formed by Judaeo-Palestinian or Hellenistic Chris-

17 His view might be influenced by Gunkel’s sharp distinction between “legend” (i.e. the oral tradition) and “history” (i.e. the written tradition), as mentioned before (§1.1).

18 Bultmann (1935:8; cf. 1935:12, 13; 1961:59; 1968:372) wrote: “We can now know almost nothing concerning the life and personality of Jesus, since the early Christian sources show no interest in either, are moreover fragmentary and often legendary; and other sources about Jesus do not exist.”

tian communities should be distinguished from that formed by the historical Jesus. He posited three characteristics of the Aramaic “original” in the synoptic traditions: “linguistic peculiarity,” “the use of direct speech,” and “the Aramaic embedded words.” First, concerning linguistic peculiarity at the levels of syntax and semantics, he suggested that some Semitisms should be explained in a different way. He (1968:240) demonstrated that some usages called Semitisms¹⁹ “could also have found their way into the koine Greek.” What is more, he (1968:240) regarded some phrases as Septuagintalisms, not as Semitisms (e.g. Lk 7:16) since “the Hellenistic-Christian linguistic usages were influenced by the LXX.” At the semantic level, he looked upon “direct speech” and “Aramaic embedded words” as insertions by Judaeo-Palestinian or Hellenistic Christian communities rather than sayings by the historical Jesus. He (1968:163) suggested that forms of direct speech like “I-sayings” might be inserted by Palestinian or Hellenistic churches. These speeches were placed on the lips of the risen Lord. With regard to Aramaic embedded words, he considered that they might have been created by Judaeo-Palestinian or Hellenistic churches. Concerning Aramaic embedded words in the miracle stories, he (1934:38; 1961:49; 1968:240) maintained that Aramaic embedded words such as *ταλιθα κουμ* (Mk 5:41) and *Εφφαθα* (Mk 7:34) imitate “wonder-working words” in a foreign tongue which was unknown to readers of the gospel. He (1968:222, cf. 1968:240; §8.3.2) suggested, “The miracle working word is frequently given in strange, incomprehensible sounds, or alternatively handed down in some foreign language.” As a result, he thought that the Aramaic embedded words were created in Hellenistic churches since they reflect “wonder-working words” of Hellenistic miracle workers. On this score, Bultmann hardly gives his attention to Aramaic embedded words because they are not always guarantees of the original sayings by the historical Jesus. Consequently, admitting the linguistic unidirectionality hypothesis from Aramaic to Greek, Bultmann argues that the *Sitz im Leben* generally determines whether Aramaic traditions are derived from the historical Jesus or Judaeo-Palestinian or Hellenistic Christian churches.

Finally, Bultmann relied heavily on the concept of *Sitz im Leben* unidirectionality. He held that Jesus and gospel traditions were unidirectionally transmitted from Judaeo-Palestinian to Hellenistic churches.

19 He illustrates this with the phrases: *ἐν πνεύματι ἀκαθάρτω* (Mk 1:23, 5:2), *φωνὴ μεγάλη* (Mk 1:26, 5:7); *ἐφοβήθησαν φόβον μέγαν* (Mk 4:41); *εἰς* instead of *τις* (Mk 5:22); *ἔρχονται ἀπὸ τοῦ ἀρχισυναγώγου scil. τινές* (Mk 5:35); the distinctive *συμπόσια συμπόσια* and *πρᾶσια πρᾶσιαί* (Mk 6:39-40); the detached nominative *ἡμέραι τρεῖς* (Mk 8:2), etc.

This *religionsgeschichtliche* view, which was suggested by Bousset (1906) and Heitmüller (1912), is based on a sharp monolingual distinction between the Aramaic-speaking Judaeo-Palestinian church and Greek-speaking Hellenistic churches (cf. Bultmann 1934:17). Bultmann (1935:12-3) mentioned that “these gospels were composed in Greek within the Hellenistic Christianity community, while Jesus and the oldest Christian group lived in Palestine and spoke Aramaic.” Bultmann focuses on distinguishing Judaeo-Palestinian traditions from Hellenistic traditions, no matter which traditions are oral or written, or Aramaic or Greek.

Furthermore, on the basis of the *Sitz im Leben* unidirectionality hypothesis, he unfolds the unidirectional development of christological titles. He (1934:17; 1952:51-52; 1956:175-8) advanced the idea that Jewish Palestinian Christians considered Jesus as the “Messiah” and “the Son of Man,” whereas Gentile Hellenistic Christians thought of Jesus as the “Lord” and “the Son of God” due to their linguistic difference. He (1956:176) supposed that Gentile Christians would not have understood “Christos” as a translation of “Messiah.” Accordingly, christological titles were unidirectionally developed from the “Messiah” and “the Son of Man” used by Aramaic-speaking Palestinian Christians to “Christos,” “Lord,” and “the Son of God” used by Greek-speaking Hellenistic Christians on the basis of the monolingualism of first-century Palestine and the Roman Near East.

Despite his widespread influence upon New Testament scholarship, his arguments are open to criticism on several points. Three criticisms can be leveled. First of all, he holds the three unidirectionality hypotheses. However, it would be more persuasive if he took the possibility of the interdirectional transmission of the Jesus and gospel traditions into account more seriously, as we have discussed in detail (§1.2.1).

Second, he does not consider embedded Aramaic words as sayings by the historical Jesus but as insertions by Palestinian or Hellenistic Christian churches. However, the study of the bilingualism of first-century Palestine and the Roman Near East shows that the embedded Aramaic words could have been used with the translated Greek words in and out of Palestine during Jesus’ ministry and continuing thereafter (cf. chapters 3 and 5). Still, the embedded Aramaic words in Greek texts are not strange, incomprehensible sounds but biblical authors’ literary device to stress their intention (§8.3.2). This means that the embedded Aramaic words could be sayings by the historical Jesus, as I will discuss (chapter 8).

Third, Bultmann made a clear-cut distinction between the Aramaic-speaking Judaeo-Palestinian Christian and Greek-speaking Hellenistic Christian churches on the basis of their monolingualism. He (1925:145; 1967:102-3) placed a great deal of weight upon Syrian Christianity since the bilingual Antiochene Christian community bridges the linguistic gap between Judaeo-Palestinian Christianity and Hellenistic Christianity (cf. Introduction to chapter 4). In this respect, he persisted with his conception of the unidirectional development of christological titles. However, his argument would have been more persuasive if he took serious account of the bilingualism of first-century Palestine and the Roman Near East (cf. chapters 3-5). A better understanding of this bilingualism dilutes the sharp distinction between the Aramaic-speaking Judaeo-Palestinian church and Greek-speaking Hellenistic churches. This implies that the Aramaic christological titles were used with their translated christological titles in Greek in the first-century Palestinian Christian church as well as Hellenistic Christian churches. Christological titles were not developed from Aramaic into Greek titles but circulated in Aramaic as well as in Greek. I call this theory interdirectional Christology or bilingual Christology (cf. §5.4; §7.4.3.2; §9.8). Although Bultmann made an enormous and lasting contribution to the understanding of the transmission of the Jesus and gospel traditions, he neglected the bilingualism of first-century Palestine and the Roman Near East and was thus hindered by his commitment to the three unidirectional hypotheses.

1.2.3 Gerd Theissen

Theissen devotes considerable attention to the history of the transmission of gospel tradition in earliest Christianity by using a sociological method. Consenting to the main ideas of form criticism,²⁰ he criticizes form critics who disregarded sociological factors of earliest Christian communities and so could not explain by what mechanisms oral tradition was changed into written tradition. He (1992:33-7) proposes that the survival of the Jesus and gospel traditions depends on a specific "social" *Sitz im Leben* rather than on a "religious" *Sitz im Leben*. He demonstrates how economic, ecological, political, and cultural factors powerfully shaped the history of the synoptic tradition.

20 He admits some basic principles of form criticism such as small units, oral tradition behind texts, and a sharp distinction between Aramaic-speaking Palestine and Greek-speaking Hellenistic areas.

Theissen (1991; summarized in 2003:34-46) explains how the oral tradition is changed into the written tradition by dividing the formation of the synoptic gospels into three stages. He (1991:25-122; 2003:46) states that at the first stage, the oral tradition of Jesus' deeds and sayings was circulated as small units in three social contexts: (i) Disciples called itinerant charismatics spread the radical ethics of Jesus' sayings. (ii) The oral tradition related to the apocalypse and the passion account was circulated in the local community in Jerusalem. (iii) The miracle stories about Jesus were handed down among people in Palestine or Galilee. He points out that at the first stage Jesus and his first followers were itinerant charismatics who were able to proclaim radical ethics concerning home and community in an oral form.²¹ In this respect, Theissen (1992:45) holds that the oral tradition is "authentic" and goes back to Jesus, the first wandering charismatic.

At the second stage of the history of the Synoptic tradition, the oral tradition was turned into the written tradition. Theissen (1991:123) assumes that some large units like the great apocalyptic discourse in Mark 13 and the passion narrative might have been written. Analyzing the social and the political situations of the two narratives and the characteristics of the written traditions, he (2003:42-4) claims that the passion narrative was documented in Jerusalem in the 40s and 50s and that the synoptic apocalypse was written as early as 39/40. Moreover, he (1991:203, 233) presumes that the "Sayings Source" was also documented in Greek in the background of Palestine in 40-55.

At the last stage, his sociological research (1991:257-281) leads him to the conclusion that the difference in ethical teachings between the Gospel of Mark and the other two synoptic gospels results from their social *Sitz im Leben*. The Gospel of Mark was written in Syria near Palestine and in close temporal proximity to the Jewish War. In contrast, the two other gospels were written after the Jewish War. By changing radical ethics in the Gospel of Mark into ethics of normalcy, the two later evangelists (i.e. Matthew and Luke) intended to give their local Christian communities strength for their lives continuing after the crisis had been overcome. Accordingly, Theissen (1991:287-9) contends that whereas the Gospel of Mark uses the oral and the written traditions of the ethical viewpoint of wandering charismatics, the other two gospels reshape Jesus' ethics from the two written documents (i.e. the Gospel of Mark and Q). The synoptic gospels preserve both the oral tradition originally transmitted by itinerant charismatics and the written tradi-

21 For the characteristics of the radical ethics of wandering charismatics, see Theissen 1978; 1992:33-59.

tion altered in the *Sitz im Leben* of their local communities. Accordingly, he insists that the social *Sitz im Leben* transmission decides on whether the Jesus tradition is oral or written.

Although Theissen opens a new chapter on the sociological approach to the transmission of the synoptic gospels, he carries over the same chronic problems of form criticism. Above all, he (1991:2; cf 1991:2-13) defines the oral tradition as the “oral prehistory” of the synoptic gospels in the tradition of Gunkel and early form critics. His definition implies that oral tradition lacks historicity and, further, the oral tradition contrasts with written history. He (1992:35) does not trust the historicity of the oral tradition and, in comparison, is overconfident in regard to the written tradition. However, the transmission of the Jesus tradition, whether it is oral or written, depends on the transmitters’ interests; it is not because oral tradition itself is apt to change or lacks historicity.²²

Secondly, his linguistic dichotomy between Aramaic and Greek depending on sociological-regional distribution is dubious. He (1992:54-5) writes:

In the cities the common, everyday language was *koine* Greek, whereas in the country areas the original vernaculars survived – in Asia Minor until well into the sixth century. But in the Syro-Palestinian area, from the very beginning, the language of Christianity was Aramaic, which was the dialect of the country people; and it is Aramaic that clearly underlies the sayings tradition.

To put it another way, he assumes that the written tradition composed in cities was documented in Greek; on the contrary, the oral tradition was circulated in Aramaic in the Syro-Palestinian area. It seems that he follows the form critics’ presupposition that Aramaic exclusively represents spoken language, whereas Greek primarily represents written language. Unfortunately, Theissen, too, neglects a serious consideration of bilingualism in first-century Palestine and the Roman Near East. His argument might be more persuasive if he took into account the possibility of an Aramaic written gospel and a Greek oral gospel.

Furthermore, his modal directionality is still based on the unidirectional hypothesis that the Jesus and gospel traditions were transmitted from oral into written tradition and never *vice versa*. For instance, he holds that the passion account was written in the 40s and 50s and that the synoptic apocalypse was composed as early as 39/40. If this is the case, as I mentioned before, it is hard to believe that the written tradi-

22 Also, for the discussion of reliability of oral tradition, see the Scandinavian school (§1.3.1; §1.5.2.3).

tion remained the written tradition in spite of the gap of several decades, at its maximum thirty years between the written tradition (40s) and the Gospel of Mark (60s or 70s) without returning into oral tradition repeatedly.

What is more, from the unidirectional viewpoint his sociological analysis of the different ethical teachings in the synoptic gospels shows that Mark collects both the oral and the written tradition, whereas the other two writers use the two written "documents." However, did the written traditions (i.e. Sayings Source and the Gospel of Mark) remain the written traditions despite the gap of several decades, at its maximum sixty years between the written traditions (40s) and the Gospels of Matthew and Luke (80s and 90s)? Rather, it is more likely that, after the two documents were written, both were in circulation in oral form as well, and that the two writers (Matthew and Luke) both used their oral traditions and their written traditions, since orality was the major communicative vehicle in ancient times (cf. §1.3.2; §1.5.2). Because of this, his description of the modal unidirectionality was unconvincing. Although Theissen clothes the transmission of the gospel tradition with sociological methodology, he follows the main arguments of form criticism and his forerunner, Gunkel. Accordingly, Theissen should also be considered a unidirectionalist.

To sum up, the three scholars surveyed have presupposed the three unidirectionality hypotheses. They supposed that the Jesus and gospel traditions were unidirectionally transmitted from oral into written forms, Aramaic into Greek, and Judaeo-Palestinian into Hellenistic tradition, and never *vice versa*. The three unidirectionality hypotheses are based on their hard and fast distinction between Aramaic-speaking Palestinian Jewish Christians and Greek-speaking Hellenistic Gentile Christians. This was based on their assumptions of monolingualism in first-century Palestine and the Roman Near East. To date, the three unidirectionality hypotheses have had strong and widespread influence upon New Testament scholarship and in discussions about the historical Jesus, the synoptic problem, textual-critical arguments, and development of christological titles, as I will discuss later.

In what follows, I will argue that the linguistic milieus of first-century Palestine and the Roman Near East reflected high-levels of bilingualism, not diglossia or minimal bilingualism (chapters 2-5). Unfortunately, form criticism failed to accept that the linguistic milieus of first-century Palestine and the Roman Near East were predominantly bilingual. A better understanding of the bilingualism of first-century Palestine and the Roman Near East will support the three interdirectionality hypotheses. I will argue that the transmission of the Jesus and

gospel traditions was not unidirectional but interdirectional between oral and written tradition and between Aramaic and Greek tradition. Accordingly, it is imperative to investigate the linguistic milieu of first-century Palestine and the Roman Near East with an eye toward bilingualism.

1.3 Modal Unidirectionality from Oral into Written Tradition

As represented above (§1.2), many scholars have assumed the modal unidirectionality hypothesis. The general assumption is that the Jesus and gospel traditions were unidirectionally transmitted from oral into written tradition or oral tradition into written Gospels, and never *vice versa*. This unilinear concept is based on Gunkel's three fundamental ideas and followed by early form criticism. Many still hold (i) that oral tradition was behind written tradition, (ii) that written tradition was the end product of oral tradition, and (iii) that oral tradition holds temporal priority over written tradition.

This is well expressed by Robert Grant. He (1963:295) writes, "There was a period of oral tradition which preceded the writing of gospels, and the existence of this period, and of the traditions, can be proved from the New Testament itself." Also, Kee (1989:245) remarks that "Our written Gospels were the end products of a process of oral transmission of Jesus tradition."²³

In this respect, scholars have sought to find oral features in the canonical and non-canonical gospels as an indication of modal unidirectionality. The presupposition of modal unidirectionality has been the basis of criteria in relation to major issues of textual criticism, the historical Jesus, and the synoptic problem. Oral tradition is generally considered earlier tradition. Also, it is generally considered closer to the original sayings of Jesus and stories about Jesus. Consequently, modal unidirectionality has functioned as a criterion for temporal priority: the more oral, the earlier.

23 In the Anglo-American tradition, modal unidirectionality was proposed by Westcott (1888:165-212). On the basis of form criticism, Dodd (1952:11) assumes that the Gospel of Mark "was written some thirty-five years, or a little more, after the events it records." In relation to Jesus' parables, Perrin (1976:8) notes that "the parables did not remain oral, immediate, and highly personal texts. They were remembered, re-told, and finally written down..."

Interestingly, as many form critics supposed, both geographical (i.e. *Sitz im Leben*) and modal unidirectionalities were made plausible on the basis of the linguistic unidirectionality. The scholars examined here (§1.3) also assumed that the linguistic unidirectionality from Aramaic into Greek supports the modal unidirectionality from oral into written.²⁴ On this point, I will discuss their modal unidirectionality hypothesis, with special attention to the linguistic unidirectionality. Despite the fact that so many scholars have dealt with the relationship between oral and written tradition and between oral tradition and written Gospels in various unidirectional ways and that some of them, to some extent, have considered the interaction between oral and written tradition and oral tradition and written gospels, I cannot enter here into a detailed discussion of the divergent theories of relevant scholars.²⁵ Two groups, first of all, will be surveyed. The Scandinavian school (§1.3.1) and recent orality theory (§1.3.2) will be observed, respectively. And then, Earle Ellis' view of the relationship between oral and written tradition (§1.3.3) will be discussed. Although the three theories are quite different from each other, they have assumed the same hypothesis of modal unidirectionality.

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- 24 Many scholars have thought that Aramaic was not used as a written communicative vehicle in first-century Palestine and the Roman Near East. Frommel (1908:18) supposed that the existence of a primitive gospel in Aramaic could not be found because it was oral. Also, Olmstead (1942) suggests that Aramaic tradition was necessarily oral. For more information, see Goodspeed 1937:127-68; 1942:315-40 (esp. 331-33). Despite the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls, some scholars still consider Aramaic tradition to be oral. Acknowledging bilingualism of first-century Palestine, Argyle disregards Aramaic written tradition and Greek oral tradition because he does not take biliteracy into account seriously. He (1974:89) presumes that "If Jesus and his disciples were as familiar with Greek as with Aramaic, the transition from the *oral Aramaic stage* to the *Greek literary stage* would have been natural and easy" [emphasis added]. Although Williams (2004b:7) admits that the Dead Sea Scrolls prove that Aramaic was used as a written language, he plays down the literary function of Aramaic. He (2004b:7) notes that "the written forms of the language, rather than oral forms, are not seen as defining the norms of the language." As a result, he proposes that it should be given "priority to spoken over written forms of the language." Also, see Albright 1960:201-2; Black 1967:16.
- 25 Remarkably, special attention should be paid to James Dunn's insightful and influential theory. He (1987; 2003; 2005a; 2005b) has persistently considered some gospel tradition as oral tradition in order to solve major issues of the synoptic problem and the historical Jesus. For recent discussions of the relationship between oral and written tradition, especially see Horsley and Draper 1999; Horsley 2001; Horsley, Draper, and Foley 2006; Thatcher 2008.

1.3.1 Scandinavian School

Standing in the tradition of Gunkel's modal unidirectionality hypothesis, the Scandinavian school considers that the Jesus and gospel traditions were unidirectionally transmitted from oral tradition into written tradition or written Gospels, and never *vice versa*. For Scandinavian scholars, the unidirectional concept of modal transmission is not much different from that of the form critics (§1.2), although it is well-known that they have views diametrically opposed to form critics at major points.²⁶ Taking the process and techniques of the oral transmission of the Jesus tradition into serious consideration, Harald Riesenfeld raises major claims on the basis of the modal unidirectionality hypothesis. Birger Gerhardsson deepens this view while focusing upon rabbinic techniques of gospel transmission. These two scholars, Riesenfeld (§1.3.1.1) and Gerhardsson (§1.3.1.2) will be examined.

1.3.1.1 Harald Riesenfeld

Riesenfeld pays attention to the oral transmission of the Jesus and gospel traditions in comparison with Jewish rabbinic techniques. Although many form critics regarded transmitters of the Jesus tradition as anonymous, Riesenfeld (1970:16, 18, 22; cf. 1970:54) argues that the transmitters are authorized and trained persons in early Christian churches, such as Paul and the twelve, and that the transmitters rigidly control the tradition by memorizing both form and content. He (1970:21-2) explains that the usages of *παράδοσις* in the New Testament show that the Jesus tradition was kept strictly in the early Christian communities. Concerning the relationship between oral and written tradition, he (1970:52) supposes that the oral and the written tradition existed side by side. Since early Christian communities considered the *παράδοσις* as the sacred word of the New Covenant in Christian worship, they documented the Jesus tradition in analogy with the Old Testament (1970:21-2). He (1970:4) suggests that the traditions were "originally oral, but gradually, as time went on, also written down." He continues that "then [they were] transmitted, as individual fragments

26 Although Riesenfeld (1970:5-6, 10-1) criticizes the *Sitz im Leben* unidirectionality of form criticism, he does not deny form criticism's contributions to the study of the transmission from oral into written tradition. He (1970:52) estimates that "the form-critical school has made a profitable and a lasting contribution." Also, Gerhardsson (2001:1-3) refutes the *Sitz im Leben* unidirectional view of form criticism. However, he (2001:56-7) admits that the *Sitz im Leben* of Christian congregations influences Jesus traditions, in some respects.

or in small groups, until they found their *final embodiment* in the compilations known to us as our gospels" [emphasis added]. In this way, he addresses the claim that the oral Jesus traditions were transmitted into written gospels in a unidirectional way. Consequently, his modal directionality seems unilinear, unidirectional, and teleological.

As to the linguistic transmission, Riesenfeld seems to suppose that an Aramaic tradition was unidirectionally transmitted into a Greek tradition. He (1970:23) considers the Aramaic tradition to be originally uttered by Jesus. As evidence that sayings by Jesus were preserved in original Aramaic forms in the memories of Jesus' disciples, he (1970:23) appeals to Aramaic embedded words such as *Talitha qūm*. But in relation to Aramaic embedded words, he does not give any explanation to the question why the Greek texts preserve the foreign words (cf. §8.1). Moreover, he (1970:48) thinks that even though the earliest church in Jerusalem inaugurated translation from its beginning, one of Paul's major contributions to Christianity was to translate Aramaic terms into Greek ones such as *Messiah* into *Christos* and *maran/marana* into *kurios*. However, he neglects consideration of bilingualism of first-century Palestine and the Roman Near East which might have led to another possibility: that the Jesus tradition was circulated in Aramaic as well as in Greek during Jesus' ministry. Accordingly, Riesenfeld holds that the transmission of the Jesus tradition was unidirectional from oral into written and from Aramaic into Greek. It would be more convincing, however, if he considered the interdirectionality hypotheses of the modal and linguistic transmissions of the Jesus and gospel traditions.

1.3.1.2 Birger Gerhardsson

In pursuing and augmenting earlier observations by Riesenfeld, Gerhardsson also maintains modal and linguistic unidirectionality. He assumes that the Jesus traditions were well-preserved in gospel traditions. This is because Jesus (as the only teacher) used rabbinic techniques of teaching and transmission and required his disciples to memorize the gospel tradition (2001:39, 47; cf. 1998:133). He (2001:49) says that "the continuity and reliability of the early Christian tradition have been preserved without interruption." In this respect, he (2001:61 n.3) thinks of the Jesus tradition as gospel tradition so that the two terms "are used synonymously" in his publications. Some scholars like McArthur (1970:39-40), however, have criticized that his view of the rigid transmission of "a fixed 'Holy Word'" could not explain the variations within the synoptic gospels and between the synoptic gospels and the fourth gospel. Davies (1963:467-8) also points out that the Fathers of

the Church (e.g. Irenaeus and Papias) knew that the tradition was already multiform, and suggests, in contrast to Gerhardsson, that the tradition was “a more fluid, living tradition.”

With respect to the relationship between oral and written tradition, Gerhardsson assumes that oral traditions interacted with written traditions before the written Gospels were fixed. He (2001:85) argues that “written records of varying length, like notes and memory aids (*hypomnēmata*) were surely in circulation at a very early stage.” He (2001:85) further states, “It is not impossible, though perhaps not likely, that such records were kept by the disciples and others already in the period of Jesus’ activity.”²⁷ Yet he (2001:50; cf. 2001:117) proposes that “the synoptic material clearly had this same association [with authoritative sacred scriptures] the whole time until it was *finally written down*” [emphasis added]. He (2001:1) confines “a period of oral tradition” to “between Jesus’ ministry and the earliest written records.” This implies that he holds modal unidirectionality in that oral tradition ended after gospel traditions were literally fixed. However, if he (2001:117) subscribes to the interface between the oral and the written tradition before the four gospels were literally fixed, it should also have been suggested that the oral tradition interacted with the written gospels after their composition as well. What is more, if orality was accepted as a major communicative vehicle (Gerhardsson 2001:113-6), it is more likely that the oral traditions continued to be used after the literary compositions of the four gospels. The oral tradition and the reoralized tradition of written gospels were continually in circulation in the first century as well as in the second century even after parts of the oral tradition had been transmitted into the written gospels. Accordingly, it is more likely that the written synoptic gospels were transmitted into oral gospels again after their composition. In other words, after the synoptic gospels were documented, they were probably circulated orally as well as in written forms in an interdirectional way.

When it comes to linguistic directionality, Gerhardsson also holds the unidirectionality hypothesis. He (2001:51) recognizes that the linguistic milieu of first-century Palestine was bilingual and that many

27 For his detailed discussion of the “use of written notes,” see 1998:157-63; 2001:71 n.25. In relation to Gerhardsson’s notes, Davids (1980:79) criticizes that Gerhardsson disregards “the role of written transmission”. He suggests, “Memory played a large part in the education and transmission of tradition in all of these groups, but it was the memorization of written texts” (e.g. 1Q Sa I, 4-8). In other words, written tradition could have been reoralized and then the reoralized memory may have been re-written. Also, for other scholars’ arguments on the “notebook hypothesis,” see §1.3.3; §1.5.2.5.

bilingual persons in the Jerusalem church checked and corrected the Jesus tradition which had been translated into Greek. Despite their censorship, he (2001:51) supposes that translation itself caused changes in the tradition because “no translation can be completely identical with the original and that two or more translations will never be word for word the same.” However, he neglected two other possibilities created by bilingualism of first-century Palestine and the Roman Near East. (i) If the linguistic milieu of first-century Palestine was bilingual, the Jesus tradition in Aramaic could have been translated into Greek during Jesus’ ministry. As a result, the Greek tradition would have been circulated along with the Aramaic tradition during Jesus’ ministry. (ii) After the Aramaic Jesus tradition was translated into Greek, the Greek tradition should have been translated into Aramaic again among Aramaic-matrix Christians (for the definition of “matrix,” see §2.1.9). Accordingly, despite the fact that many Scandinavian scholars have tried to correct the form-critical method and suggested some valid alternatives, they could not escape from the modal and the linguistic unidirectionality hypotheses completely.

1.3.2 Orality Theory

It has been widely presupposed that oral tradition has temporal priority over written tradition. This presupposition has led to two long-standing suppositions. First, it follows that oral characteristics show more affinity to original sayings by Jesus and stories about Jesus than written tradition. Second, oral features support the Markan priority hypothesis because the Gospel of Mark has been thought to have oral features more so than other synoptic gospels. In these respects, oral features have been used as a criterion for temporal priority. The oral tradition as a modal criterion is shown by Mournet’s expression (2005:156): “the more oral characteristics a text contains, the *more likely* that the tradition is derivative from the processes of oral communication” [emphasis in the original]. Admitting that oral features cannot function as “independent criteria” but as “relative criteria,” Henderson (1992:294-5) also proposes that a modal criterion is “actually necessary.”

With regard to the modal criterion, a large number of scholars have tried to associate the rough literary style of Mark’s Gospel with Markan priority. This was made popular by the form critics (§1.2).²⁸ From the

28 E.g., Rawlinson 1925:xxxi-xxxii; Taylor 1952:52-3; Trocmé 1975:68-72. Conversely, I would regard them as Mark’s own literary style and deal with them sporadically as

perspective of modal unidirectionality, they supposed that the Gospel of Mark was placed between oral tradition and the other written Gospels.²⁹ Recently, the study of orality theory³⁰ has encouraged New Testament scholars to separate oral characteristics from written texts. Under the aegis of the orality theory, they have tried to explain Mark's own literary styles as oral features for oral circulation. In other words, the lack of literary skill in the Gospel of Mark is replaced by oral features in the Gospel of Mark. Many scholars have singled out oral features from the Gospel of Mark³¹ or Q.³² This implies that Mark and/or Q are considered to bridge the gaps between oral tradition and the other Synoptic Gospels.³³ They have assumed that the Gospel of Mark or Q must have included the legacies of oral features (e.g. oral syntax) more than other materials on the basis of Markan priority hypothesis.³⁴ As a consequence, although they apply oral theory to New Testament writings, they still insist on the modal unidirectionality hypothesis that says that transmission of Jesus and gospel traditions is unilinear, teleological, and unidirectional from oral into written.

Although many scholars have dealt with the relationship between oral and written tradition and although their arguments are quite significant, a full exploration of their discussions exceeds the scope of my investigation. Two representative scholars will be mentioned: Werner Kelber and Joanna Dewey. Kelber (§1.3.2.1) argues for discontinuity between oral and written tradition, whereas Dewey (§1.3.2.2) supports partial discontinuity between oral tradition and written Gospels.

Mark's own rhetoric (e.g. for the discussion of Markan εὐθὺς, see §6.3.3; for the discussion of Markan codeswitching, see §8.3).

- 29 As mentioned previously, Bultmann considered this unidirectionality hypothesis as "laws of development."
- 30 E.g. Ong 1967, 1977, 1982; Havelock 1963, 1982:3-38. For detailed discussion of the influence of oral theory upon Biblical Studies, see Horsley, Draper, & Foley 2006; Thatcher 2008.
- 31 Kelber 1979, 1983; Williams 1985; Dewey 1989, 1994a, 2004, 2008; Pieter Botha 1991:304-31; Bryan 1993; Horsley 2001; Shiner 2003; Horsley, Draper, & Foley 2006. Criticizing the form-critical method, Bauckham (2006:242) persuasively points out that for form critics "Mark's Gospel is to be seen as a kind of oral literature that incorporates the oral traditions much as they already existed."
- 32 Kelber 1983; Horsley & Draper 1999; Dunn 2005b; Horsley 2006.
- 33 E.g., Kelber 1983:65-6; Dewey 1989; Bryan 1993:72-81.
- 34 Kelber 1983:64-70; Dewey 1989:37 (cf. 2004); Bryan 1993:72-81. Kelber (1983:95) mentions that "The question is the more relevant if one subscribes to Markan priority, assuming the text is itself the primary record of the transition from orality to textuality."

1.3.2.1 Werner Kelber

Kelber applies recent orality theory to Gunkel's view. He (1983:8, 15) rightly faults both form criticism and the Scandinavian school for hypothesizing that transmission of the synoptic gospels is "teleological," "straight," and "linear." Nevertheless, on the basis of the modal and the linguistic unidirectionality, he also emphasizes the difference between orality and literacy and the discontinuity between oral and written tradition.

First of all, he (1983:65-66) pays attention to oral features of the Gospel of Mark and regards them as oral syntax and oral stylistic devices to show the oral tradition behind the written gospel. He illustrates the use of ἄρχω with infinitive verbs (2:23; 6:7), the adverbial εὐθύς and καὶ εὐθύς (1:29; 3:6), iterative πάλιν and καὶ πάλιν (usually with verbs of movement, 2:1; 7:31; 14:40 or with verbs of speaking 4:1; 10:1, 10), the popular καί (9:2, 11:20), καὶ γίνεται or καὶ ἐγένετο (1:9; 2:15), historic present, the frequent use of the third person plural instead of passive (5:14; 8:22), direct speech, etc. This indicates that he considers the Gospel of Mark, with its rich oral features, as a medium between oral tradition and the other synoptic gospels on the basis of Markan priority and from the perspective of the modal unidirectionality.

Second, although Kelber only briefly mentions Gunkel (Kelber 1983:xiii, 87 n.96, 107), it seems that his overall arguments are heavily influenced by Gunkel (§1.1). He (1983:105) starts with the difference between oral and written tradition, that is, oral tradition is flexible and fragile, whereas written tradition is fixed and immortal. He (1983:30) asserts that "The concepts of *original form* and variants have no validity in oral life, nor does the one of *ipsissima vox*" [emphasis in the original]. For this reason, he (1983:94) suggests "oral pluralism," which means that "each performance is 'an' original, if not 'the' original" [emphasis in the original].³⁵ Further, his overemphasis on the difference between orality and literacy led to a purported discontinuity between oral tradition and the Gospel of Mark. He (1983:95) argues that "the gospel [of Mark] arises not from orality *per se*, but out of the debris of deconstructed orality." In this sense, he (1983:196) maintains that the Gospel of Mark was a text that was written "not to continue but to overcome oral mentality." That is, according to Kelber (1983:185-6), the Gospel of Mark was written to supersede the oral tradition produced by "oral authorities" (i.e. disciples, Jesus' family, false prophets, and Christs).

35 Kelber (1983:30) cites this from Lord's statement (1960:101). However, this is not far from Gunkel's original idea (§1.1). Kelber's theory is partly endorsed by Dunn's exhaustive series of New Perspective on Jesus (2003, 2005a, 2005b).

Consequently, he proposes that the discontinuity between the oral tradition and the written gospel proves that the transmission of the gospel tradition was neither teleological nor linear. However, he still presumes the modal unidirectionality from oral into written tradition. He has three reasons for doing so. (i) Oral traditions lie behind the written gospels in fragments. (ii) After the Gospel of Mark (and gospels) was written, the oral tradition ended. (iii) The oral traditions could have temporal priority over the written tradition.

Moreover, his modal unidirectionality seems to be based on linguistic unidirectionality. Kelber (1983:21) states that Jesus was only an oral performer who could not have left written materials. Moreover, he maintains that Jesus' disciples displayed "only tenuous connections with literate culture."³⁶ He (1983:17-8) relates their illiteracy to the rural locations where the Jesus movement originated and where the Jesus tradition was delivered. Conversely, the written gospels were composed in the context of Hellenistic cities. He appeals to Theissen's theory (1978; cf. §1.2.3) to explain the relations between orality and rural areas, and between literacy and cities. Following Theissen, Kelber associates Aramaic tradition with oral tradition. This is well expressed in this comment (1983:66): "Even if some of these features are traceable to Aramaisms or Semitisms, this does not preclude their oral propensity." Reading between the lines, it seems that Kelber's linguistic unidirectionality colored his understanding of the relationship between orality and literacy and the discontinuity between oral tradition and written gospels.

Four shortcomings warrant critique. First, he tries to relate the oral features of the Gospel of Mark to Markan priority: that is, he places the Gospel of Mark between oral tradition and the other synoptic gospels. However, oral features should not always warrant temporal priority over written features. As is well known, when authors wrote their books in ancient times, they were intended for reading out loud and/or for oral performance (cf. §1.5.2.4, n.37). This means that oral features are not necessarily indicative of oral tradition and that temporal priority should not necessarily be granted to writings with oral features. Henaut (1993:113) rightly cautions that "Such often-cited criteria as alliteration, dualities, triads, chiasmus and inclusio are found in written texts." He (1993:68) correctly points out that "An oral flavour to a nar-

36 As for the note-taking hypothesis, he (1983:25) mentions that "the taking of notes and the cultivation of writing was a world apart from the life style of these prophetic transmitters of Jesus' sayings. They needed no aids in writing because they practiced the message they preached." Contra his view, see §1.5.2.5.

rative ... does not prove an oral tradition." For this reason, he (1993:113) insists that the stylistic devices "belong to Mark's overall narrative structure, and are clearly a part of his *literary* technique" [emphasis in the original]. Consequently, they should be considered as Markan literary styles and do not necessarily bespeak oral tradition or temporal priority.

Second, perhaps Kelber's most problematic argument is that he overemphasizes the contrast between the oral tradition and the written gospels based on his sharp distinction between orality and literacy. In the same way that I criticized Gunkel's arguments (§1.1), it can be said that the relationship between orality and literacy is not mutually exclusive but interwoven and complementary. Recently, the interaction between orality and literacy has been suggested by many scholars.³⁷ Moreover, if he (1983:23) thinks that the major communicative vehicle of first-century Palestine and the Roman Near East was orality, it is more likely that the Gospel of Mark was written for oral performance and then circulated in oral forms simultaneously with the circulation of written forms (cf. Kelber 1983:94).³⁸ Accordingly, his emphasis on the stark contrast between orality and literacy is not persuasive.

Third, Kelber does not hold his unidirectionality very firmly at times. On the one hand, he asserts that the Gospel of Mark put an end to oral tradition on the basis of discontinuity between oral tradition and

37 For instance, concerning the Hebrew Bible, Niditch (1996:1) argues that literacy in ancient Israel should be considered in relation to "its continuity and interaction with the oral world." She (1996:5) assumes that an oral tradition should be documented and then, the written tradition may be reoralized again. Van der Toorn (2007:12) notes, "In Babylonia and Israel, writing was mostly used to support an oral performance." Lentz (1989) and Thomas (1989, 1992) propose that orality and literacy are not exclusive but coexisted and interacted in ancient Greece. Gamble (1995:30) also criticizes Kelber's thesis, saying "a too sharp theoretical differentiation [between oral and written modes] misconceives the situation." He suggests that the two modes "were far closer and interactive." Rebutting Kelber's difference between orality and literacy Gerhardtsson (2001:116-7; here 117; §1.5.2.4) suggests that "The two media stood in very intimate interaction." Halverson (1994) persuasively refutes Kelber's overemphasis on the contrast between orality and literacy. For more information, see Achtemeier 1990:3-27; Henderson 1992:283-306; Robbins 1993; Horsley, Draper & Foleys 2006.

38 Furthermore, Fox (1994:127) rightly points out that "oral tradition continued to carry special authority well into the second century" after the written Gospels were composed beginning in the 60s. Fox (1994:127) also assumes that "Various Gospels soon circulated, but by the third quarter of the second century the four which we now recognize were widely, though not universally, regarded as special. As texts took over and the length of the oral tradition grew, respect for orally transmitted sayings diminished."

the written gospel. On the other hand, he (1983:17, 94) he presumes that the characteristics of the oral medium are “tenacious” and “dominated long after introduction of writing,” and that the written gospel was designed “to be recycled into the oral medium.” He (1983:93) subscribes to Koester’s assumption that the oral tradition coexisted with the written Gospels up to the middle of the second century. He (1983:23) states, “The concept of a predominantly oral phase is not meant to dispense with the existence of notes and textual aids altogether.” He (1983:93) proposes, “The transposition of oral forms of speech into gospel textuality did not put an end to speaking.” Consequently, his tendency to dichotomize orality and literacy is not helpful. As a matter of fact, he (1983:32) asserts that “Media differences are blurred or belittled [by Gerhardsson and Bultmann].” Yet, he (1983:23) suggests that “The lines of orality and textuality [i.e. textual aids] were indeed blurred in those instances.” His work (1983) tended toward the default of unidirectionality. Accordingly, a better explanation is that the written forms were not the end of the oral tradition but reoralized in an oral-centered society.

Last, it seems that the discontinuity between the oral tradition performed in rural areas and the gospels written in cities stems from his linguistic bias. He seems to inherit this tendency from form criticism, of which he is overtly critical, as indicated by his appeal to Theissen’s stance that Aramaic was oral, whereas Greek was written. Along the same lines as my criticism of Theissen (§1.2.3), Kelber would have done better to consider the bilingualism of first-century Palestine and the Roman Near East. In relation to this, Niditch (1996:3) persuasively argues, “Orally composed and oral-style works can be rural or urban.” The study of bilingualism supports the modal and the linguistic interdirectionality hypotheses in that both written tradition in Aramaic and oral tradition in Greek would have been circulated in parallel with written tradition in Greek and oral tradition in Aramaic in rural areas as well as cities (see Part I).

Kelber deserves credit for applying oral theory to gospel transmission in various ways. His innovative ideas have had wide influence upon New Testament studies and have attracted lively discussion among eminent scholars.³⁹ However, he could not overcome the modal and the linguistic unidirectionality hypotheses completely and thus committed the same mistakes as Gunkel. Although Kelber (1983:32)

39 Especially, Horsley, Draper, & Foley (2006) edited a book dedicated to Werner Kelber in which they appropriately eulogized him (vii-xvi). Also, see Thatcher 2008:1-43.

partly escaped from the concept of unilinear transmission that form critics and the Scandinavian scholars held, he still failed to take the necessary step toward interdirectional transmission.

1.3.2.2 Joanna Dewey

In many respects, Joanna Dewey's work has exemplified modal interdirectionality between oral and written tradition. While she should be commended for this, I will argue that she still exhibits some modal unidirectionality tendencies. To her credit, she (1994b:37-8) convincingly critiques the form critics' modal unidirectional assumptions⁴⁰ and Kelber's discontinuity between orality and literacy and his rapid supersession of oral tradition with written gospels. Instead, she proposes that orality influenced the Gospel of Mark both in the process of its composition and during its performance in Christian worship.

Above all, Dewey (1989:33; cf. 1989:44, 1994a:145-63) stresses the interaction between oral tradition and Mark's Gospel within the process of the gospel's composition. She emphasizes this for two reasons. (i) The Gospel of Mark was written for listening audiences since orality was the central medium of first-century Christianity. (ii) Oral techniques influenced writing when the evangelist composed the gospel. She (2004:503-4) insists that the Gospel of Mark was "building on, refining, and developing an oral tradition that had already created a continuous, more-or-less coherent narrative" and that the written Gospel of Mark did not compete with, but coexisted with, oral circulation. Her view can be seen as a correction for Kelber's extreme discontinuity between oral and written tradition. Taking a further step, she intriguingly pays attention to oral re-performance of the written text of the Gospel of Mark. She (2004:496; cf. 1994a:151-9) suggests that after the Gospel of Mark was composed around 70 AD, "it continued to be performed orally." She (2004:498) considers that the boundaries between oral re-performance and a re-written Gospel of Mark were fluid. She (2008:82) convincingly concludes, "In the ancient media world, the Gospel of Mark was likely to have been oral, written, recycled into orality, rewritten, and so on." With this argument in place, she adheres to the modal interdirectionality hypothesis.

40 She rebuts their three assumptions, saying that "the progression from oral performance to written text was a continuous linear development, with writing rapidly becoming the primary medium for Christians, and with written texts supplanting oral tradition as soon as they were composed."

Like many scholars (e.g. Kelber), Dewey (1994a:149-57; 1989:37) suggests some oral features in the Gospel of Mark on the basis of the Markan priority hypothesis: additive and aggregative composition (e.g. the use of paratactic καί), agonistic tone, and participatory character. She is unclear about whether or not these oral features are indicative of Mark's compositional placement. One might infer from her work that the Gospel of Mark was a medium between oral tradition and the other written synoptic gospels. This view, of course, is unconvincing for the same reasons that Kelber's argument was unconvincing (§1.3.2.1). The oral features of the Gospel of Mark do not necessarily prove that the Gospel of Mark is more oral than other gospels and that the Gospel of Mark has temporal priority over other gospels.

Moreover, it seems that she does not break with Kelber completely since she still suggests a dichotomy between nonliterate and literate carriers of New Testament tradition(s). When it comes to the transmission of New Testament manuscripts in the second and following centuries, she (1994b:59) holds a contrastive position in regard to the relationship between oral tradition and written Gospels. It seems, in a sense, that she replaces Kelber's contrast between orality and literacy with her own contrast between nonliterate and literate. She (2008:86) argues that "the New Testament *writings* have *ultimately* silenced and *largely* controlled [Jesus]" [emphasis added]. According to Dewey (2008:86-7), only the literate (i.e. small educated male elite) can handle and transmit the written manuscripts, whereas the oral tradition delivered and circulated among the nonliterate (i.e. the largely uneducated, female non-elite) came to an end.⁴¹ In this respect, the written tradition triumphed over the oral tradition which was "the living, speaking Jesus" in circulation. As a result, she (1994b:59-60; cf. 1998) insists that the New Testament writings were distorted by the interests of the small educated male elite from the second century onward. Her view may reflect form criticism's explanation for oral tradition. She (1994a:145; 2008:86-7) considers oral tradition as "nonliterate" tradition.⁴² Consequently, she holds that the written gospels are the end products of oral traditions. As such, while she does well to move beyond unidirectionality at points, this stance betrays the tendencies of the modal unidirectionality.

41 She (2001:242) describes, "The Gospel of Mark and John are at the oral end of the continuum."

42 Henderson (1992:294) also describes oral tradition as "pre-history" tradition, like form critics defined.

This theory is not persuasive if orality was the major communicative vehicle not only in the first-century AD, but even in the fourth century AD and beyond. Also, she (2004:505) admits that “the oral tradition [of traditional European fairy tales] continued alive and largely unaffected by the printed versions until well into the twentieth century.” She also remarks that the oral tradition ended due to “increasing literacy of the population and the availability of cheap books, hardly factors in antiquity.” This means that oral tradition continued to be used together with written tradition. Second, the literate did not refer to only the educated male elite. Some lower-status Christians including slaves would have been literate (§3.2.6). Third, as Gamble (§1.5.2.4) persuasively argues, the fact that the same texts were read aloud repeatedly shows that reading written tradition did not provide new information but reminded Christians what they had already known. It also shows that 90% of the Christian people who were illiterate could share the knowledge of the gospel traditions. We cannot make a clear distinction between “orality for the illiterate” versus “literacy for the literate.” Consequently, her dichotomy is untenable since it leads back to the modal unidirectionality hypothesis: (i) oral tradition circulated among the masses who were uneducated, female, or non-elite behind written gospels which were distorted by people who were educated, male, and elite, (ii) the written tradition as the end product of the oral tradition, and (iii) temporal priority of the oral tradition over the written tradition. Accordingly, although Dewey persuasively suggests modal interdirectionality, it is regrettable that her argument is partly based on the modal unidirectionality hypothesis.

1.3.3 The Earliest Written Tradition: Earle Ellis

Another point to be noted here is Earle Ellis’ argument. Contrary to the form critics’ view of “laws of development” (1978:240), he has persistently argued that some Jesus traditions were written during Jesus’ ministry. He (1999a:352) argues that “individual episodes (and groups of them) were put in writing very early, some perhaps during Jesus’ ministry.”

Classical form criticism supposed that the Jesus tradition was orally circulated without a written form before the composition of the Gospel of Mark because Jesus’ followers expected the imminent end of the world (cf. §1.2), as Dibelius proposed.⁴³ Ellis (1978:243; cf. 1999b:53;

43 He (1934:9) says that “The company of unlettered people which expected the end of the world any day had neither the capacity nor the inclination for the production of

2001:12) criticizes this apocalyptic view, saying that this view “founded with the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls.” He continues, the Qumran community “viewed itself to be in the ‘last generation’ (1QpHab 2,7; 7,2), expected an imminent end but, nevertheless, produced a large body of literature.”⁴⁴ As a consequence, although first followers of Jesus believed in the imminent end of the world, their position did not keep them from writing about Jesus.

Ellis (1978:243-7; cf. 1999a:22) makes five suggestions to support his view. First, some disciples and followers of Jesus were literate, since Jewish Law commanded that Jews should teach their children to read and write, according to Josephus (*C. Ap.* 2.204; *Ant.* 4.211) and Philo (*Leg.* 115, 210). Second, Jesus and his disciples held a prophetic view concerning biblical tradition, which means that they, like the Qumran community, were not banned from writing sacred texts. Third, form critics presupposed that oral transmission led to variants of tradition which were quite different from the original tradition. This view has become passé. Recent studies of oral folk traditions show that oral transmission does not necessarily lead to variants. Fourth, when Jesus’ disciples were sent off on their brief mission, they might have left some literary forms for their hearers. Fifth, he considers some disciples and converts to be bilingual. Bilinguals both transmitted and translated the Jesus tradition in written forms as well as orally for purposes of wider transmission. Later, he adds one more reason to the list. He proposes

books, and we must not predicate a true literary activity in the Christian Church of the first two or three decades.” Following the apocalyptic view, Hengel (2005:73) states, “This absence of early literary witnesses is all too easy to understand: one who awaits the end of the ‘old, evil world’ in the near future is not at first interested in a literary consolidation of history for posterity. It is enough to proclaim orally what the disciples and he himself have from their experience with Jesus.”

- 44 Davids (1980:79) argues that “some groups contemporary with the New Testament had no hesitation in composing their works as written documents (e.g. the apocalypticists and the sectaries of Qumran).” Millard (2000:198-9) also criticizes the apocalyptic view. He argues, “Nothing in the history of Greek and Roman literature or the distribution of literary texts among the papyri from Egypt supports the idea, either.” Taking a further step, he suggests an instructional view that the Jesus tradition was written for edificatory purposes, that is, for teaching in detail the earliest Christians in the churches. Furthermore, form critics assumed that the earliest *kerygma* did not include the gospel traditions related to church life and behavior and that they were added later by the Christian church because, although Jesus stressed his imminent return, his second coming was delayed. Blomberg (1992:246) criticizes this assumption and argues that Jews knew that “imminent” did not mean “right soon” because they knew the meaning of “the Day of the Lord was ‘at hand’” (e.g. Ps 90:4; Joel 2:1; Obad 15; Hab 2:3). Thus, Blomberg (1992:294) asserts that Jesus’ emphasis on his imminent return has been exaggerated.

that the prolific writing of first-century Palestine upholds the possibility that some Jesus traditions were written during Jesus' ministry. He (1999b:54) suggests that "the widespread literacy in first-century Palestinian Judaism ... would have facilitated the rapid written formulations and transmission of at least some of Jesus' teaching."

Ellis deserves credit for having raised awareness about the possibility of written materials before the composition of the Gospel of Mark and even during Jesus' ministry. Although he seems to push some of his assumptions too hard, his basic tenets are difficult to dispute. His argument is endorsed by Stanton and Bauckham, who proposed a further elaboration of notetaking theory (§1.5.2.5). Unfortunately, it seems that Ellis' theory is still placed within the modal unidirectionality hypothesis. He seems to suppose that initial written tradition during Jesus' ministry remained without reoralization. However, the written tradition is not the end of the oral tradition. If he assumes that the Jesus tradition was written during Jesus' ministry, it is more likely that the written tradition was orally circulated again.

Second, he (1978:246-7) does well to assert that the bilingualism of first-century Palestine undermines both the assumptions of the linguistic and the geographical unidirectionality. In this way, his work stands out from his field. He believes that some disciples, hearers, and converts were bilingual. This implies that the Jesus tradition was translated from Aramaic into Greek during his ministry. Furthermore, contra form criticism's *Sitz im Leben* unidirectionality hypothesis from Judaeo-Palestinian into Hellenistic tradition, he (1998:76) proposes that "good Greek in a Christian document was no sign of a later date or diaspora origin, although Semitic Greek might be a sign of Palestinian or Syrian origin." For these reasons, he (1998:76) rightly suggests that bilingualism discloses "how false was the dichotomy drawn by the 'history of religions' school between Palestinian and diaspora Judaism." However, some points related to the bilingualism of first-century Palestine and the Roman Near East need to be reconsidered.⁴⁵ Although he (1998:76) mentions that "Palestine was largely bilingual," his arguments seem to betray the fact that he (1978:245-7) holds to minimalism

45 He makes the linguistic distinction based on the ethnic division of Palestinian Jews and Gentiles from the Judaeo-Palestinian region. He (1999b:54 n.19) shows that some converts from Syria, the Decapolis, Tyre and Sidon could speak Greek. However, some converts from these regions must have spoken Aramaic as their matrix language (§5.2.1). Also, although he (1978:246-7) assumes that the Hellenists in Acts 6:1 were Greek speakers who could not speak Aramaic, it seems that the Hellenists were Greek-matrix speakers who were bilinguals in Greek and Aramaic (see chapter 5).

(i.e. partial bilingualism; cf. §2.3.3). It is also regrettable that he did not further develop his valuable contribution. He neglects the implication that the bilingualism of this period showed the linguistic interdirectionality between Semitic and Greek traditions. Accordingly, although Ellis persuasively points out that the Jesus tradition was written and translated into Greek during his ministry, he seems to stand in the classic form criticism tradition that written Greek tradition is the end of oral Aramaic tradition in a unidirectional way. Nevertheless, his investigation shows that the study of bilingualism is urgently required when it comes to transmission of Jesus and gospel traditions.

As surveyed (§1.3), many scholars hold the modal unidirectionality hypothesis: (i) oral tradition stands behind written tradition, (ii) written tradition is the end product of oral tradition, and (iii) oral tradition has temporal priority over written tradition. However, as we discussed, it is more persuasive to consider the modal interdirectionality hypothesis. Furthermore, many scholars have recently suggested the modal interdirectionality hypothesis, which will be investigated in detail (§1.5.2). Accordingly, one cannot make a clear distinction between oral and written tradition and insist on the priority of oral tradition over written tradition. The transmission of Jesus and gospel traditions is not unilinear, teleological, or unidirectional but hybrid, circular, and interdirectional.

1.4 Linguistic Unidirectionality from Aramaic into Greek Tradition

There has been a general consensus that Jesus and his disciples usually spoke Aramaic, whereas the synoptic gospels we have were written in Greek. Although the linguistic gap between Aramaic and Greek has been explained in various ways, the arguments have been based upon the linguistic unidirectionality hypothesis that Aramaic tradition was transmitted into Greek tradition in a unidirectional way. Moreover, as we have surveyed, both the *Sitz im Leben* unidirectionality hypothesis (§1.2) and the modal unidirectionality hypothesis (§1.3) are heavily based upon the linguistic unidirectionality hypothesis. The linguistic unidirectionality hypothesis is closely related to viewing the linguistic milieu of first-century Palestine and the Roman Near East as monolingualism (§1.4; cf. §1.2, §1.3), diglossia (§2.2, §2.3), or partial bilingualism (§2.3.3). I will discuss these, respectively.

The linguistic unidirectionality hypothesis has been maintained by two major groups, whether *ipsissima verba Jesu graeca* are accepted or