



Gastvortrag

Donnerstag, 31.10.2024, 12:15 –13:45 (SOE-F-8)

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Can we measure prescriptive success? Views from historical sociolinguistics

For a long time, histories of language such as Dutch, English, French and German have silently assumed and sometimes explicitly stated that the emergence of a metalinguistic tradition from early modern times onwards has fundamentally influenced the course of the language. In general, the early and late modern period are seen through the lens of standardisation, and a great influence is generally attributed to spelling guides, grammar books and schoolbooks. Often, such claims are not based on empirical analyses of language use. The advent of historical sociolinguistics and representative historical corpora has led to extensive research into the link between historical prescriptivism and language variation and change. In this talk, we will begin by presenting models of standardisation. We will then move on to discuss the way in which the potential influence of prescriptivism can be measured. Drawing on case studies from mostly Dutch, along with examples from other European languages, we will explore the extent to which prescriptive success can be determined.

