Joseph Priestley, grammarian: Late Modern English normativism and usage in a sociohistorical context

Type: Doctoral Thesis
Title: Joseph Priestley, grammarian : late modern English normativism and usage in a sociohistorical context
Author: Straaijer, Robin
Publisher: LOT, Utrecht
Issue Date: 2011-03-01
Keywords: Codification, Corpora, Descriptivism, Historical sociolinguistics, Joseph Priestley, Letters, Prescriptivism, Standardisation

Abstract: The eighteenth century was a key period in the establishment of standard modern English. This period, referred to as the Late Modern English period, witnessed the publication of an unprecedented number of normative works aiming to define ‘correct’ English. Joseph Priestley (1733–1804) is best known as a scientist and theologian, but his Rudiments of English Grammar, first published in 1761 is an important work in the wave of English normative grammars of the late eighteenth century. Using a multi-disciplinary approach, this book investigates Priestley’s role as a codifier of the English language. The author demonstrates that the influence of Priestley’s grammar on the language has been underestimated and merits re-evaluation. Priestley’s ideas on grammar are related to his broader philosophical thinking. It is shown that, although Priestley is usually seen as one of the few descriptive grammarians of the period, his grammar also contains decidedly prescriptive elements, and that his adherence to the force of usage should be qualified. In addition, Priestley’s usage is compared to the rules in his grammar using a corpus of Priestley’s personal correspondence, created for this study.

Description: Promotor: I.M. Tieken-Boon van Ostade
With summary in Dutch
Faculty: Faculteit der Letteren
Citation: Straaijer, R., 2011, Doctoral thesis, Leiden University
Series/Report no.: LOT dissertations
ISBN: 9789460930522
Handle: http://hdl.handle.net/1887/16552

Files in this item

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Size</th>
<th>View</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cover</td>
<td>515.5Kb</td>
<td>View/Open</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full text</td>
<td>7.701Mb</td>
<td>View/Open</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Propositions</td>
<td>45.25Kb</td>
<td>View/Open</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

THIS ITEM APPEARS IN THE FOLLOWING COLLECTION(S)
- OpenDissertations
- Other
- Dissertations

A service provided by Leiden University Libraries

Grammars, dictionaries, usage manuals and other linguistic references are traditionally categorized along a spectrum running from prescriptivist to descriptivist, yet for years problems with this system of categorization have been noted. Forty years ago Geoffrey Pullum cautioned against confusing methodology and motives when applying the ‘descriptive’ or ‘prescriptive’ labels (1974: 77–78). Straaijer, R.2011. Joseph Priestley, Grammarian: Late Modern English Normativism and Usage in a Sociohistorical Context. Utrecht:LOT. Google Scholar. Doctoral Thesis. Title: Joseph Priestley, grammarian : late modern English normativism and usage in a sociohistorical context. Author: Straaijer, Robin. The eighteenth century was a key period in the establishment of standard modern English. This period, referred to as the Late Modern English period, witnessed the publication of an unprecedented number of normative works aiming to define ‘correct’ English. Joseph Priestley (1733–1804) is best known as a scientist and theologian, but his Rudiments of English Grammar, first published in 1761 is an important work in the wave of English normative grammars of the late eighteenth century. Using a multi-disciplinary approach, this book investigates Priestley’s role as a codifier of the English language. This site uses cookies to deliver our services, improve performance, for analytics, and (if not signed in) for advertising. By using LibraryThing you acknowledge that you have read and understand our Terms of Service and Privacy Policy. Your use of the site and services is subject to these policies and terms.

Hide this. Results from Google Books. Click on a thumbnail to go to Google Books.