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Text Categories, Corpora, Editions, and
the Witness Depositions from the Salem
Witch Trials

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Textual History as Language History? Text Categories, Corpora, Editions, and the Witness
Depositions from the Salem Witch Trials¹

PETER J. GRUND

1. Introduction

Around the 18th of May 1692, the following 'statement' (1) against Elizabeth Colson and John Willard was submitted to authorities in the Massachusetts Bay Colony by or on behalf of the teenager Susannah Sheldon, one of the fiercest accusers during the Salem witch trials.

(1) The sam day ther Apeared to mee ~~eleasab~~ eleasabath Coolson and shee took a book and would haue mee to set my hand to it and I would not and then shee Profered mee A blak Peas of monny and seaid I might touch that and I shall be well - - - may the 10 on tusday ther apeared to mee the sam apearatio{n} and another with them In the liknes of a man and they seaid I should Gooe and tell mr hather{e<n>} of it then the seaid willard <€>seaid he would break my head and stop my leegs that I shou{ld} not Gooe [...]
(*RSWH*, no. 179)

Four months later, the Bostonians John and Mary Arnold filed with the same authorities the 'statement' found under (2), attesting to the good behavior of two alleged witches, Mary Esty and Sarah Cloyce, who were then in jail in Boston.

(2) These May Cartify home it may. Consarne that wee hous names are vnderritten bein<g>
dasired by sum of the Realeations of {Mary} estwek and Sareh Cleise to giue ou[Lost] [=

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our] obseruation how thay behaued t<h>am salus while thay ~~ware~~ {Remained} in
B[Lost]torn [= Boston] prison we dow affirme <th>at wee [2 words illegible] sow noe ill
carreg or Behauor in tham But that thare daportmont wose varey s<a>bere and ciuell as
wittnes our hands (*RSWH*, no. 602)

In the recent edition of the documents from the Salem witch trials, *RSWH* (Rosenthal et al. 2009), these two texts are both given the label of 'statement.' Putting them under the same heading is logical on a general level since they both provide evidence in cases against alleged witches. However, striking differences are also apparent between the two documents: one provides evidence against and the other support for people accused of witchcraft. The presentation, tone, and structure also differ significantly. Although written with a spelling that appears to mimic spoken qualities, John and Mary Arnold's statement is quite formal, even formulaic, while Shelden's statement gives the flavor of the purported discussion between herself and the apparitions. In other words, on one level, grouping the two texts in the same category seems to be justified; on another level, the categorization potentially obscures differences between the texts.

In this article, I will explore how alternative, multiple, and more fine-grained divisions of texts than those typically found in editions and language corpora may enhance our knowledge of linguistic patterns. Especially, I want to suggest that features of textual history can offer alternative categorizations. As indicated by my initial examples, I will use witness statements or depositions from the witch trials in Salem, Massachusetts, in 1692 as material to illustrate this larger methodological point. For convenience, I will refer to these texts as the Salem depositions, although this term is potentially problematic, as we shall see. I will show that for these texts it is

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crucial to pay attention to how producers of the texts perceived textual categories (as revealed through their use of certain text labels), who the recorders of the texts were, and how the texts were produced and used. I demonstrate the importance of considering these factors for linguistic studies by showing how our understanding can be enhanced in terms of 'spoken' features of depositions, of evidentials (such as *see, hear, be told*), of spelling, and of variation among the depositions in general. Indeed, by dividing the depositions in accordance with these text-historical factors, we can arrive at new insights about how the recorders and deponents of the Salem depositions shaped the language of the documents and hence also about the more general discourse of the Salem witch trials (see Grund et al. 2009: 83–86). Some of the patterns discussed in this article are undoubtedly peculiar to the Salem documents, while other patterns may be characteristic of the broader text category of depositions (however that is defined). Nevertheless, the basic idea holds that the history of texts may provide useful ways of classifying them and that future editors and corpus compilers therefore should consider multiple codings of texts along various text-historical parameters. Although I am not the first person to suggest the usefulness of multiple text codings (as I will show later), the kinds of factors that I am advocating as the basis for classification (that is, text labels, scribes/recorders, and issues of production and use) have not been considered to any great extent. I will contextualize this discussion by presenting previous treatments of text classification, especially in English historical corpora, and by describing the production and use of the Salem depositions.

2. Background

The impetus for this article comes from a collaborative project on early modern English witness depositions (Kytö, Grund, and Walker 2011). During the course of the project, it became clear

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that, although all the texts can be neatly gathered under the umbrella category of 'depositions,' they can also be divided in various other ways that provide additional insights into language patterns. The mixing of Latin and English in our early modern depositions, for example, is only understandable if the depositions are divided into depositions from criminal courts and depositions from church courts, or into various scribal categories (see Grund 2011a).

Naturally, other researchers have also noted that texts can be divided in a variety of ways, and it has been shown in numerous studies that classifying and coding texts according to a number of parameters is essential for our understanding of what kinds of factors influence language variation and change. As may be expected, text categorization has been a central issue in many historical as well as contemporary corpus projects, and, as a result, there are a number of different classification schemes. The compilers of the Helsinki Corpus, for example, opted for a text type and a prototypical text category classification, as well as a number of other parameters, in order to allow users to explore various configurations of texts (Kytö 1996; Rissanen 1996). The compilers of Middle English Medical Texts (MEMT) classified their material into three major categories, but the corpus makes it possible to investigate any other grouping the user may conceive of with the help of the enclosed software (Taavitsainen, Pahta, and Mäkinen 2005; Grund 2007a). Finally, the Lampeter Corpus of Early Modern English Tracts provides a number of different text classifiers, including a special category based on a text's self-labeling, which I will return to later (Schmied and Claridge 1997).

I do not intend to discuss the issues of how to define a 'genre' or 'text type' and thus how these corpora arrived at some of their classification choices, issues that have been vigorously debated (see e.g. Moessner 2001; Kohnen 2001). My point is instead that, on the basis of the history of texts, corpus compilers may want to provide multiple classifiers, or that users of

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corpora may want to explore alternatives to the categories given in corpora. The point is then not to provide one category that may fit some texts better than others, but to consider a range of factors that may lead to a variety of groupings. In fact, these factors may cut across more traditional 'genre' or 'text type' categories, as, for example, a 'deposition' may have features in common with an 'indictment,' including the same recorder, use in the same court, etc.²

Although my suggestion to consider text-historical factors may seem fairly straightforward, there are complications. For example, what factors should be taken into consideration, and how do we reconstruct textual histories? It may be argued that this approach to classification will be of more relevance for some types of text, such as utilitarian texts and texts that survive in manuscripts, than other categories, such as printed texts or texts in modern editions, since the textual history may be more easily reconstructed in the former than in the latter. Although this argument is valid to some extent, two points should be made. First, although textual history may not be traceable to the same degree in all texts, it may be possible to trace in different ways; that is, different factors will be relevant for different kinds of writings. For texts surviving in manuscripts, factors such as scribe/recorder, owner, and usage may be important, while early printed texts may be coded according to publishers, printers, intended audience, and similar factors.³ What factors to consider, then, depends on the nature of the texts to be included in a collection, edition, or corpus. Secondly, although modern editions may obscure textual history since the text has been removed from its original context, that is not a completely convincing reason not to consider textual history in classification. Instead, I would argue that what is needed is a shift in what version of a text we consider as a suitable source in linguistic studies. Ever since Roger Lass re-visited this fairly old problem in 2004, an increasing number of scholars have voiced the same concern (Lass 2004a; for an overview, see Kytö, Grund, and

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Walker 2011). What is involved in this shift is the necessity for historical linguists to go back to the manuscripts of many historical texts and provide linguistically reliable text editions, since many of the editions used as linguistic sources are not reliable for certain research questions in English linguistics (see e.g. Kytö and Walker 2003; Grund, Kytö, and Rissanen 2004; Kytö, Grund, and Walker 2011). Many of the editions that are currently used for linguistic research were simply produced for different research purposes, for example, to pursue sociohistorical, literary, or legal questions. In conjunction with producing more linguistically reliable editions, we have the opportunity to provide information on the manuscript texts and their use that was not included or was obscured in the editions, information that may provide new insights into language usage. An edition that is produced with some of these issues in mind is the new Salem edition (*RSWH*), and with the help of this edition I hope to show what aspects of textual history may prove useful.

3. Material

I will use the approximately 370 documents given mainly under the labels 'statement,' 'deposition,' and 'testimony' in *RSWH* to demonstrate the potential usefulness of classification according to aspects of textual history.⁴ These documents all share the same general purpose of providing evidence for or against an alleged witch. To understand how these documents can be divided in various ways, it is important to understand when, how, and by whom they were produced. During the Salem trials, witness statements were usually not taken down in court; rather, depositions would be recorded elsewhere and subsequently submitted to the authorities (see Grund et al. 2009: 67). This was in keeping with a Massachusetts Bay Colony law from 1650, given in (3).

(3) Whereas experience doth shew the inconuenience of takeinge verball testimonyes in Court by reason of many *impertincyes* in their relations, so that the clarke cannott well make a *perfit* record thereof, & to *preuent* all mistakes & vngrounded jealousies agaynst the officers, be it hereby enacted & decreed, that henceforth all testimonjes shalbe *presented* in writinge to the Court, either attested before a magistrate, or (if the *party* be within ten miles of the Court) to be then attested in Court vpon oath [...] (Shurtleff 1854: 211; the italics are mine expanding abbreviations in the source)

Since the law dictated that depositions should be taken down outside court, no legal requirement appears to have existed for the deposition to be recorded by a professional court clerk; rather, anyone could write down a deposition. This is clearly reflected in the Salem depositions, as they are written in more than thirty different handwritings, presumably partly because many deponents took down their own depositions. Certain people in the community also appear to have worked as unofficial or perhaps semi-official writers for payment. For example, Thomas Putnam, a militia sergeant and former parish clerk, took down more than a hundred depositions (see e.g. *RSWH*, nos. 169, 170, 172; Hiltunen and Peikola 2007: 53–54, 57–60). Even the infamous justice John Hathorne, the author Nathaniel Hawthorn's ancestor, wrote down statements for a number of Salem villagers (see e.g. *RSWH*, no. 123). Presumably, these villagers sought notarial help because they could not write or were uncertain about the proper format for a witness deposition. As I will show, the recorders of the documents provide a crucial parameter along which texts can be coded.⁵ Once the depositions had been written down, they were then filed in court, and if they were admitted into evidence they were read out in court (during the

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Jury of Inquest session, during the trial, or both; see Section 4.3), and sworn to by the witness. At the various points in the procedure, there could be changes made to the depositions, as shown by various corrections and additions in the documents (see Grund 2007b). This clearly points to many documents being the product of a multi-stage process often involving several different recorders rather than one single writing moment (Grund 2007c; Hiltunen and Peikola 2007: 46–48). This production process and the continual and varied use of the documents provide multiple possibilities for classification, as I will show.

Although the some 370 Salem depositions considered here come in various shapes, it is useful to have an idea of the general setup of this overarching category of text. The deposition in (4) will serve as a prototypical example.

(4) **<t>he testimony of william Rayment aged 26 years or thereabouts testifieth & saith**

that I being at the house of leftint Ingesone: some time in the later end of marth: there discoursing conserning. the examyng of sererall person suspected for wiches: I was saying that I hard that goody procter was to be examyned to morrow to which goody ingesone replyed she did not beleue it for she heard nothing of it: some of <t>he afflict{ed} persons being present one of them or more cryed out there is goody procter there is goody procter and old wich Ile haue her hang goody ingerson sharply reproc{ed} them: then they sem<e>d to make. a Jest of it (*RSWH*, no. 497; the bold and underlining are mine)

Depositions commonly contain a mixture of the witness's original testimony and scribal interventions (for a discussion, see Grund et al. 2009: 67; Grund and Walker 2011); they often

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include switches between the witness's narrative and his or her retelling of verbal exchanges in direct or indirect speech. As shown in (4) in bold, the recorder usually adds the initial information on the witness, including her or his name and age, and appends the formula "testifieth and saith" before the deposition proper begins. In this deposition, the witness, William Rayment, retells his experience at Goody Ingersol's house. He recounts the dialogue between himself and Ingersol in indirect speech in the first underlined passage, or at least that is how the recorder wrote it down. But the deponent recalls the words of one of the afflicted girls in direct speech, in the second and third underlined passages, or, again, that is how the recorder wrote it down. Although some depositions contain a great deal of direct speech, others include none, instead framing the testimony in the third person in indirect speech.

4. Text categories and textual history

4.1 Textual labels

Over the past decade, some corpus compilers and researchers have started paying attention to how the producers and users of historical texts themselves conceived of and understood different texts as belonging to different categories. Since scholars of genre studies, such as Devitt (2004), have emphasized that the name of a text category is a powerful tool to analyze how people understand groupings of texts, the labels found in the texts themselves have attracted special attention. In English historical linguistics, this approach has been advocated by, in particular, Görlach (1992; 2001), and, as mentioned before, by the compilers of the Lampeter Corpus, who used the texts' self-labeling as one of their text classifiers (Schmied and Claridge 1997).

A variety of labels appears in the Salem depositions, shown in Table 1.⁶

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Table 1. Text labels

Label	N
Deposition	212
Testimony	55
Complaint	4
Information	2
Certificate	1
Evidence	1
<i>No label</i>	90
TOTAL	365

I have taken any label that appears to describe the text as a name for the text category. These labels usually occur at the very beginning of the text, as in example (5).⁷

(5) the **deposition** of timothi perley and deborah perley his wife timothi perley aged about 39 and his wife about 33 [...] (*RSWH*, no. 257)

The various uses of these labels deserve a detailed study, but here I simply want to demonstrate the potential importance of considering the labels for linguistic research. The depositions written down by the Salem minister Samuel Parris will serve as an illustrative case. Parris uses both the terms 'deposition' (x12) and 'testimony' (x9) for the witness statements that he records, and no label at all in three cases.⁸ However, the term 'testimony' is only used for the statements by his niece, Abigail Williams (x8), and for one statement by Ann Putnam Jr., both members of the core group of accusers consisting of young women and girls. For his other statements by other people, which usually include himself, he uses the term 'deposition.' Matching the difference in label are radical differences in structure and linguistic features. Contrasting examples are provided in (6) and (7).

(6) The Testimony of Abigail Williams witnesseth & saith that she hath severa<l> times seen, & been afflicted by the apparition of Susannah Martin of Almsbury widow at & before the .2. May. 1692 (*RSWH*, no. 113)

(7) The Deposition of Samuel Parris aged about .39. years, & Nathanell Ingersoll aged about fifty & eight yeares & also Thomas Putman aged about fourty yeares all of Salem testifyeth & saith that Eliz: Hubbard, Mary Warren & Ann Putman & John Indian were exceedingly tortured at the Examination of John Willard of Salem Husbandman, before the honoured Magistrates the .18. May .1692. & also that upon his looking upon Eliz: Hubbard She was knockt down, & also that some of the afflicted & particularly Susannah Sheldon then & there testified that they saw a black man whispering him in the ear [...] (*RSWH*, no. 176)

The other testimonies and depositions follow very much the same patterns: the testimonies report on alleged *first-hand* experience of witches; the depositions, by contrast, are often (though not always) *second-hand* reports by people observing or, more often, being told about alleged afflictions. Naturally, the linguistic structure and framing of such statements will differ. For example, I have found significant differences between these two kinds of statements in the use of evidentials, that is, markers that indicate how a person knows what he or she claims to know. Markers of sensory evidence (e.g. verbs such as *see* and *hear*) predominate in the first-hand testimonies: seven out of nine markers consist of the verb *see* (in various forms). In the 'depositions,' there is much more emphasis on what was said than what was directly observed. For instance, in the eight depositions involving Parris himself as a deponent (usually together

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with Thomas Putnam and Nathaniel Ingersol), fourteen out of sixteen markers constitute expressions of saying (also called quotatives). This underscores that the deponents recount the experience of others rather than what they have observed themselves (Grund forthcoming). In Example (6), for instance, Abigail Williams says that "she hath...seen" the alleged witch, while, in Example (7), Parris, Ingersol, and Putnam do not mark the basis of their knowledge other than indicating at the end that Shelden testified to some of the evidence.⁹ The labels given by Parris thus correspond to real differences in the texts, and separating the two clearly highlights linguistic differences. Whether this holds true across the full material remains to be explored, but there is clear potential for interesting observations about language that this division can facilitate. If the Salem depositions are simply treated as one group, these differences would most likely go unnoticed.

4.2 Recorders and scribal practices

The previous discussion of Samuel Parris's use of 'testimony' and 'deposition' also highlights another crucial factor that impacts linguistic use and variation among the Salem depositions: the identity of the recorders and their scribal practices. It is important to recognize that the Salem recorders were for the most part not objective court clerks that simply recorded verbatim what the deponents said (see Grund et al. 2009: 69–70; Doty 2007; Grund 2007c; Hiltunen and Peikola 2007). Rather, as I indicated before, many of them were community members writing down their own depositions or helping out a friend or neighbor who did not know how to write. Many of these unofficial recorders were heavily invested in the trials in various ways. Samuel Parris, who was a staunch believer in the witch trials, was in the middle of a battle for his position as a minister in the community, and he had a need to show that he could handle the

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crisis with a firm hand (Boyer and Nissenbaum 1997 [1974]: 61–65; Hoffer 1997: 29–34; for Parris's recording of examination documents, see Hiltunen and Peikola 2007: 54). Thomas Putnam, who as mentioned before recorded more than 100 depositions, was the father of perhaps the most insistent accuser of witches, Ann Putnam Jr. He wrote down Ann's depositions as well as the depositions of a number of others belonging to the core group of accusers. Although his role in the trials has been known for a long time, the discovery of his many scribal activities reveals that his role was even more central than previously thought (see Hiltunen and Peikola 2007: 57–60; Rosenthal 2009: 30–31).

This scribal situation makes for a very complex web of deposition recording, and there are a number of ways in which text classification according to recorder is of great importance. I will highlight two aspects. First of all, it is usually assumed that depositions go back to an underlying speech event: a recorder would take down what a deponent told the recorder orally. This assumption has promoted a great deal of interest in depositions among historical sociolinguists and historical pragmaticians focusing on the dynamics of the spoken language of the past (see e.g. Culpeper and Kytö 2010: 54–59; Grund and Walker 2011). However, the Salem depositions challenge this assumption, or show that the assumption does not hold for all depositions.¹⁰ There are in fact two major categories: one category of depositions indeed represents a recorder's written version of (usually) one deponent's retelling of past experiences or actions. However, another category represents a self-authored deposition, where the deponent him- or possibly herself wrote down the deposition.¹¹ In the case of the self-authored depositions, there is *de facto* no underlying spoken version, although the deponents may of course report on spoken language used by themselves and others in another context.¹² Examples representing these two broad categories are given in (8) and (9). Example (8) gives Simon Willard's

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statement, written by himself, while Example (9) is Willard's recording of Mary Warren's statement as given before the Jury of Inquest or Grand Jury,¹³ where Willard seems to have been employed as a semi-official recorder.

(8) The: Deposition of Simon Willard aged: about fortytwo years sayth: I being att y^e house of M^r Rob^t Lawrance: at ffalmoth in Casco Bay: in Septemb^e 1689 [...] I s^d deponant saw M^r Borroughs: put his hand on y^e gun: to show us: how he held it and where he held his hand: and saying there he held his hand when he held s^d gun out: but: I saw him not hold it out then:
S^d gun was about {or near} seven foot barrill: and very hevie: I then: tryed to hold out s^d gun with both hands: but could not do it long enough to take sight (*RSWH*, no. 130)

(9) Mary: Warin. afirmd: before y^e Jury of Inquest: that George Jacobs Sen^e has: afflicted her: s^d Warin: & beat: her with his staffe he or his Apperition: s^d Warin ses she has seen s^d Jacobs or Appearance afflict: Mary Walcot: & beat her with his staffe: she sayd also: that s^d Jacobs has: afflicte Ann Putman s^d Warin verily: thinks: s^d George Jacobs is a wizard ["wizard" written over "witch"] Augst: 4: 1692 upon her oath (*RSWH*, no. 480)

Since Warren's statement was taken down in a slightly different context than Willard's own statement and for a slightly different purpose, there will be inevitable differences between the two. However, in Warren's statement, it is virtually impossible to know whose language we are seeing. Some of the framing is undoubtedly Willard's, but even the language attributed to Warren in the deposition is not necessarily Warren's at all: Willard may have paraphrased or tried to capture only the main substance of what she said (for a general discussion of the impact

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of the recorder's language in depositions, see Grund and Walker 2011; Grund 2011b). We will never be able to confidently tease apart what language belongs to whom, and it may not be important. However, a division of the Salem depositions into self-authored and recorded gives us an opportunity to see if statements that never existed in an oral version are systematically different from those that did. This may give us some new insights into the spoken language of the past, scribal manipulation of language, and other features.

Scribal classification may also help illuminate and complicate linguistic patterns that are found across the Salem depositions: although certain features may at first seem to be characteristic of the depositions in general, they may in fact turn out to be less characteristic of the text category than of the predilections of certain recorders. A case in point is the use of adjectives and adverbs that the Salem deponents and/or recorders appear to employ in order to boost the importance of the testimony or emphasize the allegedly excruciating torments that the deponents were exposed to while afflicted by witchcraft.¹⁴ I will not here consider all the different expressions used by the deponents and/or recorders; instead, I will focus on some high-frequency markers to illustrate what scribal classification can accomplish. If we exclude the adverb *very*, the most common adjectives and adverbs used in this context are *dreadful* and *dreadfully* and *grievous* and *grievously*.¹⁵ These are found throughout the depositions, seemingly used by a great number of deponents. However, a pattern emerges if the distribution is considered from the perspective of the recorders, as may be seen in Table 2 (based on the some 370 depositions surveyed for this article).

Table 2. Dreadful/dreadfully and grievous/grievously in the Salem depositions

Recorder	<i>Dreadful, dreadfully</i>	<i>Grievous, grievously</i>
Thomas Putnam	80 (87%)	204 (86%)

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George Herrick	3 (3%)	-
Simon Willard	1 (1%)	2 (1%)
Samuel Parris	-	9 (4%)
Edward Putnam	-	8 (3%)
John Hathorne	-	1 (0.5%)
Robert Pike	2 (2%)	1 (0.5%)
<i>Other</i>	6 (7%)	12 (5%)
TOTAL	92 (100%)	237 (100%)

One pattern is very clear: these ‘intensifiers’ are almost exclusively found in depositions written by Thomas Putnam. They may even be used many times in the same deposition, as in Example (10).

- (10) The Deposition of Elizabeth Hubbud aged about 17 years who testifieth and saith that on the 27th of february 1691/92 I saw the Apperishtion of Sarah osborn the wife of ~~E~~x Alexander osborn who did most **greviously** tortor me by pricking and pinching me most **dreadfully** and so she continewed hurting me most **greviously** tell the first of march 1691/92: being the day of hir Examination [^]{~~being first of march~~} and then also Sarah osborn did tortor me most **greviously** by pinching and pricking me most **dre<ad>fully** and also seuerall times sence Sarah osborn has afflected me and urged me to writ<e> in hir book (*RSWH*, no. 10; the bold face represents my emphasis)

Part of this pattern may perhaps be accounted for by the fact that Putnam recorded many more depositions than any other recorder, but the number of instances of the adjectives and adverbs is so overwhelming that it does not explain it fully. What is also remarkable is that other recorders may take down depositions by the same people as Putnam, but in those depositions the deponents

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never use these words. Clearly, we have to consider the possibility that the words are Putnam's, rather than a frequent New England or Salem idiom (for a discussion of Putnam's use of set phrases, see Hiltunen and Peikola 2007: 57–60). At least, the classification according to recorder helps us see possible explanations that would not have been evident without taking the recorder into account.¹⁶

4.3 Production and use

As shown previously, the recorders of the Salem depositions are crucial in the production of the documents, as they may influence the language recorded substantially. However, other factors involved in the production can also have a bearing on the linguistic features of the depositions. Even more importantly, the subsequent use of the documents can contribute to their shape and hence the linguistic character of the depositions as we now have them. These factors of production and use are thus important to consider in linguistic studies. From a more general standpoint, Lass (2004b) has already articulated parts of the issue that I am addressing here. He makes the point that when we study the language of a historical text, we usually take the text as a linguistic utterance. This means that we often assume it to be the product of one writing moment, representing one person's language. So, if there is variation in the text in terms of language, that variation is taken as reflecting variation in the person's language. However, as Lass (2004b) convincingly demonstrates, the case is rarely that straightforward: many historical texts may have been copied many times by multiple people, who may have modified the text in various ways. What we thus have is a text with several co-authors or co-constructors, and the linguistic variation may be a reflection of these different co-constructors' usage (see also Grund 2006; Grund 2007c). The question is of course how we can ever know what stage of a text we have at

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hand and how we can take such textual complexities into consideration in linguistic studies. I would suggest that providing some categorization on the basis of production and use may help us deal with some of these problems and also provide explanations for patterns in language.

For the Salem depositions, it will probably be useful to have several text classifiers related to production and use rather than only one category since many possible factors are of potential interest. Two aspects seem particularly important. The first issue concerns in what parts of the court procedure the depositions were produced or used: some appear never to have been used formally during the Jury of Inquest hearings or the trials (judging by the annotations),¹⁷ while others were presented during either or both of these proceedings. If a deposition was admitted into evidence by the Jury of Inquest or Grand Inquest/Jury (see note 13), the deposition was annotated by a secondary recorder, noting that the witness affirmed his or her statement (as in (11)), and sometimes some additional information is given.

(11) The aboue sd Deponant Ann Putnam acknowledged before y^e Grand inquest y^e truth of y^e aboue Euedence vpon her Oath this 15 of septem. 1692 (*RSWH*, no. 170)

Some depositions appear to have originated during the Jury of Inquest sessions, such as Sarah Bibber's statement in (12) (cf. also Example (9)).

(12) [Hand 1] Sarah Vibber: upon: her: oath: affirmed to y^e Jury of inquest: that shee: hath seen: An Puddeater afflict: Mary Warin: Mary Walcot & An Putnam: both at y^e time of her examination. at M^r Tho Beadles; and y^e last night she: together with goodwife

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Parker. did afflict: y^e forenamed: Warin Walcot & Putnum: s^d Puddeater: hath afflicted:
me: to: and i do beleeve she is a wich. Sept^e: 7: 1692 /// (*RSWH*, no. 555)

Using court procedure or court stage (such as whether it was used at the Jury of Inquest session or not, or used at trial or not) as a basis for classification would have several benefits for linguistic studies. Not only would it tell us whether certain linguistic features and phrases are attributable to and explainable by court procedure, but a correlation between language and the process may perhaps tell us whether the depositions that were admitted into Jury of Inquest or trial evidence share certain linguistic characteristics. Perhaps the linguistic form, argumentation, or similar features were important factors for the depositions to be admitted into evidence.

The second issue of classification according to use and production concerns textual provenance and transmission, in other words, where the texts originated and how they were transmitted. In Section 4.2, I suggested that the Salem depositions could be divided into self-authored and recorded, but, in fact, the situation is sometimes more complicated than reflected in this twofold division. A case in point is the deposition by John and Mary Arnold, cited at the beginning of this article (Example (2)). Interestingly, an almost identical statement is found among the Salem documents, but the statement is by Thomas and Elizabeth Fosse, in support of Mary Esty. In (13), I repeat Example (2) together with the Fosses' statement for easy comparison. (I have arranged the two texts so that the lineation matches up in the two columns.)

(13)

<i>RSWH</i> , no. 602; John and Mary Arnold's deposition for Mary Esty and Sarah Cloyce	<i>RSWH</i> , no. 552; Thomas and Elizabeth Fosse's deposition for Mary Esty
---	--

These May Cartify home it may.	thes may sartifie home it may
Consarne that wee hous names are	c[Lost] [= concern] that wee hows names are
vnderritten bein<g> dasired	vndorrit[Lost] [= underwritten] Being dasired
by sum of the Realeations of {Mary}	by sume of the Realeations o<f> marey
estwek and Sareh Cleise to giue	estweke to giue
ou[Lost] [= our] obsarvation how thay	our obsarvation how she
behaued t<h>am salus while thay were	behaued hur self while she
{Remained} in B[Lost]torn [= Boston]	Reamai<ned>in Ipswech
prison we dow affirme <th>at	prison we dow afarme th[Lost] [= that]
wee [2 words illegible] sow noe ill carreg or	wee sowe noe ell carreg or
Behauor in	behau[Lost] [= behavior] [Lost?]
tham But that thare	th<a>m {hure} but thare {that hure}
daportmont wose varey s<a>bere and ciuell	daportment wos<e> sobor and ciuell
as wittnes our hands	as wittnes our ha[Lost] [= hands]

The similarity between the two documents is of course no coincidence: although the spelling varies, the recorder of the two statements is the same, so far unidentified writer. However, determining exactly how the two documents are related is more complicated. The cancellation of “th<a>m” (*them*) and “thare” (*their*) in the Fosse statement may suggest that the recorder used the Arnold statement as the basis for the Fosse document. If the recorder used the Arnold statement, which concerns both Mary Esty and Sarah Cloyce, he may at first have copied the plural by mistake, later realizing that the Fosse statement only pertains to Mary Esty and then

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replacing the plural with “hure” (*her*). However, another possibility, which is perhaps more convincing, is that the two are based on the same original document. This may be indicated by a note on the Arnold statement making clear that the text is a copy (“this is truee cop<i>e”); *RSWH*, no. 602), although the note could also simply suggest that the recorder made the version of the Arnold statement that we now have from an earlier version of the statement.

The formulaic nature of the language distinguishes these two statements from most other Salem depositions (cf. Example (4)).¹⁸ This may be an indication that the hypothesized original may even derive from one of the many contemporaneous manuals and guidebooks available for justices of the peace and clerks, which frequently contain models for various legal documents. I have shown elsewhere that it is very likely that some recorders had access to such manuals or to documents based on models from such manuals (Grund 2007b: 12–14). Although I have not been able to locate a direct source for the Arnold and Fosse statements in the numerous manuals extant from the early modern period, models for depositions and similar statements occur in quite a few manuals (see Grund and Walker 2011; cf. Grund 2007c: 125–126).

Even clearer examples of the importance of textual transmission come from texts that survive in more than one copy. Example (14) presents such texts, the deposition on the right having been copied from the deposition on the left. (I have arranged the lineation so that the lines match up in the two columns.)

(14)

<i>RSWH</i> , no. 667	<i>RSWH</i> , no. 666
The deposition: of Rose ffoster: who testifieth and saith I haue ben most greuously	The Deposition of Rose Foster Who Testefieth and saith I have beene most Greuously

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<p>afflicted and tormented by Abigail ffalkner of Andeueo<ur> also I haue seen Abigail ffalkner or hir Apperance most greuously afflect and torment martha sprague Sarah phelps and Hannah Bigsbe [^]{sence the beginig Augst} and I veryly beleue that Abigail <?>H ffalkner is a wicth and that she has offten affleted me and the afforesaid parson by acts of wicthcraft:</p>	<p>Afflicted & tormented by Abigall Faulkner of Andover Allso I have seene Abigall Faulkner or her appearence most Afflict & Torment Martha Sprague Sarrah Phelps: and hannah Bixbe since y^e beginning Agust & verrily believe that Abigall Faulkner is a witch & that she has often afflicted me and y^e afores^d person by acts of Witchcraft</p>
--	--

The later copyist (producing no. 666), who is unknown, makes several changes to the earlier text (no. 667), written by Thomas Putnam. Putnam’s characteristic spellings are ‘updated,’ including “deposistion” to “Deposition” and “wicth” to “witch.” The later copyist missed a few words in Putnam’s text or left them out deliberately (such as “greuously” in line 5). These two depositions afford very different kinds of linguistic evidence: for a study of spelling, maybe both could be used since the later copyist seems to systematically change the original orthography, but for other linguistic issues the two cannot be used as linguistic equals. Whether in the original or in the copy, the structure, syntax, and word choice of the deposition reflects Putnam’s usage (in addition to the original deponent’s) not the subsequent copyist’s. The same situation holds for a number of depositions and their copies among the Salem depositions (e.g. *RSWH*, nos. 497 and 498, 634 and 635). Indeed, even if two or more copies of a deposition have not survived, it is probably safe to say that the version of many depositions that we have now is not the original version: the original may have consisted of notes that were later written up into the extant document, or, as the above examples show, the texts may have been recopied for safekeeping or

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by request from interested parties (see also Grund 2007c). From a note by the court clerk Stephen Sewall, who was in charge of the paperwork from the Salem hearings, we know that the family of the alleged witch Rebecca Nurse requested and was given copies of the evidentiary material used in the case against Nurse (*RSWH*, no. 285). Furthermore, a Massachusetts Bay Colony law mandated that a person had to pay "six pence for euery page" to a clerk or recorder "for transcribing a copie thereof [that is, of a deposition] when it [was] called for" (Shurtleff 1854: 212).

All in all, the documents cited above, as well as the supporting evidence from Sewall's note and the law, clearly suggest that copying was common and that the extant documents represent a variety of textual stages, from original to later copies that are one, two, or even several steps removed from the *ur*-deposition. Although the classification is never going to be fool-proof, since we do not know in every case whether something is a copy or an original, providing a classification that separates original texts and secondary copies (when known) will help alleviate part of the issue that Lass raises. A further advantage of such a division is that it may provide insights into copying strategies and linguistic changes that may occur during copying. Granted, this classification would require some initial preparatory work by editors, corpus compilers, or researchers, but the payoff would be greater accuracy and a potentially greatly enhanced understanding of linguistic and textual patterns.

5. Concluding remarks

I have argued that it is useful to consider a variety of classifications of texts when they are used for sources in studies of the history of the English language. Especially, I have underscored that different aspects of the history of texts can provide categories that may enhance our

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understanding of the linguistic characteristics and variation among the texts. As I have shown, particularly important for the Salem depositions are factors such as how the producers and users conceived of the texts (as suggested by the texts' own labels), who the producers of the depositions were, and how the depositions originated and were subsequently transmitted. Naturally, the features of textual history considered here may not suit all text categories; rather, other categories may require considering a different set of factors. Furthermore, as I have stressed, it is not my intention that these alternative or additional categorizations replace more traditional genre or text type categorization, but rather that they would complement such categorization so that language patterns can be approached from various angles. In fact, in some cases, these text-historical groupings may cut across genre categories, as the scribe, owner, printer, publisher, etc., may have been involved in the production or transmission of a variety of texts of a variety of genres.

In my opinion, either or both of two strategies are called for in the future. Again, I would agree with Rissanen (1996: 231) that users of corpora should explore their own classifications if the categories provided in the corpora do not fit the research questions. However, despite Rissanen's recommendation (and that of others), this appears to happen very rarely; rather, the original compilers' decisions tend to set the agenda for future studies. As users of corpora or other sources, we need to explore other classifications as a complement to the groupings that have been provided by the compilers or editors. Secondly, as we continue to develop and make available new collections of texts (in the form of corpora or editions), we have the excellent opportunity to explore new factors and classifiers. Admittedly, providing information or additional types of classification based on the history of the texts puts more onus on corpus compilers and editors, whose work is laborious and time-consuming as it is. At the same time,

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few people have as intimate familiarity with the texts as the editors and compilers, who are thus in a unique position of providing information along the lines that I am suggesting. Naturally, this information can be provided in different ways. In *An Electronic Text Edition of Depositions 1560–1760* or ETED (Kytö, Grund, and Walker 2011), we found that various factors influenced the linguistic usage and that these factors should ideally be taken into consideration by researchers. While we coded the texts for some of them (including type of court and scribe), we discussed others in the accompanying book, making future users aware of some of the additional features (such as court procedure) that we could not include in the coding. Whatever way the information is provided, alternative classifications based on information on text history will undoubtedly provide new perspectives on language usage in historical periods.

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² I thus agree with Rissanen's (1996: 231) warning that if scholars do not agree with the classification of a corpus, they should use another classification. However, I also argue that corpus compilers should assume more responsibility for providing more than one or two genre-related fields.

³ As shown, for example, for Milton's works, printing houses could change an author's original punctuation in accordance with their house style or a more general, perceived standard (Corns 1990: 11–12; Treip 1970). In terms of this kind of parameters in corpora, the Helsinki Corpus, for instance, includes a classifier for 'audience,' coded as "PROF," "NON-PROF," and "X" (Kytö 1996).

⁴ I exclude from my study the depositions that do not survive in manuscript, but are only known to us from (usually) much later editions (such as *RSWH*, nos. 493 and 643).

⁵ Although a great deal of work went into identifying and classifying these recorders for *RSWH*, much remains to be done. Margo Burns, Matti Peikola, and I are currently pursuing a project entitled "Writing Practices in Early New England: An Electronic Database of the Recorders of the Salem Witch Trial Documents," which aims to provide a full charting of these recorders and their scribal practices (handwriting, use of abbreviations, etc.).

⁶ The editors of *RSWH* added a text label in the heading accompanying each document. The choice of label follows the use in the texts to some extent. The rationale is that "[d]eposition' is used if the document specifically states that it is a 'deposition,' or refers internally to a 'deponent,' and 'Testimony' is used if the document uses the word 'testifieth.' 'Statement' is used in all other cases, but all three had a similar evidentiary status" (Rosenthal and Burns 2009: 95). Consequently, 'statement' is not a text label that ever occurs in the texts themselves, and despite the impression given by the above quote 'testimony' does occur quite frequently, seemingly as a text label (e.g. *RSWH*, nos. 42, 141, 192). Furthermore, this classification scheme is not consistently carried out. For example, No. 24 contains the word "testifieth," but is nonetheless given as a 'statement,' and, although No. 163 does not contain the words 'testimony' or 'testifieth,' it is classified as a 'testimony.'

⁷ The status of these words as indicators of text categories is sometimes less than straightforward (see Grund and Walker 2011). There are no examples of texts with multiple labels.

⁸ 'Deposition': *RSWH*, nos. 8, 20, 52, 57, 109, 176, 191, 343, 360, 361, 363, 488; 'testimony': *RSWH*, nos. 30, 113, 138, 183, 207, 240, 244, 245, 246; 'no label': *RSWH*, nos. 61, 135, 501. Parris co-recorded no. 338 (a 'deposition') with Thomas Putnam, but in this text, Putnam is the recorder using the term.

⁹ Note that there is a verb of seeing ("saw") embedded in Shelden's statement of her experiences at the end of Example (7).

¹⁰ In contemporaneous England, the conventions of recording depositions were quite different in that the depositions would have been taken down before a court official of some kind by an individual that was connected to the court or to the court official. In some courts, this individual was a professional scribe, while, in other courts (such as justice of the peace sessions), the recorder may have been a local schoolmaster, lawyer, or someone in the justice's household (for details, see Grund 2011b).

¹¹ There is as yet no clear evidence of women taking down depositions, for themselves or others (Grund et al. 2009: 70).

¹² These two categories can be problematized further, as I will show in 4.3.

¹³ The Jury of Inquest determined whether an alleged witch should be formally charged and brought to trial (Trask 2009: 50).

¹⁴ These are related to features that Quirk et al. (1985: 429–430, 589–591) classify as 'amplifiers,' but very often the markers in the Salem documents simply function as manner adverbs/adjectives that stress the horrific nature of the alleged attacks by the witches. I am currently exploring these linguistic markers in a larger study.

¹⁵ The forms *dreadful/dreadfully* and *grievous/grievously* cover all of the following spellings found in the Salem documents: "dreadffull," "Dreadffull," "dreadfull," "Dreadfull," "dredful," "dreadfully," "Dreadfully," "dread{fully}," "dre<ad>fully," "Dredfully," "dredfully," and "greivous," "greuious," "greviose," "grievous," "greevously," "greevously," "greiveiously," "grieviously," "greiviously," "greuesely," "greuesly," "greuesoly," "greuiously," "Greuiously," "greuosly," "grieviosly," "grieviouly," "grieviouly," "grieviousl," "grieviously," "grievio<o>usly," "grievio<u>sly," "grieviously," "grieviously."

¹⁶ The scribal classification could be expanded in various ways. For example, as has been shown by recent research on letters, social networks can provide a great deal of insight into linguistic innovation and diffusion in historical

periods (see e.g. Tiekens-Boon van Ostade 2005; 2011). Constructing such networks for the scribes and/or for the deponents and providing such information as a basis for textual grouping may help show in more detail how the usage of *dreadful/dreadfully* and *grievous/grievously* (and of other features) spread in the Salem community. For an attempt at applying network theory to some Salem documents, see Díaz-Vera (1999). However, since Díaz-Vera's study is based on very little data and uses some unclear classifications, it remains uncertain whether networks can be re-constructed in sufficient detail to be useful for the study of language during the Salem trials.

¹⁷ If a deposition was used at trial, it usually includes the annotation *jurat in curia*, or less commonly *jurat* or *sworn in court* (see e.g. *RSWH*, nos. 403, 553 *et passim*).

¹⁸ This kind of language is shared by a number of other Salem depositions that give evidence *for* rather than *against* an alleged witch (e.g. *RSWH*, nos. 294, 315, 318, 373, 412, 431, 439, 571, 746). In the legal procedure of the time, evidence for an alleged witch would have been treated differently than evidence against. For example, as Trask (2009: 53) remarks, "[t]hose witnesses who presented exculpatory evidence [...] were [...] not allowed to swear to their testimony." Owing to their different evidentiary status, depositions for a defendant may have had their own conventions. Irrespective of whether specific conventions existed, their separate status and their similarity in form and language suggest that a division could be useful in accordance with the intention of the depositions (*for* or *against*).