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From Tongue to Text: The Transmission of the Salem Witchcraft Examination Records¹

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Introduction

In the absence of audio recordings, scholars interested in studying the characteristics of spoken language in the early Modern period are forced to rely on written speech-related sources.² These sources include, among others, drama and fiction dialogue, trial proceedings, and witness depositions. However, at the same time, it has been shown that, although purporting to represent spoken conversation, these texts probably reflect actual spoken language only partially and to different degrees (for the evaluation of the degree of "spokenness" of these text categories, see Culpeper and Kytö 2000; see also Kryk-Kastovsky 2000; Moore 2002). Drama and fiction dialogue, for example, represents constructed speech produced by an author who may have been more or less successful in mimicking contemporaneous spoken conversation. A fiction author or a dramatist may also be guided by literary goals such as to entertain or to convey a certain picture of an event or person. Trial records and witness depositions, on the other hand, constitute records of authentic dialogue or spoken language. However, they represent spoken language recorded in a formal setting, and the record frequently includes legal formulae and obvious scribal interventions (Culpeper and Kytö 2000, 195; Walker 2005, 14–15, 19).

One of the sources that have received a great deal of attention in relation to spoken interaction of the past is the Salem witchcraft trial records from 1692, especially those records that have survived from the pre-trial hearings (or examinations). As early as 1928, Henry Alexander pointed out that the Salem documents "have ... a very real interest to the student of early American speech, as they give us what is probably the best and most complete picture of the popular language as spoken in New England at this period" (1928, 390; cf. also Kytö 2004). In 1972, J. L. Dillard used the examination records of Tituba, a slave woman of the Salem minister Samuel Parris and accused witch, as a starting point for his discussion of the origins of African American English. He claimed that Tituba's language "shows through the transcription made by Justice Hathorne" (1972, 526; see also Rissanen 2003, 97–100). More recent studies have focused on questioning strategies and larger court room tactics of denial and confession, as well as the general speech-like character of the examination records (see e.g. Archer 2002; Doty

and Hiltunen 2002; Hiltunen 1996 and 2004; Rissanen 1997 and 2003; Rissanen and Kahlas-Tarkka 2007). Although all of these studies hedge their statements of how reliable the documents are as records of actual spoken interaction, no systematic attempt has been made to ascertain (as far as possible) their actual linguistic reliability. With the advances of historical sociolinguistics, this is becoming a more and more pressing issue. Applying sociolinguistic methods to historical records, scholars increasingly use material such as court records to correlate linguistic use and extralinguistic factors such as sex, age, and rank; that is, speakers are used as sociolinguistic informants (for English historical sociolinguistics, see Nevalainen and Raumolin-Brunberg 1996; 2003). The Salem examination records, which contain female as well as male speakers, of different ages, and of different ranks, seem therefore to offer an excellent opportunity for sociolinguistic research into early English in North America. However, the question remains to what extent these records are reliable witnesses of the individual voices that they purport to represent.

The aim of this article is to explore the issue of linguistic reliability by studying Salem examination records that exist in more than one copy. The Salem examinations are exceptional, if not unique, in that several records have in a few cases survived from the same event. Some of these records seem to have an exemplar/copy relationship, whereas others may be independent copies of one and the same exemplar; still others appear to be independent records of the same examination event taken down by different recorders. I will compare these multi-version examinations and discuss their textual and linguistic differences. I will show that the recorders who prepared the examination records appear to have been especially concerned with recording the substance (as opposed to the literal context) of the original hearing: Since records of the same event report the spoken interaction in the courtroom differently, it seems that the original linguistic characteristics have only been preserved to a limited extent or that some records are more linguistically "accurate" than others. To a large extent, the language of the examinations appears to represent a recorder's reconstruction of the speech event from notes taken down at the examinations, thus blending the recorder's own language with that of the trial participants.³ Before discussing three categories of multi-version examinations, I will provide some background on the Salem documents, the recorders of the documents, and the circumstances in which the examinations were recorded.

Background and Material

Although the scope of the Salem witchcraft trials was fairly limited compared to European witch persecutions, they have attracted extensive attention in scholarly as well as popular studies (see Mappen 1996 and Norton 2002, and references therein). Scholars have proposed various explanations for the witch hunt in Salem, from ergot poisoning to social, religious, and political tensions. However, whereas more or less plausible arguments can be made for one cause or the other, it cannot be established that one reason in particular was behind the persecution of alleged witches.⁴ The unrest started in Salem Village in February-March 1692, when a group of young women and girls accused three women of being witches. In the next few months, the accusations escalated and spread to involve people in a number of neighboring towns. By the end of 1692, when the trials were almost over, more than 150 people had been accused of practicing witchcraft. Despite the fairly large number of alleged witches, only nineteen were hanged; paradoxically, most of the accused escaped capital punishment by confessing to being witches, repenting, and accusing others. During the whole course of the trials, the main accusers remained the group of young women and girls that initiated the stream of allegations, although they were joined by a number of other accusers, many of them confessed witches. Throughout most of the trial process, the credibility of this core group of accusers was not questioned by the majority of the magistrates, who admitted spectral sightings, experienced by the accusers alone, into evidence. However, in the second half of 1692, there was mounting opposition to spectral evidence and the trials in general by powerful clerics in Boston (including Increase Mather) and by other civic leaders, and the trials started to wind down. Although petitions for restitution were still being filed several decades later, the last alleged witches were released from jail in April and May 1693.

Unfortunately, the actual trial records from the Court of Oyer and Terminer, which was instituted in 1692 by Governor William Phips to deal with the accusations of witchcraft, have not survived (Trask 1997, xx). Instead, most of the extant material derives from the pre-trial hearings, which were held to determine whether an alleged witch should be formally indicted, imprisoned, and brought to trial. (Naturally, some of this material was used as evidence at the actual trials.) Included among this material are the examination records. These records should not be confused with witness depositions (although they do share some characteristics): Examination records preserve the interrogation of an alleged witch at a preliminary, (semi-)judicial hearing,

and were taken down by a recorder appointed by the presiding magistrates. Depositions for or against an alleged witch, on the other hand, were filed with the court by witnesses. These records were predominantly taken down outside court, and were sometimes written by the witnesses themselves and at other times by someone else on their behalf (Grund et al. forthcoming).

There are about 100 extant examinations, including records of confessions. Some of the records are written as dialogues in direct speech between the accused and the interrogator, although they usually also include short passages reported in indirect speech or metatextual comments provided by the recorder. These records appear to reflect the original speech event fairly closely since they include many speech-related features such as discourse markers, interjections, imperatives, and interrogatives. Other examinations are exclusively, or almost exclusively, recorded as indirect speech, where the alleged witch's answers have been preserved, but the interrogator's questions have been excluded. These records are characterized by third person pronoun forms, past tense verbs, and a complex sentence structure (Grund, Kytö, and Rissanen 2004, 150–53; Grund et al. forthcoming). Thus, they appear to be further from the original speech event since they do not contain many of the speech-related features found in the examinations that are recorded as dialogues.

My material consists of three groups of examination records. I give an overview of the material in Table 1.

Table 1. *Documents included in the study*

Group	Document	Recorder	Alleged witch
1	Essex Institute Archive 24, ff. 4v–5r, 6v–7v, 10r–10v	Unidentified	Mary Toothaker, William Barker Sr., William Barker Jr., Mary Barker, Mary Marston
	SC1, series 45X, Massachusetts Archives Collection, v. 135: p. 37	William Murray	William Barker Sr.
	SC1, series 45X, Massachusetts Archives Collections, v. 135: p. 44	William Murray	Mary Marston
	Judicial Archives, Massachusetts Archives, Suffolk Files, v. 32: p. 10, docket #2678	William Murray	Mary Barker
	Judicial Archives, Massachusetts Archives, Suffolk Files, v. 32: p. 50, docket #2713	William Murray	Mary Toothaker
Judicial Archives, Massachusetts Archives, Suffolk Files, v. 32: p. 103, docket #2761	William Murray	William Barker Jr.	
2	Boston Public Library 2 (MS Am 46)	Samuel Parris	John Willard
	Boston Public Library 3 (MS Am 46)	Samuel Parris	John Willard
	Essex County Court Archives 1: 174	Samuel Parris	Susanna Martin
	Essex County Court Archives 1: 175	Samuel Parris	Susanna Martin

3	Essex County Court Archives 1: 9	Joseph Putnam	Sarah Good, Sarah Osborne, Tituba
	Essex County Court Archives 1: 11	Ezekiel Cheever	Sarah Good, Sarah Osborne, Tituba
	New York Public Library, Witchcraft. Mass. Essex Co. Salem "Examination of Tittuba the Indian Woman" ⁵	Jonathan Corwin	Tituba
	Essex County Court Archives 1: 125	Samuel Parris	Bridget Bishop
	Essex County Court Archives 1: 137	Ezekiel Cheever	Bridget Bishop

The first group covers five examinations found in two copies each. Essex Institute Archive 24 includes five examination records, which were probably copied from the other five documents listed in Group 1. Group 2 contains four documents that were all written by Samuel Parris. Boston Public Library 2 and 3 (MS Am 46) contain the same examination, and Essex County Court Archives 1: 174 and 1: 175 are versions of the same examination. In this case, the two versions of the same examination may be the result of independent copying from an earlier version or from earlier (shorthand) notes. Finally, in Group 3, I have included a number of examination records that were most likely prepared by different recorders at the same event. Essex County Court Archives 1: 9 and 1: 11 contain the examination of Sarah Good and Sarah Osborne. A record of the slave woman Tituba's examination is also found in these two documents and in addition in a New York Public Library manuscript.⁶ Finally, Bridget Bishop's examination is recorded in both Essex County Court Archives 1: 125 and 1: 137. I will discuss these three groups separately but I will return to some overall patterns and conclusions.

Recorders and Recording

A very important aspect of the examination records is the identity of the recorders who prepared them (for a discussion of the scribal context in Salem, see Hiltunen and Peikola 2007; Grund et al. forthcoming). Although these were (semi-)judicial hearings, the records were not taken down and post-edited by trained court clerks. Rather, a number of prominent people of Salem Village or Salem Town were appointed as recorders. Many of the examinations written by the Salem minister Samuel Parris, for example, end with a note by the famous Salem magistrate John Hathorne stating: "m^r Sam^l parris being desired to take in wrighting y^e Examination of Deliuerance hobs hath deliuered itt as aforesaid" (Essex County Court Archives 2: 101).⁷ In addition to Samuel Parris, the recorders include the merchant William Murray, the militia captain

Simon Willard, the tailor Ezekiel Cheever Jr., John Hathorne and his fellow magistrates Jonathan Corwin and John Higginson Jr., the wealthy and influential Salemite Joseph Putnam,⁸ the attorney general Thomas Newton, and a few unidentified recorders (for details on these recorders, see Rosenthal et al. forthcoming).

Recording all that took place in the courtroom, including the dialogue between the interrogator and accused, obviously entailed difficulties for these recorders. Writing rapidly with an implement that needed re-sharpening and constant re-application of ink required a great deal of skill (see Thornton 1996, 15). There were also other problems. Samuel Parris famously states in his record of the examination of Rebecca Nurse: "This is a true account of the sume of her examanation but by reason of great Noyses by the afflicted & many speakers many things are pretermitted [i.e. omitted]" (Essex County Court Archives 1: 72). That the afflicted caused a great deal of noisy disturbance during the hearings is attested in many examination records. The level of noise may thus have influenced the accuracy of the recording. Furthermore, at the end of many of the examinations, the recorder has added a note declaring that the record is accurate as far as the "substance" of the hearing is concerned, as in example 1.

1. I und^r written: being appointed by Authority to: take: y^e Above written examination doe testify y^t ~~this~~ upon oath taken in Court: y^t this is a true Copsy of y^e substance substance of it to y^e best of my knowledge:
[Boston Public Library 19 (Ms Ch.K 1.40 v.2 [194]); examination of Ann Dolliver; written by Simon Willard]

Sometimes, *sum* is used instead of *substance* to signal the same meaning (see the quote from Essex County Court Archives 1: 72 above). This is an indication that the recorders paid special attention to the content of what was said but not necessarily equal attention to the precise words or linguistic forms that the courtroom participants used (cf. Kytö and Walker 2003, 224). As I will show, there is plenty of support for such a claim in the examination records. This gives a slightly different picture of the importance of verbatim testimony than emphasized by Kamensky (1997). On the basis of a Massachusetts Bay colony law enacted in 1650, she argues that courts aimed to produce as correct a record of testimonies as possible, and concludes that "only when ear-witnesses' exact words were accurately restated, closely examined, and carefully weighed could the true aim of Puritan jurisprudence be accomplished" (1997, 13). If this law pertained to examination records and not only to depositions, which seem to be its primary concern, the

recorders either did not pay slavish attention to it, or perhaps they considered their recording of the *substance* to be sufficient to fulfil the requirement of the law. If the latter is the true, Kamensky's stress on "exact words" may be an exaggeration.

Another important issue concerns how the recorders took down their records during the examinations, and how they prepared the documents that we now have. It is probably a safe statement that most, if not all, extant records are not the original records taken down in court. The surviving documents give a very polished appearance: Some documents (especially those written by the minister Samuel Parris) have been written neatly in columns and with the interrogator's question and the accused person's answer on separate lines. There are also relatively few corrections in the documents; more corrections would have been expected if the recorders had been struggling to keep up with the conversation-rate dialogue between the participants (Grund forthcoming). The question remains, however, from what the extant records were prepared. The recorders themselves provide some clues. Examinations written by Samuel Parris and Simon Willard in particular mention the word "characters," as in example 2.

2. This is a true account of the examination of Eliz: How taken from my characters
^ {written} at the time thereof witness my hand Sam: Parris
[Essex County Court Archives 1: 322; examination of Elizabeth How; written by
Samuel Parris]

In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, "characters" signified notes in shorthand (*OED* s.v. *character* 3b.). The practice of shorthand was very popular in early Modern England, and there was a great demand for manuals outlining different systems. This is shown by the fact that some manuals came out in as many as fifty-five editions (Davidson 1998, 309; see also Davidson 1996, 422–23). The different shorthand systems were very diverse, and it is unclear exactly how successful they were. The earliest printed English-based shorthand, Timothy Bright's *Characterie* (1588), appears to have been very labor-intensive and complicated (Doran 1935, 153–55). Inventors of subsequent systems, however, such as John Willis in *The Arte of Stenographie* (1602) and Thomas Shelton in his *Tachygraphy* (c. 1626), proposed more refined and apparently more successful recording schemes (Davidson 1996, 422–23). However, although the manuals themselves promised great speed and accuracy, the results seem to have been mixed. Early Modern preachers often complained that their sermons had been distorted in printed editions that were based on shorthand transcripts (Adams 1933, 139). It is uncertain how

proficient Parris and Willard (and perhaps others) were at using shorthand, or what system or systems they employed, although they would probably have had access to most of the shorthand manuals that circulated in England (cf. Hoffer 1992, 7; Thornton 1996, 9, 12).⁹ If Parris and Willard were highly skilled users of shorthand, their records may potentially be more extensive and more accurate than those of recorders who simply took notes.

In addition to records based on notes, some records appear to be copies of full-text versions. As we will see, there are records of examinations that are almost identical. There are also corrections in some documents that suggest that they were based on earlier versions. For instance, examples of corrected dittography (i.e. the same item written twice in succession) or of corrected anticipatory errors (i.e. an item appearing later in the text has been inserted owing to an eyeskip when copying) indicate copying from earlier full-text versions or possibly very extensive notes (Grund forthcoming). These records probably represent later copying of texts that were originally prepared from (shorthand) notes.

Group 1: The Examinations of Mary Barker, William Barker Sr., William Barker Jr., Mary Marston, and Mary Toothaker

Group 1 comprises five examinations found in two copies each. The merchant William Murray produced one set of records and an unidentified recorder the other set. The examinations are mostly recorded in indirect speech; there are only short passages or statements given as direct speech. The two versions of each examination are remarkably similar, and they rarely present substantial differences.¹⁰ The differences that do exist seem to point to one version being the source for the other. Supporting evidence for the documents having an exemplar-copy relationship is found in Essex Institute Archive 24. This document contains a large number of examinations in addition to the ones discussed here. In many cases, the recorder of Essex Institute Archive 24 copies the signature of the justice of the peace that signed the original document. In the case of Mary Barker's examination, for example, the magistrate John Higginson Jr. has signed the record written down by William Murray, now preserved in Judicial Archives, Massachusetts Archives, Suffolk Files, v. 32: p. 10, docket #2678. The Suffolk document also contains Mary Barker's mark (in place of her signature). In Essex Institute Archive 24, on the other hand, the unidentified recorder has simply copied Higginson's signature and Mary Barker's

mark. This is a clear indication that Essex Institute Archives 24 contains copies of earlier documents. Some of these earlier documents do not appear to have survived, while others, such as the documents discussed here, may still be extant. It is of course possible that both records of a particular examination may derive independently from an earlier version. However, the fact that the documents written by William Murray contain original signatures, and the fact that the extant records are so close strongly suggest that one was copied from the other.

There are several ways of accounting for the existence of multiple copies of the same examination. Essex Institute Archive 24 may have been prepared for safe-keeping, since it records the cases against a number of alleged witches. Alternatively, the document may have been commissioned by someone wanting the full record of a number of examinations. In 1650, there was a Massachusetts Bay Colony decree that people who were testifying in a case needed to present their deposition in writing to the court. This deposition was to be filed with "the recorder," who would retain it for safe-keeping. However, for a special fee ("six pence for euery page") "the recorder" could prepare a copy (Shurtleff 1854, 211–12). There are many uncertainties about how applicable this case is to the examination records, since the decree deals specifically with witness depositions. Furthermore, the formulation does not clarify who could ask for a copy to be made of the deposition. Nevertheless, it may suggest that copies could be commissioned by interested parties.¹¹

As remarked above, the differences between the two copies of the same examination in Group 1 are rarely striking. I provide an overview of the differences in Table 2, and discuss some of the major categories in detail below.

Table 2. *Differences in Group 1 versions*

Type of difference	N
Omission/addition	38
Tense	8
Lexis	6
Number (singular vs. plural)	5
Determiners	3
Verbal inflection/constructions (e.g. different past tense forms)	5
Word order	2
Other	7
SUM	74

The largest category of differences is omission/addition, that is, items that have been omitted in one version or added in another, such as in example 3.

3. And when she refused he looked angry and threatned her very much
[SC1, series 45X, Massachusetts Archives Collection, v. 135: p. 44; examination of Mary Marston; written by William Murray]

& when She Reffused he looked angry & Threatned her much
[Essex Institute Archive 24, f. 7v; examination of Mary Marston; written by an unidentified recorder]

There are a great number of different items that have been omitted/added in the documents, including conjunctions (*and, that*), adverbs (*again, very*), and prepositions (*on, about*). Usually, the syntax and meaning of the statement are only changed slightly by the addition or omission of the item. Significantly, there are no long passages that have been added or omitted in one or the other version. If the examinations in Essex Institute Archive 24 derive from the examinations in the other documents studied here, it is evident that the copyist both added and omitted items, and similar items may sometimes be omitted and at other times added.

Tense differences appear eight times in the documents. These differences often occur in the formulation that introduces what the witness has said (as in example 4).

4. she further sayth that she hes seen no appearance since but a ffly which did speake to her
[Judicial Archives, Massachusetts Archives, Suffolk Files, v. 32: p. 10, docket #2678; examination of Mary Barker; written by William Murray]

She further Said y^t She had Seen no aperance Since but a ffly y^t ~~had~~ {w^{ch} did} Speak to her
[Essex Institute Archive 24, f. 6v; examination of Mary Barker; written by an unidentified recorder]

Since the first instance of a tense difference ("Sayth" vs. "Said") is part of the recorder's formulaic metatext (introducing what was said), and hence does not belong to the speech event per se, it is perhaps of less interest for a study of the accuracy of the recording of the examinations. In the second instance ("hes" i.e. *has* vs. "had"), on the other hand, the use of "hes" could perhaps be assumed to be a more faithful rendering of what was said. Mary Barker is more likely to have said "I have seen..." than "I had seen..." Nevertheless, even the first

instance is significant in that it shows to what extent the copyist paid attention to language detail when copying his exemplar. Again, if we assume that Essex Institute Archive 24 contains copies, no clear tendencies can be seen in the recorder's handling of tense: he sometimes uses past tense forms when the other documents have present tense forms; at other times, he uses the present tense when the past tense is found in the other version of the same examination.

Lexical differences (i.e. different choices of single words) appear six times. The two alternative words chosen seem often to be equally possible in the context, though the meaning of the statement may be slightly different (as in 5).

5. she promised herself twenty tymes by the way (but fea~s [= fears] it was to the devil) That if she should dye upon the Gallowse yet she would not say any thing but that she was Innocent
[Judicial Archives, Massachusetts Archives, Suffolk Files, v. 32: p. 50, docket #2713; examination of Mary Toothaker; written by William Murray]

She promised her Self twenty times By y^e way (but feales it was to y^e Diuel) that if She Should Dye upon y^e Gallows. Yett She would not Say any thing but y^t She was Innocent
[Essex Institute Archive 24, f. 5r; examination of Mary Toothaker; written by an unidentified recorder.]

The remaining categories of variation are fairly small. Differences in number (singular or plural nouns) appear five times; variation in verbal inflection (e.g. different past tense forms) is found five times; and word order and determiner differences appear two and three times respectively. For examples of these categories, see 6–9.

6. Being asked what moved her to afflict any persone she said the devil made her doe it.
[SC1, series 45X, Massachusetts Archives Collections, v. 135: p. 44; examination of Mary Marston; written by William Murray]

being asked w^t moved her to afflict [^]{any} p~sons She S^d y^e Diuel made her do it
[Essex Institute Archive 24, f. 7v; examination of Mary Marston; written by an unidentified recorder]

7. she saith she never knew her daughter to be in this condition before this summer
[Judicial Archives, Massachusetts Archives, Suffolk Files, v. 32: p. 50, docket #2713; examination of Mary Toothaker; written by William Murray]

She Saith She neuer new her Daughter to be in y^t Condision before this Sumer

[Essex Institute Archive 24, f. 5r; examination of Mary Toothaker; written by an unidentified recorder]

8. And Martha Sprague being recovered out of a fitt said that Barkers apparition and Goody Parker rid upon a pole. and was baptised at five myle pond
[Judicial Archives, Massachusetts Archives, Suffolk Files, v. 32: p. 103, docket #2761; examination of William Barker Jr.; written by William Murray]

and Marth[~] Sprague being Recouered out of a fitt S^d y^t barkers apperition & Good[~] Parker rod vpon a pole & was baptized at 5 Mile pond
[Essex Institute Archive 24, f. 10v; examination of William Barker Jr.; written by an unidentified recorder]

9. Being again asked how far she had yeilded to satan she said the devil promised her she should not be discovered
[Judicial Archives, Massachusetts Archives, Suffolk Files, v. 32: p. 50, docket #2713; examination of Mary Toothaker; written by William Murray]

being asked again how far She had yelded to Sattan, She S^d the Diue{1} Promised her She Should not be Discovered
[Essex Institute Archive 24, f. 4v; examination of Mary Toothaker; written by an unidentified recorder]

Again, no clear patterns emerge from these differences in terms of consistent changes in either of the two versions of each examination. If the recorder of the examinations in Essex Institute Archive 24 based his texts on the other documents (as I have suggested earlier), he does not seem to have changed the formulations in any consistent way while copying his exemplar.

Finally, the *Other* category includes a number of differences that occur once or twice. These differences cover, for example, the genitive with and without an 's' ("devils book" and "Diuell book"), and the *do*-construction vs. the simple past tense. One difference is of special interest, however. Example 10 shows how the two versions convey a slightly different message about Mary Toothaker's experience with the devil.

10. for ~~my~~ {her} breath hes been often Stopt as it was just now
[Judicial Archives, Massachusetts Archives, Suffolk Files, v. 32: p. 50, docket #2713; examination of Mary Toothaker; written by William Murray]

for her breath was almost Stopt as it was Just now
[Essex Institute Archive 24, f. 4v; examination of Mary Toothaker; written by an unidentified recorder]

In the Suffolk Files version, Mary Toothaker claims that her breathing has often been cut off by the devil when she tried to pray. In the Essex Institute document, on the other hand, it is suggested that her breath has in fact not been cut off completely but only "almost." Perhaps the recorder of the Essex Institute version thought it implausible that her breath would have been cut off; rather, it may have seemed more believable that she had been *almost* choked. Other interpretations of the change are also possible: The recorder that produced the copy may have had more knowledge about the case; perhaps additional information had surfaced since the original record was made. (Again, this presumes that the Essex Institute document is a later copy.) Irrespective of the origin of the difference, it is notable that, in this passage, the two versions differ both in linguistic form and in semantic content.

The existence of variation between the different versions outlined above has important implications. Admittedly, most examination documents contain a signature at the end and a comment stating that a certain recorder has taken down the examination; there are also sometimes comments from justices of the peace, accompanied by their signatures. These records would seem not to be secondary copies, although they were probably produced from courtroom notes. However, there are records that do not contain such stamps of originality or authenticity. It is thus unclear how far removed such a document is from the original speech event: It may be a record prepared from notes taken down in court, but, more importantly, it may be a secondary copy. If it is a secondary copy, it is fairly safe to say that changes have been made on a variety of levels in the course of copying, as indicated by the documents discussed above. Court documents of this kind thus share conspicuous characteristics with many other manually copied texts from the early Modern period (or even earlier periods): They were subjected to the same kind of textual "corruption" (whether conceived of as copying errors or as scribal emendations) that is observable in most early Modern texts (or indeed Old or Middle English texts) that exist in two or more manually copied versions. The recorder or copyist of the document has a crucial role in this context, and it must be acknowledged that the language reported in the record has been filtered through several stages of recording and copying, perhaps carried out by several recorders.

Group 2: The Examinations of John Willard and Susanna Martin

The documents included in Group 2 differ from those found in Group 1 in many respects. The four documents (Boston Public Library 2 and 3, and Essex County Court Archives 1: 174 and 1: 175) were written by one and the same recorder, the minister Samuel Parris. They are primarily recorded as dialogues where both the interrogator’s questions and the alleged witch’s answers have been preserved. The two versions of the two examinations (of John Willard and Susanna Martin, respectively) also exhibit greater differences than did the versions in Group 1. To illustrate this, I give a short extract of the two versions of John Willard’s examination record in example 11.¹²

11.

Boston Public Library 2 (MS Am 46)	Boston Public Library 3 (MS Am 46)
<p>Susan: Sheldon tried to come <u>near</u> him but fell down immediately, <u>& he took hold of her hand with a great deal of do, but she continued in her fit crying out, O John Willard, John Willard &</u> The ex What was the reason <u>you could not</u> come near <u>him</u>? <u>The black man stood between us.</u> They cannot come near any that are accused. Why do you say <u>they could not come near any that were accused: You know Nehemiah Abbot they could talk with him.</u></p>	<p>Susan: Sheldon tried to come <u>to</u> him, but fell down immediately.</p> <p>What is the reason <u>she cannot</u> come near <u>you</u>?</p> <p>They cannot come near any that are accused. Why do you say <u>so, they could come near Nehemiah Abbot, the children could talk with him</u></p>

As may be seen, differences appear on all levels. Most notably, in this extract, passages have been left out in one version or added in the other. One question in Boston Public Library (BPL) 3 is addressed to John Willard (“What is the reason she cannot come near you?”), whereas in BPL 2, it is addressed to a witness, Susanna Sheldon, who also provides an answer that is not found in BPL 3.¹³ The differences between these two documents as a whole suggest either that BPL 3 is an abbreviated version copied from BPL 2, or, perhaps more likely, that they both stem from one or more earlier versions or perhaps Parris’s (shorthand) notes. The relationship between Essex County Court Archives (Ecca) 1: 174 and 1: 175 is similar — Ecca 1: 175 may be a copy of Ecca 1: 174, or, more likely, they may be independent copies of the same exemplar(s) or notes. The

reason why Parris prepared two copies of these documents is unclear. One may represent a more polished version than the other, or perhaps he was asked to produce two versions for safe-keeping. However, if the latter is true, we would perhaps have expected the two copies to be more similar.

Determining the exact relationship between the two records of the same examination and their origin is not of prime concern in this context. What is crucial, however, is that the two versions differ substantially both in content and linguistic form, and would hence yield different results if used as sources for linguistic studies. Since the differences between the versions are many and of various kinds, I will concentrate on a few central features listed in Table 3. I will focus here on differences found in the portions of the examinations recorded as direct speech. Admittedly, interesting differences also occur in passages cast as indirect speech and in the metatextual narrative provided by the recorder (such as "Susan: Sheldon tried to come near him but fell down immediately;" in example 11). However, these passages are fairly short and do not provide information that is substantially different from that presented in the discussion of direct speech passages.

Table 3. *Differences in Group 2 versions*

Type of difference	N
Discourse markers	6
Omitted/added passages	12
Verbal constructions/question structure	13
Adverbs	4
SUM	35

Discourse markers have received considerable attention in English historical linguistics, primarily in studies with a historico-pragmatic approach (see Kryk-Kastovsky 2000, 211, and references therein). These markers have been considered some of the prime indicators of spoken language of the past. The Salem documents contain quite a few instances of discourse markers, primarily *well*, *why*, and *oh*, as in 12.

12.

If they be dealing in the black art, you may know as well as I.

Well what have you done towards this?

Nothing.

Why it is you, or your appearance.

[Essex County Court Archives 1: 174; examination of Susannah Martin; written by Samuel Parris]

These markers give the impression that the dialogue presented in the documents is indeed a record of speech. However, the different versions of the same examination use these markers to different extents. BPL 3 uses *well* once when it is not found in BPL 2, whereas BPL 2 uses *well* once and *oh* once when they are not found in BPL 3. Similarly, Ecce 1: 174 uses *why* and *well* when they are absent from Ecce 1: 175. On the other hand, *well* is found in Ecce 1: 175 once, while it is absent from Ecce 1: 174. Several interpretations can be offered for these discrepancies: It is possible that neither of the two versions provides an accurate picture of the usage of the discourse particles; rather, the two combined may represent the full record of the usage in the courtroom. Alternatively, one may be more accurate than the other, which suggests that the recorder inserted and/or removed some of the markers when preparing one of the copies. Another possibility still is that the usage in both reflects the recorder’s sprinkling of these features into the record to make it more speech-like. Perhaps the last alternative is the most feasible: If the recorder was concentrating on recording the “substance” of the hearing, he would probably have been less inclined to pay attention to discourse particles.

There are surprisingly substantial differences in terms of passages that have been added or omitted in one or the other version. Particularly in BPL 2, there are several questions and answers that are not found in BPL 3. Consider, for instance, the extract in example 13.

13.

Boston Public Library 2	Boston Public Library 3
<p>What do you think of this? How comes this to pass? It is not from me, I know nothing of it <u>You have taxt your self wonderfully, it may be you do not think of it.</u> <u>How so?</u> <u>You cryed up your tender affections and here round about they testify your cruelty to man</u></p>	<p>How do you think of this, how comes it to pass? It is not from me, I know nothing of it.</p>

<p><u>& beast, & by your flight you have given great advantage to the Law, things will bear hard upon you</u></p>	
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In this passage, the interrogator’s mock-conciliatory remark (“You have taxt your self wonderfully...”), Willard’s bewildered reply, and the interrogator’s subsequent statement are not found in BPL 3. The two versions thus give a completely different picture of the course of the interrogation and the conversational interchange between Willard and the interrogator. Similar differences appear an additional three times in BPL 2 and 3, BPL 2 always being the more extensive. Although it is uncertain, it is perhaps easier to suggest that the passages were omitted in BPL 3 rather than added in BPL 2 (although it cannot be ruled out that Parris consulted other transcripts perhaps prepared by other recorders in order to produce BPL 2). But whichever is closer to the truth, the fact remains that if only BPL 3 had survived, our conclusions about the language would have been based on that document, although it seems to be an imperfect record as far as recording the original speech event.

Omitted/added passages are not as common or as striking in Ecce 1: 174 and 1: 175. The differences mainly consist of short phrases found in one but not the other, as in example 14.

14.

Essex County Court Archives 1: 174	Essex County Court Archives 1: 175
<p>Nothing Why it is you, or your appearance. I cannot help it. That may be your Master</p>	<p><u>I have done</u> nothing. Why it is you, or your appearance. I cannot help it. That may be your Master <u>that hurt them</u></p>

The presence of the two phrases in Ecce 1: 175 can be interpreted as added clarifications. Alternatively, their absence in Ecce 1: 174 may signal that they were omitted in this document since they are not strictly necessary. Again, the different versions provide alternative pictures of the courtroom interaction between the interrogator and the alleged witch, Susanna Martin. Significantly, the “substance” of the conversation is retained but the actual linguistic features of the conversation vary.

In terms of verbal constructions and the way questions are formulated, many kinds of differences appear between the versions. BPL 2 and 3 differ in their choice of modal auxiliaries, or modal auxiliaries and imperatives (*will* vs. *would*, *would* vs. *could*, *confess* vs. *you*

Peter Grund. 2007. "From Tongue to Text: The Transmission of the Salem Witchcraft Examination Records." *American Speech* 82(2): 119–150. (the accepted manuscript version, post-peer review)

must confess). Ecce 1: 174 and 1: 175 prefer different word orders in questions containing *not* (e.g. *Have you not* vs. *Have not you*; x3); and Ecce 1: 174 uses the negative in two questions where it has been left out in Ecce 1: 175, as in example 15 (see also 16 below). In this way, the question is left more open in Ecce 1: 175, whereas in Ecce 1: 174 the question presupposes a yes-answer. This variation is a good example of how linguistic studies may yield different results if based on one or the other version. The use of yes/no questions with negative polarity (i.e. a yes-answer is expected) was part of Archer's study of question strategies in the Salem examinations (2002, 14–15). She does not include Ecce 1: 174 or Ecce 1: 175 (i.e. Susanna Martin's examination), but if she had her results and subsequent discussion would have differed depending on which examination version was used.

15.

Essex County Court Archives 1: 174	Essex County Court Archives 1: 175
<u>Do not you</u> think they are Bewicht?	<u>Do you</u> think they are Bewicht?
No, I do not think they are?	No I do not think they are.

In another passage (example 16), Ecce 1: 174 prefers a construction with verb + object whereas Ecce 1: 175 uses a simple verb. In this instance, although 1: 175 seems to give more information, the same information may be inferred from the context in 1: 174.

16.

Essex County Court Archives 1: 174	Essex County Court Archives 1: 175
What did you do? Did not you <u>give your consent</u> ?	What did you do? Did you <u>consent</u> these should be hurt?
No, never in my life.	No never in my life.

The final category discussed here involves different types of adverbs. Connectives such as *thus* (BPL 3), *therefore* (BPL 2), and *besides* (Ecce 1: 175) are found in one version but not the other. In one instance, BPL 2 and 3 have selected two near-synonymous words (example 17). Again, the meaning is only slightly different, if at all, in the two versions, but the linguistic choice is different.

17.

Boston Public Library 2	Boston Public Library 3
Do you think these are Bewicht? Yes, I <u>verily</u> beleive it.	Do you think these are bewicht. Yes, I <u>really</u> beleive it.

To the above examples could have been added many other instances, though from mostly less common categories, including variation in determiners, verb tense, alternative formulations or lexical choices. What is evident and striking from all of these differences is that they combine to give two records of the same event that are conspicuously different, primarily in formulation but also sometimes in content. It is of course difficult, if not impossible, to determine which of these recordings is closer to the original speech-event and hence a more accurate representation of the courtroom proceedings. However, the fact that differences exist presents great challenges for linguists wanting to use the examination records as sources of the spoken language of the past and the courtroom dialogue. I will return to some of the implications of these findings later on.

Group 3: The Examinations of Sarah Good, Sarah Osborne, Tituba, and Bridget Bishop

As we have seen, the different versions of one and the same examination in Group 1 are fairly close in content and formulation, while the documents of Group 2 differ more substantially from each other. The examination records in Group 3 represent yet another step: These versions exhibit radical differences in the representation of the same speech event. The most likely explanation for the variation is that the records were produced independently by two or more recorders who were following the court proceedings at the same time. The differences between the records may be due to several reasons. The recorders may not have been equally proficient at recording the events, or they may have approached their task with different goals. The final records may of course also represent several stages of copying.

I will discuss three cases of what appear to be independent records: first, the examination records of Sarah Good and Sarah Osborne, which were produced by Joseph Putnam and Ezekiel Cheever; second, the examination records of the minister Samuel Parris's slave woman, Tituba, which exists in three versions written by Joseph Putnam, Ezekiel Cheever, and Jonathan Corwin;

and third, the examination records of Bridget Bishop, which were prepared by Samuel Parris and Ezekiel Cheever. Since the differences are so substantial, I will discuss selected extracts.

Essex County Court Archives (Ecca) 1: 9 and 1: 11 contain records of the examinations of both Sarah Good and Sarah Osborne (as well as of Tituba, which I will return to below). The two documents are very different from each other in terms of presentation technique. Ecca 1: 9 was prepared by Joseph Putnam and contains basically only short notes or abbreviated answers by Good and Osborne. The interrogator's questions are very rarely included. Rissanen (2003, 99) suggests that Putnam's document "consist[s] of hasty notes on the spot." Although the record does give that impression, it is unlikely that the extant document constitutes the original notes. It contains several instances of corrections of what appears to be dittography (i.e. the repetition of the same words probably produced by an eyeskip; cf. Grund forthcoming). These corrections suggest that the record was copied from an earlier written record or prepared from notes. Putnam's document is also peculiar in that the answers are sometimes so terse that they can hardly have been of much use as evidence in the court proceedings without the accompanying questions. For example, the first statement given in Ecca 1: 9 is Sarah Good's answer "with non." But it is unclear what this answer is in reply to. Interestingly, in Ecca 1: 9, Good's statements have been numbered; this has also been partially done in Sarah Osborne's record (but not in Tituba's). This may indicate that there was a set of questions that should go with the record, which has not survived.

Ecca 1: 11, on the other hand, gives a very different and polished impression. Written by Ezekiel Cheever, the record of Good's and Osborne's examinations is mostly given as a dialogue between the accused and the interrogator, who appears to have been the magistrate John Hathorne. Almost all turns between the speakers have been marked by "(g)," "(O)," or "(H)" for the participants' names (sometimes the full names or short forms are given). As we will see, Cheever's record frequently contains much more information than Putnam's. However, there are also aspects of the examination that must have been left out or missed by Cheever but caught or added by Putnam.

The extract given below (example 18) is taken from the two records of the examination of Sarah Osborne. The extract is representative of the whole of the record and also for the record of Sarah Good's examination. I have divided the text into passages to facilitate the discussion of some of the features of the two versions.

18.

Passage	Ecce 1: 9	Ecce 1: 11
1	saith shee saith that shee saith that shee was more lickley beewicht then a wick	shee said this morning that shee was more like to be bewitched then that shee was a witch
2		m ^r Harthon asked her what made her say so: shee answered that shee was frighted one time in her sleep and either saw or dreamed that shee saw a thing like an indian all black which did pinch her in her neck and pulled her by the back part of her ^h {head} to the dore of the house (H) did you never see anything else (O) no.
3	shee said shee would neuer beeleaue the deuell	it was said by some in the meeting house that shee had said that shee would never beleive that lying spirit any more. (H) what lying spirit is this hath the devil ever deceived you and been false to you (O) I doe not know the devill I never did see him.
4	the deuell did propound to hur that shee should neuer goe to meting noe more	(H) what lying spirit was it then (O) it was a voice that I thought I heard, (H) what did it propound to you. (O) that I should go no more to meeting but shee I said I would and did goe the next sabbath day
5	and att that time nothing was sugested to hur elces	(H) were you never tempted funder, (O) no.
6	why did she pinch the young wo ^{<ae>} man shee neuer did nor dont kno ^{<w>} who did	
7		(H) why did you yeild thus far to the devil as never to goe to meeting since. (O) alas I have been sike and not able to goe her housband and others said that shee had not been at meeting thes years and two months

There are several striking differences between the two records. Ecce 1: 11 is more extensive (see Passages 2, 3, 4 and 7). This is perhaps not too surprising since the general strategy of Ecce 1: 9 seems to be only to present the essence of the dialogue, and it mostly provides only the answers

and not the questions (see, however, Passage 6). Some passages are only found in one and not the other, and surprisingly, these passages are not exclusively found in Ecce 1: 11, which generally contains a longer record: Passage 6, found in Ecce 1: 9, has no equivalent in Ecce 1: 11.

The linguistic features of the two also differ considerably. To some extent, this may be expected since Ecce 1: 9 is primarily recorded in indirect speech, while Ecce 1: 11 is mostly cast in direct speech. There is one notable similarity between the two, however. In Passage 1, both records report very similar wordings for Osborne's statement that it is more likely that she has been bewitched than that she is a witch. A similar phenomenon occurs in Good's examination where Good's husband is reported to have said "thatt shee [i.e Good] ~~saieth that shee~~ is an enemy to all good" in Ecce 1: 9, and "that shee is an enemy to all good" in Ecce 1: 11. Since the two recorders, presumably independently, report statements very similarly in the case of Osborne's examination and in exactly the same way in the case of Good's examination, these statements probably come close to what was actually said in the courtroom. However, we can of course never completely discard the possibility that the recorders borrowed material from each other or other sources, although the differences would seem to disprove such contamination.

As for the other passages, it seems clear that neither version presents an accurate record of what took place in the courtroom. Of course, we can never know whether a recorder added something that was not part of the original court proceeding. The recorder may also have misheard something, inadvertently adding something that was never said or done. However, it seems more likely that the recorders took down as much as they could or as much as they felt was important. As mentioned earlier, many recorders point out that the record is true as far as the *substance* of the examination is concerned. This may mean that parts have been left out that were considered of less importance by a particular recorder. The upshot of this, which will become more evident in my discussion of the record of Tituba's examination, is that the records are sometimes incomplete, but they often retain the general substance of what happened in the courtroom (as far as we can tell). As for the linguistic features, the evidence is inconclusive. Ecce 1: 9 obviously abbreviates and reformulates, but to what extent Ecce 1: 11 is true to the original dialogue between the interrogator and the accused is unclear.

In the case of Tituba's examination, we are very fortunate to have three variant versions. In addition to Ecce 1: 9 and 1: 11, the examination is also preserved in New York Public Library (NYPL). The NYPL version, which was written by the justice of the peace

Jonathan Corwin, is the longest of the three records. Like Ecce 1: 11, it is cast mostly as a dialogue between Tituba and John Hathorne. The conversational turns in NYPL are indicated by "Q" for *Question* and "A" for *Answer*. The three versions are often widely different in formulation. I have given an extract from the three versions below. Since Tituba's examination is fairly extensive, I will not discuss more than a few examples. However, the extract given below (example 19) is representative of the records in general.

19.

Passage	Ecce 1: 9	Ecce 1: 11	NYPL
1	and shee oned that shee did itt att furst butt butt she was sorry for itt	ther is 4 women and one man they hurt the s children and then lay all upon hure and they tell me if I will not hurt the children they will hurt me (H) but did you not hurt them (T) yes but I will hurt them no more (H) are you not sorry that you did hurt them. (T) yes.	ther was .5. of y ^m w th y ^e man, they tould me if I would nott goe & hurt y ^m they would doe soe to me att first I did agree w th y ^m butt afterward I tould y ^m I doe soe noe more. Q. would y ^e [= they] have had you hurt y ^e Children y ^e Last night A. yes, butt I was Sorry & I sayd, I would doe soe noe more, but tould I would ffeare God.
2		(H) and why then doe you hurt them) (T) they say hurt children or we will doe worse to you	Q. butt why did nott you doe soe before? A. why they tell me I had done soe before & therefore I must goe on, these were the .4. woemen y ^e man, butt she knew none but Osburne & Good only, y ^e other were of Boston
3	itt was the apearance of a man that came to hur and told hur that she must hurt the Children	H) what have you seen an man come to me and say serve me (H) what service (T) hurt the children and last night there was an apearance that said K Kill the children and if I I would no go on hurtang the children they woud doe worse to me	Q. att first begining w th y ^m w ^t then appeared to you w ^t was itt like y ^t Got you to doe itt A. one like a man Just as I was goeing to sleep Came to me this was when y ^e Children was first hurt, he sayd he would kill y ^e Children & she would

			never be well, and he sayd if I would nott serve him he would doe soe to mee Q. is y ^t y ^e same man y ^t appeared before to you, y ^t appeared y ^e last night & tould you this? A. yes.
4	and she said that 4 times shaps of a hodg or a dodge and bid hur sarue him she said that shee could nott then she said he would hurt hur	(H) what is this appearance you see (T) sometimes it is like a hog and sometimes like a great dog this appearnce shee saith shee did see 4 times (H) what {did} it say to you (T) is the black dog said serve me but I said I am afraid he [^] {said} if I did not he would doe worse to me (H) what did you say to it (T) I will serve you no longer then he said he would hurt me and then he lookes like a man and threatens to hurt me	Q. w ^t Other, likenesses besides a man hath appeared to you? A. sometimes like a hogge sometimes like a great black dogge, foure tymes. Q. but w ^t did they say unto you? A. they tould me serve him & y ^t was a good way; y ^t was y ^e black dogge I tould him I was afrayd, he tould me he would be worse then to me. Q. w ^t did you say to him then after that? A. I answer I will serve you noe Longer he tould me he would doe me hurt then.

In Passage 1, Ecce 1: 9 seems only to give an abbreviated answer, which provides the gist of what Tituba appeared to have said in court. The other two documents present a dialogue between Hathorne and Tituba, but the two versions of the verbal exchange are conspicuously different. For example, in Ecce 1: 11, it is Hathorne that solicits Tituba's admission of regret: "(H) are you not sorry that you did hurt them. (T) yes." In NYPL, on the other hand, Tituba volunteers her regrets that she has hurt the children and offers further comment: "I sayd, I would doe soe noe more, but tould I would ffeare God." This last formulation is not found at all in Ecce 1: 11 (or 1: 9).

Ecce 1: 9 has no equivalent to the question and answer found in Passage 2 in Ecce 1: 11 and NYPL. The two latter documents, in turn, differ substantially both in content and formulation. In Ecce 1: 11, Tituba claims that she continued hurting the children because otherwise the other alleged witches and the man would hurt her even more severely than she was hurting the children. In NYPL, on the other hand, Tituba's answer is less convincing: She claims

that the witches asserted that she had hurt the children before and "therefore I must go on." She also adds as a clarifying remark that the people asserting this were the same five people mentioned earlier (Passage 1 and earlier in the examination).

In Passage 3, Ecça 1: 9 again seems to heavily abbreviate the discussion. It records that a man came to Tituba and told her that she must hurt the children. Ecça 1: 11 contains some additional information. It records that the man told Tituba to serve him. This triggers a follow-up question from Hathorne: "what service," which receives the answer (also recorded in Ecça 1: 9): "hurt the children." However, Ecça 1: 11 then goes on to say that the man appeared to her the night before and said that she must go one step further and kill the children and hurt them even more. If not, he would visit more pains on her. NYPL, on the other hand, adds yet more information and some alternative details to this picture. NYPL does not mention initially that the man appeared to Tituba the previous night and instructed her to kill the children. Instead, NYPL backtracks and states that the man appeared to Tituba when the children were first being assaulted by witchcraft. He asserted then that *he* would kill the children and that "she [i.e. Tituba] would never be well." It was also at this time that the man told her that he would hurt her if she did not comply, according to NYPL. Only at the end of this section is it made clear that this is the same man that appeared to her the previous night. The versions thus differ markedly in depicting the sequence of events. What is more, even when the content is similar, the linguistic form can vary considerably. For example, the initial question by Hathorne and Tituba's subsequent answer are phrased very differently in Ecça 1: 11 and NYPL, although the sense is similar: "(H) What have you seen an man come to me" (Ecça 1: 11), and "Q. att first begining wth y^m w^t was itt like y^t Got you to doe itt A. one like a man" (NYPL). It is of course unclear which of the two formulations Hathorne actually used in the courtroom, if indeed he used either of them.

In the fourth and final passage discussed here, the three versions agree on a number of issues: 1) a hog and a dog appeared to Tituba; 2) this happened four times; 3) they/it said that she should serve them/it; 4) Tituba refuses; 5) it (the black dog) threatens to hurt her if she does not comply. Similarities in formulation also exist between the versions, especially Ecça 1: 11 and NYPL. For example, in response to the first question, Ecça 1: 11 records the response: "sometimes it is like a hog and sometimes like a great dog." NYPL contains a similar answer: "sometimes like a hogge sometimes like a great blacke dogge." Although there is general agreement among the versions, there is also disagreement in particulars and in linguistic detail (I

will concentrate on Ecce 1: 11 and NYPL). In NYPL, the initial question is formulated much more precisely than in Ecce 1: 11, probably in recognition or response to the earlier discussion of the man. Furthermore, in NYPL, it is confusingly "they" (i.e. the hog and the dog) that command Tituba. However, this is afterwards revised, declaring "y^t was y^c black dogge." In Ecce 1: 11, the speaker is always the dog. Although Hathorne's follow-up question about what the dog told her is similar in the two versions, the linguistic features vary. Note for example the use of *him* and *it*: "what did you say to it" (Ecce 1: 11), and "w^t did you say to him then after that" (NYPL). At the end of this passage, after Tituba has refused to serve the dog, the two versions present different stories: NYPL simply states that the dog concludes that it will hurt her since she has refused to do his bidding. Ecce 1: 11, by contrast, provides a more elaborate description declaring that the dog looked like a man and threatened to hurt her.

It is evident from this comparison that the three versions of Tituba's examination provide very different pictures of the courtroom proceedings and the verbal exchange between Tituba and the interrogator John Hathorne. The variation in linguistic form and to some extent content has obvious implications for linguistic studies. In her study of question strategies in the Salem examinations, Archer (2002: 30) only used one version of Tituba's examination: Ecce 1: 11, as found in Boyer and Nissenbaum (1977: 747–49). Clearly, her results would have been different if she had based the study on one of the other versions. This demonstrates the danger of using the Salem examinations indiscriminately as records of the characteristics of the language used by the courtroom participants.

Finally, the two records preserved from Bridget Bishop's examination (Ecce 1: 125 and Ecce 1: 137) present patterns similar to those discussed earlier in this section. Although they record the same courtroom event, the two versions provide sometimes widely different pictures of the proceedings: Information is found in one version but not the other; at a few points whole conversational exchanges are recorded only in one version. An illustrative example of the presence and absence of information is found in the striking exchange cited in example 20 below. In Ecce 1: 137, Ezekiel Cheever records Bishop's initial denial of being a witch and her frustrated comment "I know not what a witch is." But in Ecce 1: 125, Samuel Parris records a much longer exchange between the two, including Hathorne's cunning follow-up questions. Ecce 1: 125 thus gives the impression of a much more pressing and hostile interrogation than Ecce 1: 137 in this passage. (Note that I have changed the lineation to facilitate comparison.)

20.

Ecce 1: 125	Ecce 1: 137
<p>Why you seem to act witchcraft before us, by the motion of your body, which has influence {seems to have influence} upon the afflicted.</p> <p>I know nothing of it. I am innocent to a Witch. I know not what a witch is.</p> <p>How do you know then that you are not a witch? & yet know not what a witch is?</p> <p>I do not understand know what you say</p> <p>How can you know, you are no Witch, & yet not know what a Witch is:</p> <p>I am clear: if I were any such person you should know it.</p> <p>You may threaten, but you can do <no more> than you are permitted.</p> <p>I am innocent of a witch.</p>	<p>(m^r Harth) doe you not see how they are tormented you are acting witchcraft before us what doe you say to this why have you not an heart to confese the truth</p> <p>(BH) I am innocent I know nothing of it I am no witch I know not what a witch is</p>

Even though it is obvious that the two records deal with the same exchange, the formulation of the exchange, the conversational strategy, and the linguistic features are radically dissimilar. In example 21, for instance, Hathorne's question is basically the same in the two versions. However, Bishop's response differs significantly. In Ecce 1: 125, Bishop gives a timid or self-assured answer (it is difficult to tell which from the context). In Ecce 1: 137, on the other hand, she plainly states her innocence.

21.

Ecce 1: 125	Ecce 1: 137
<p>What do you say of those murders you are charged with? <u>I hope, I am not guilty of Murder.</u></p>	<p>(m^r Harth) what doe you say to these murders you are charged with (B) <u>I am innocent I know nothing about of it.</u></p>

As we have seen above, the records of one and same event can vary widely both in content and linguistic form. At least some of these differences obviously stem from the fact that the records were prepared by different recorders. These recorders may have had different

approaches to what was important and what was not, thus recording the proceedings selectively. In deciding the relative importance of one detail or another, bias may have been a factor. Many of the recorders were community members who feared that a covenant of witches had infiltrated their midst. Furthermore, political, religious, and social factions were plentiful at the time in Salem (Boyer and Nissenbaum 1997 [1974], 181–86). The minister Samuel Parris, for example, who is one of the most frequent examination recorders, was a staunch believer in the legitimacy of the trials, and he was in the middle of some of Salem's social and religious tugs-of-war.

However, perhaps the most important factors influencing the state of the records are the strategy of recording employed by the recorders, their proficiency at recording, and the way in which the final record was prepared. The recorders may have used different forms of recording (e.g. shorthand vs. note-taking), which would have imposed different kinds of limitations on what they had time to record. It is also unclear how skilful the recorders were as none of them were professional court clerks. On the basis of the notes, the recorder probably tried to reconstruct the dialogue and events in the courtroom. Differences in what the recorders actually took down in their notes and in how the recorders reconstructed the event would account for some of the differences in content and language between the copies. Another more complex possibility may be that some of the records represent one recorder's amalgamation of several sets of notes taken down by several recorders. However, this seems unlikely since some recorders mention explicitly that the record is based on their notes or "characters" taken down during the proceedings. It is of course also possible that one of the records is more accurate than the other. If this is so, it demonstrates that one recorder rephrased and recorded the courtroom exchange selectively. These findings have obvious implications for examination records that only exist in one copy. In these cases, we do not have the opportunity to compare with other versions and we cannot be sure of the state of the text, in terms of content or in terms of linguistic features. However, the examinations discussed in this section indicate that these single-version records are the product of one particular recorder's comprehension of the events and his reconstruction of the same on the basis of notes taken down at the time.

Summary and Conclusions

I have shown in this article that investigating different versions of one and the same examination record can provide valuable evidence for evaluating the reliability of these records as accurate

representations of the examination event. The documents included in Group 1 suggest that documents could be carefully copied. At the same time, it is evident that changes were introduced (consciously or unconsciously) in the records even in these seemingly careful copies. There thus appear to be examination records that have been filtered through one or more copyists, which removes the records further from the original speech event.

Even more significant are the documents included in Groups 2 and 3. These documents depict the same courtroom proceedings but, at the same time, they exhibit substantial differences in language and also sometimes in content. These documents thus highlight a clear problem: which of the extant versions comes closest to the actual speech event? Or do both present equally problematic (and faulty) representations of the courtroom proceedings? No unequivocal answer to this question can be provided based on the evidence at hand. However, what is clear is that the recorders or copyists of the documents play a key role. In their recording, the writers were obviously constrained by difficulties in catching on paper the conversation-rate cross-examination. To cope with these problems, they appear to have taken down the proceedings in note form or in shorthand, and on the basis of these (shorthand) notes, which may have been more or less exhaustive, they reconstructed the event. In this reconstruction, the recorders appear to have been concerned primarily with the *substance* of the proceedings, that is, what they considered to be the important parts or gist of the examination. The actual language used by the courtroom participants was probably not of primary importance, as is shown by the widely different linguistic forms of some examination records. At the same time, the documents do seem to approximate spoken language (as far as we can tell on the basis of comparisons with modern spoken language). However, it is essential to recognize that this language is not necessarily the spoken language of the interrogator, the accused, and possible additional witnesses, but rather what constituted spoken language in the eyes of the recorder. Consequently, the documents contain a mixture of the original characteristics of the proceedings and the recorder's reconstructed courtroom features.

This study thus shows that individual Salem examinations are at best partially reliable sources for the original speech event. It is clear that attributing specific linguistic features to individual participants in the trial proceedings is fraught with significant problems. It is even doubtful to what extent whole conversational turns have been accurately reproduced, even as far as content is concerned. This does not mean that the Salem examinations are useless as witnesses

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of the spoken language of the past. However, the role of the recorder is obviously crucial here and needs to receive greater acknowledgment in linguistic studies of the Salem documents than it previously has. In fact, to some extent, the Salem recorders appear to be similar to dramatists or fiction authors in their attempt to record speech; but where the former probably mixed reconstruction and construction of speech, the latter of course are involved in constructing speech. In the end, what we have access to is the recorder's text and the language written down by the recorder. For linguistic studies then, it thus seems safer to study the language of the examinations as the language of the recorders, unless there are linguistic or extralinguistic reasons to attribute it to the trial participants.

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² Naturally, there are also descriptions and off-hand remarks about spoken language, especially pronunciation, in other kinds of contemporaneous sources, such as grammars and the works of the orthoepists (Lass 1999, 58–67). Phonetic spellings in informal writing like letters are also important sources for pronunciation in the past (Wyld 1936; Grund et al. forthcoming). However, I will not deal with pronunciation in this article.

³ To a certain degree, my approach is similar to the one adopted by Maynor (1988). She cast doubt on the linguistic reliability of the WPA ex-slave narratives from the 1930s by showing that two versions of the same narrative in some instances exhibit different linguistic features. She attributed these differences to transcription and postediting policies that sometimes dictated "linguistic tampering" to clean up the documents (1988, 112–13). Although I will be concerned with a very different set of factors influencing linguistic variation in variant text versions, our investigations come to similar conclusions: Variation in the records seriously calls into question their usefulness for certain kinds of linguistic research.

⁴ For descriptions of the course of the trials, see e.g. Rosenthal (1993), Hoffer (1997), and Norton (2002).

⁵ *Dictionary Catalog* (1967, 500).

⁶ A record of Good's, and especially Tituba's examinations is also found in Essex County Court Archives 1: 13, written by the attorney general, Thomas Newton. This document also contains accounts of subsequent examinations of other alleged witches. The document appears to present a summary version of the examinations and may have been prepared on the basis of one of the other versions discussed here. Mainly because of the summary nature of the document, I have excluded it from discussion. Essex County Court Archives 1: 14 also contains a seemingly abbreviated record of Good's, Osborne's, and Tituba's examinations. Written in the hand of the magistrate John Hathorne, who acted as the interrogator during the examinations, the record refers to a longer recording of the examinations. Again, because of the summary nature of the document, I have excluded it from consideration in this article.

⁷ I have transcribed the examples from digitalized images of the original documents available at <http://jefferson.village.virginia.edu/salem/home.html>. In the transcription of my examples, I have followed the principles used by Rosenthal et al. (forthcoming): Superscript letters have been retained as superscript. The capitalization and punctuation of the documents have been kept. Curly brackets, '{}', signal that the feature occurs above or below the line or in the margin. Carets (^) marking where an addition is to be inserted have been kept. Angled brackets, '<>', mark that the feature is unclear or that the transcription is uncertain to some extent. Square brackets enclose my editorial comments. '[...]' means that a passage has been left out. '[L]' shows that the document is damaged and the reading cannot be recovered. Canceled material has been retained and struck through in the transcription. A superscript wavy macron, '˜', signals that a mark representing 'r' preceded or followed by any vowel is found in the document. Sometimes this mark is also used to represent other letter combinations. Double underlining represents my emphasis. After the example, I have added a reference to the collection where the document appears and its call number. In Essex County Court Archives 2: 101, '2' refers to volume 2, and '101' to the number of the document. The material in the Essex County Court Archives and Essex Institute Archive is from the Records of the Court of Oyer and Terminer, 1692, property of the Supreme Judicial Court, Division of Archives and Records Preservation, on deposit at the Philips Library, Peabody Essex Museum, Salem, MA. The New York Public Library material is from Miscellaneous Collections: Places (Massachusetts. Essex Co. Salem), Manuscripts and Archives Division, The New York Public Library, Astor, Lenox, and Tilden Foundations.

⁸ The document that Joseph Putnam probably wrote is Essex County Court Archives 1: 9 (which I will return to later). This document does not contain Joseph Putnam's signature, but it does contain a contemporaneous note that ascribes the document to Putnam. This note was probably written by the justice of the peace John Hathorne. Furthermore, Joseph Putnam's signature appears in another Salem document, Massachusetts Historical Society 30 (Petition for Rebecca Nurse). The handwriting appears to be the same as 1: 9. I will therefore refer to the recorder of

this document as Joseph Putnam. I am grateful to Matti Peikola for drawing my attention to the Massachusetts Historical Society document.

⁹ Although no shorthand versions of the examinations have survived, there are two samples of unidentified systems of shorthand in the Salem documents: SC1, series 45X, Massachusetts Archives Collections, v. 135: p. 47, and Massachusetts Historical Society 52 (*Misc. Mss*, Examination of George Burroughs). The latter sample has been suggested to be by Parris. For a discussion, see Grund et al. (forthcoming).

¹⁰ I am disregarding here differences in spelling, punctuation, use of abbreviations, and similar features that are often changed in the transmission of documents.

¹¹ A Massachusetts Bay Colony decree of 1652 indicates that it was possible for any person to consult records that had been filed with a public officer, at least at some levels of the court system (Shurtleff 1854, 263). Furthermore, in Essex County Court Archives 1: 69, an indictment against Rebecca Nurse, the court clerk Stephen Sewall states in a memorandum on the back of the document that he has supplied the Nurse family with documents.

¹² Note that the colons after "Susan" in Example 11 is not an indication that what follows is a direct speech recording. Rather, it is an abbreviation mark, since her name is *Susanna Sheldon*. The recording here represents the recorder's description of what happens in the courtroom.

¹³ Witnesses are sometimes called upon during the examinations to provide additional testimony or to approach an alleged witch.

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