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## Grassroots prescriptivism

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## What is the difference between *thus* and *thusly*?<sup>1</sup>

### 6.1 Introduction

The HUGE (Hyper Usage Guide of English) database compiled at Leiden University as part of the research project ‘Bridging the Unbridgeable: Linguists, Prescriptivists and the General Public’ by Robin Straaijer (2014)<sup>2</sup> includes 123 usage problems, which are defined as disputed items of usage in British and American English. Among them, the usage of the word *thusly* is one more recently added to the usage guide tradition.<sup>3</sup> Although it is first mentioned only in 1927—that is, relatively late in a database which includes 77 usage guides published between 1770 and 2010—it has since its introduction appeared regularly in the US American publications. *Thusly* has been described by usage guide authors as ‘unnecessary [...] since *thus* is already an adverb’ (Allen [ed.], 1999, p. 573), ‘not only a needless variant of *thus* [...] but also a nonstandard one’ (*The Written Word*, 1977, p. 309) and even as an ‘abomination’ (Morris & Morris, 1975, p. 599). Its usage continues to

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<sup>1</sup> Lukač, M. (in press). What is the difference between *thus* and *thusly*? Paper submitted to *E-rea: Revue électronique d’études sur le monde anglophone*.

<sup>2</sup> The HUGE database was developed in the context of the project ‘Bridging the Unbridgeable: Linguists, Prescriptivists and the General Public’, directed by Ingrid Tiekens-Boon van Ostade and financed by the Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research.

<sup>3</sup> *Usage guides* are authoritative all-in-one reference works comprising advice on correct usage (Busse and Schröder, 2010, p. 87), which address usage problems (cf. Tiekens-Boon van Ostade, 2013).

be condemned until today, most recently by Bryan Garner, who in the fourth edition of the *Garner's Modern English Usage* (2016) calls *thusly* a 'nonword'.

In the 'Bridging the Unbridgeable' research project we attempted to bridge the gap between prescriptivists, linguists, and the general public by systematically exploring the usage guide tradition, the usage problems that they address, the attitudes of the general public towards these problems and actual usage. Embedded in this research agenda, this paper examines *thusly* as it is perceived through the lens of prescriptivism (§6.2), by the general public (§6.3) and the word's actual usage (§6.4). For that purpose, I will analyse (i) the relationship between the prescriptive rule enforced against the usage of *thusly* in usage guides that are part of the HUGE database, (ii) the attitudes of speakers towards its usage and (iii) the actual usage explored by way of corpus analysis and classified by speakers of English. By comparing sentences including *thus* and *thusly* extracted from the Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA) (Davies, 2008–), I attempt to demonstrate that factors including word meaning, genre and type of verbs modified all help distinguish between different contexts in which *thus* and *thusly* appear and account for systematic variation. This paper aims to show that in spite of the prescriptive rule (which in its most typical form indicates that *thusly* should be replaced by *thus*) *thusly* is a distinct adverb used in specific contexts in standard American English, which is increasingly gaining acceptance, particularly among younger speakers.

## 6.2 The prescriptivists

Usage guides include a set of core prescriptive rules that have been handed down from the authors of one usage guide to the next, which are referred to as the ‘prescriptive canon’ (cf. Chapman, 2010, p. 142). The HUGE database provides ample evidence of the repetitive nature of the usage guide tradition. For instance, the distinction between *shall* and *will* is mentioned in 65 usage guides, and the variability in the choice of the preposition in *different to/than/from*, as well as the distinction between *who* and *whom* are taken up in 63 out of the 77 usage guides in the HUGE database. Not only are the topics repeated by the authors, but so are the arguments supporting the prescriptively enforced rules. The reiterated arguments were the focus of the analysis of the entries on *thusly* in 16 usage guides in the HUGE database. As previously reported in Lukač and Tieken-Boon van Ostade (in press), *thusly* is a usage problem embedded in the American prescriptive tradition: 11 out of the 16 respective usage guides are written for an American readership. If we take a look at the frequencies of the word in GloWbE (Davies, 2013), the recently compiled 1.9-billion-word corpus of Global Web-based English, it becomes apparent that *thusly* is most frequently used in American English and perhaps does not appear often enough in other varieties to be picked up by usage guide authors. The origins of the word are, according to several usage guides, associated with nineteenth-century American humourists who coined the word as an example of a humorous hypercorrection and ‘[an] “ignorant” substitute for *thus*’ (Wilson, 1993, p. 437) with the aim of ‘imitating the speech of poorly

educated people straining to sound stylish’ (Pickett, Kleinedler, & Spitz, 2005, p. 464).

Both the *Oxford English Dictionary* (*OED*) and *Merriam-Webster* list 1865 as the year of the first recorded usage of *thusly*.

**Table 6.1** Frequency of *thusly* in GloWbe

	US	Canada	GB	Ireland	Australia	NZ
total N	346	78	99	26	43	31
freq. per million	0.89	0.58	0.26	0.26	0.29	0.38

The example sentence from the *OED*, taken from the 1865 December issue of *Harper’s Magazine* in (1) and the earliest recorded usage of *thusly* in the Corpus of Historical American English (COHA) (Davies 2010–) from 1967 (2), both illustrate humorous contexts in which the word is used:

- (1) It happened, as J. Billings would say, ‘thusly’<sup>4</sup>
- (2) He concloods thusly: – ‘I am forced to ask yoo, ez one enjoyin confidenshel relations with Him who occupies the Presidenshel chair, to hev it given out that I stand in opposition to him.’ (COHA:1867:FIC:Swingin round the Cirkle)

Some of the first records of its usage in the Google Books corpus indicate that *thusly* may have been simultaneously used in non-fiction writing without humorous connotations. Consider the following examples:

- (3) ‘[B]ut not content with carrying his ill-temper towards Scottish Masonry into his Grand Commandery, he lugs it into the recesses of Royal Arch Masonry, in the notice of the District of Columbia by attacking Comp. Rockwell thusly: ‘In the correspondence,

<sup>4</sup> Josh Billings is the pen name of the well-known American humorist Henry Wheeler Shaw (1818–85).

Comp. Rockwell gives his opinion as a “33d,” which has about as much to do with the affairs of Royal Arch Masonry as “the man in the moon” (Google Books:186: Proceedings of the Grand Royal Arch Chapter of the State of Illinois)

- (4) An Alabama paper perpetrates thusly—‘As out shirt was not brought home in proper season this week, we called on our old washer-woman to learn the cause.’ (Google Books:1871:The Latter-day Saints’ Millennial Star Vol. 33)

Although *thusly* clearly originates from nineteenth-century American English, it remains uncertain whether it has indeed been coined by humorists as numerous sources report (cf. Pickett, Kleinedler, & Spitz, 2005, p. 464; Butterfield, 2007, p. 157). Considering that several instances of its usage in neutral contexts can be found at the same time when the humorists introduced it to their writing, they could, in fact, have been using the word that they have come across in actual usage. The emergence of *thusly* at the time may be another testament to the general tendency for morphological exceptions to regularise over time (Leiberman et al., 2007).<sup>5</sup>

Perhaps the most constant piece of advice given by usage guide authors (9/16) regarding *thusly* is that it should be replaced by *thus*, as it is ‘[unnecessary since] *thus* is already an adverb’ (Allen [ed.], 1999, p. 573) and ‘merely [...] a needless’ and ‘[nonstandard] variant of *thus*’ (*The Written Word*, 1977, p. 309). ‘There is no such word in standard English’, Trask argues (2001, p. 284), ‘write *thus*, not \**thusly*.’ Suggesting using one linguistic feature in place of another is conventional in usage guide writing. In fact, one of the main purposes of the genre is

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<sup>5</sup> I would like to thank the anonymous reviewer for suggesting a reference to this article and providing other useful comments and recommendations.

to help the reader decide between two or more alternatives in language (Weiner, 1988, p. 173) such as *less* and *fewer* in referring to countable nouns (*less/fewer people*) or between using *further* and *farther* as the comparative of *far*. What is problematical, however, regarding the advice for replacing *thusly* with *thus* (as it is by and large phrased in usage guides) is the lack of accounts on the context in which *thusly* is used. The most notable exceptions here are *Pocket Fowler's* (Allen [ed.], 1999) and *Webster's Dictionary of English Usage* (1989). *Pocket Fowler's* (Allen [ed.], 1999, p. 573), as Lukač and Tieken-Boon van Ostade (in press) report, is the only among 16 usage guides that distinguishes between two different meanings of *thusly*, *thusly*<sub>1</sub> 'therefore' (5) and *thusly*<sub>2</sub>, 'in this way' (6). The example sentences below illustrating the respective meaning distinction were taken from the COCA corpus (Davies, 2008–) (cf. Lukač & Tieken-Boon van Ostade, in press):

- (5) I don't want to commit myself to a long-term relationship, and thusly, I don't want to be financially responsible. (COCA:1993:SPOK:Ind\_Geraldo)
- (6) He describes his daily routine thusly: 'I open my mail and I turn it over to the secretary to answer. I can go into my office now for an hour and that's a day's work.' (COCA:1992:MAG:jet)

The meaning distinction proved to be relevant in measuring the acceptance rate of *thusly* in the survey reported on in §6.3— unsurprisingly perhaps, as *thusly*<sub>2</sub> is much more common than *thusly*<sub>1</sub> according to the results of the corpus analysis presented in §6.4.



### 6.3 The general public

#### 6.3.1 *The survey*

To analyse the attitudes of speakers towards *thusly* and differences, if any, between demographic groups together with Ingrid Tieken-Boon van Ostade I set up a questionnaire using the online survey tool Qualtrics. The survey was made available between July and September 2015. It consisted of three sections: we first tested the acceptability of *thusly* and flat adverbs, that is, unmarked adverbs (*Drive slow* for *Drive slowly*), in standard usage. The results of the analysis of the part of the questionnaire dealing with flat adverbs are reported on elsewhere (Lukač & Tieken-Boon van Ostade, in press). In the second part of the questionnaire, the respondents were asked about their practices of publicly complaining about grammar and usage, for instance on social media or in newspaper letters to the editor. Finally, we posed a series of demographic questions to identify the respondents' gender, age and education, as well as whether they were native speakers of British or American English or another variety (or, alternatively, which language variety formed their preferred linguistic model). The survey was announced in the journal *English Today* (Tieken-Boon van Ostade, 2015c), it was further distributed through the 'Bridging the Unbridgeable' project's blog, Facebook and Twitter, and notifications about it were sent out through newsletters for graduate linguistics students at the Universities of Leiden, Basel and Freiburg as well as that of the Dutch-based Society for English Native Speaking Editors (SENSE). The survey was completed by altogether 212 respondents. Table 6.2 provides

the socio-demographic information on the survey respondents; as they were not required to provide all answers in order to finish the survey, the total number of responses differs per question.

**Table 6.2** The demographics of the participants

Gender	M	F	Unspecified				Total
	59	103	11				173
Age	25 >	25–40	40–50	50–	65–	75	
				65	75	<	
	14	61	21	59	11	7	173
Variety (native)	British	American	Other				
	52	24	19				95
Variety (model)	British	American	Other				
	36	22	15				76
Education	Primary	Secondary	University				
	1	10	157				203

As Table 6.2 shows, almost 60 per cent of the informants who answered the question about their gender were women, with the largest number coming into the age groups 25–40 and 50–65. The youngest and oldest categories contain the fewest respondents. Among those who answered the question whether English was their mother tongue, there were slightly more NS (55.6%) than NNSs (44.4%), and nearly 55 per cent of the informants who stated that they were NSs identified their variety as British English and 25 per cent as American English. British English was the most commonly chosen linguistic model among the NNSs. The majority of the informants were well-educated: nearly 80 per cent of them attended university, which was unsurprising, considering the channels through which the survey was distributed.

### 6.3.2 *Acceptability of thusly*

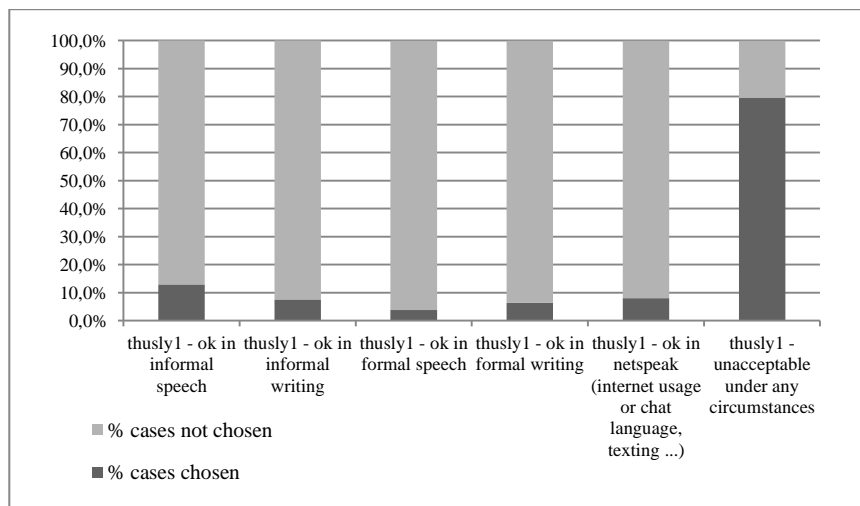
In testing the acceptability of *thusly*, we presented the participants with sentences (5) and (6) above and asked them to rate the two items on a six-fold scale. Following the classic study on attitudes towards usage problems conducted by Mittins et al. (1970), we asked the respondents whether they found the sentences to be acceptable in informal speech, formal speech, informal writing and formal writing; to these traditional categories, we also added ‘netspeak’—which we described as including ‘internet usage or chat language, texting’ (cf. Crystal, 2006, p. 402; Hedges, 2011)—and the option ‘unacceptable under any circumstances’. The respondents could choose more than one category in their responses. They were, moreover, given the opportunity to comment on their response in a follow-up open question ‘If you disapprove of *thusly* as an adverb, why is that?’ The results of our analysis for the acceptability of the two items are summarised in Figure 6.1 and 6.2 below.

The results of the analysis show that the majority of our respondents found both *thusly*<sub>1</sub> and *thusly*<sub>2</sub> unacceptable under any circumstances. The percentage of the unacceptable responses for *thusly*<sub>2</sub> (62.3%), however, was significantly lower than that for *thusly*<sub>1</sub> (79.6%) ( $\chi^2 [1, N = 497] = 10.261, p = .001$ ). Although the percentages were higher for the acceptability of *thusly*<sub>2</sub> across all categories, the difference was significant only for formal contexts: the participants found *thusly*<sub>2</sub> to be more acceptable in both formal speech and writing than *thusly*<sub>1</sub> ( $\chi^2 [1, N = 497] = 14.900, p = .001$ ).

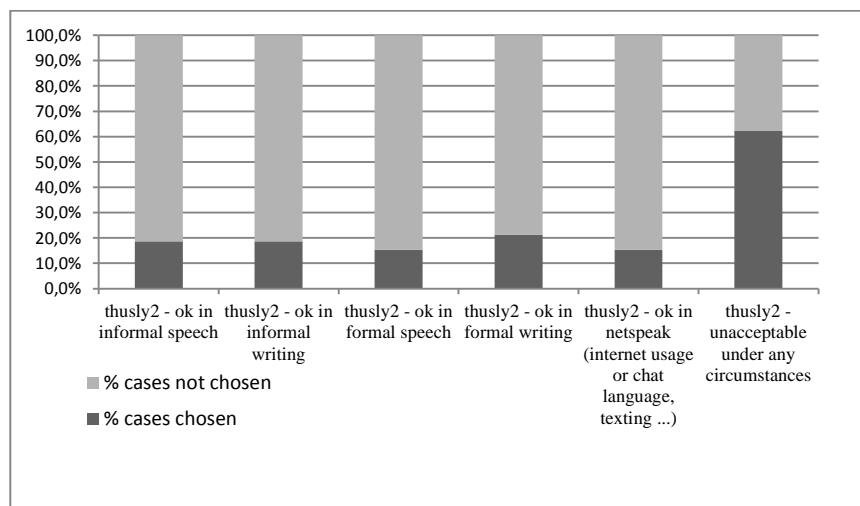
In 2002, the *American Heritage Dictionary* included *thusly* in their Usage Panel survey, which enabled us to compare our own find-

ings with those from thirteen years earlier. In the respective survey, no distinction was made between the two meanings of the word, and only the acceptability of what we call *thusly*<sub>2</sub> was tested. The acceptability of *thusly* was rated by the *AHD* Usage Panel on the following sentence:

- (7) His letter to the editor ended *thusly* [‘as follows’]: ‘It is time to stop fooling ourselves.’



**Figure 6.1** Acceptability rating for *I don't want to commit myself to ... and thusly* [‘therefore’], ... (*thusly*<sub>1</sub>) (from Lukač & Tieken-Boon van Ostade, in press)



**Figure 6.2** Acceptability rating for *He described his daily routine thusly* [‘as follows’] (*thusly*<sub>2</sub>) (from Lukač & Tieken-Boon van Ostade, in press)

At the time, 86 per cent of the *AHD* Usage Panel found the sentence in (7) unacceptable. When we compare these ratings to the ones presented here (unacceptable 62.3%), we can tentatively conclude that the acceptability for *thusly*<sub>2</sub> (‘as follows’) has risen in the meantime. The question we subsequently set out to answer was: How did the demographic groups, if at all, differ in their acceptability judgments?

### 6.3.3 Differences among demographic groups

Considering that our respondents could choose multiple answers in judging the acceptability of *thusly*<sub>1</sub> and *thusly*<sub>2</sub>, we categorised their responses—which together comprised 23 different categories—into a three-point scale ranging from (1) unacceptable, (2) informal, for those multiple responses in which at least one of the informal contexts or netspeak were chosen or a combination of them, and (3) formal, if the

respondent chose at least one of the formal contexts. To compare the mean ranks across demographic groups we performed a Kruskal-Wallis test the results of which are summarised in Table 6.3.

**Table 6.3** Differences in acceptability rankings across demographic groups (Kruskal-Wallis test) (based on Lukač & Tieken-Boon van Ostade, in press)

	Gender	Age	Nativeness	Variety (native)	Variety (model)	Education
<i>Thusly</i> <sub>1</sub>						
Chi-Square	5.092	7.712	.229	1.913	1.041	.261
Df	2	5	1	2	2	2
Asymp. Sig.	.078	.173	.632	.384	.594	.878
<i>Thusly</i> <sub>2</sub>						
Chi-Square	.506	18.792	3.777	5.549	.264	1.497
Df	2	5	1	2	2	2
Asymp. Sig.	.776	.003*	.052	.062	.876	.473

NNSs seem to be slightly more accepting of *thusly*<sub>2</sub> than native speakers (56% of NNSs' responses were categorised under 'unacceptable', as opposed to 67% of the NSs' responses). British respondents rejected the form more often (77%) than the American respondents (50%), with one reporting: 'I've never heard or seen "thus" used in this way...' (male, 50–65) and another: 'Thusly doesn't exist in my dialect. (Southern British, close to RP.)' (male, 50–65). One male British respondent aged between 50 and 65 acknowledges that the word may have a different status in American and British English: 'I recognise that it is not uncommon and is standard in US usage. It is just not part of my idiolect, and I find it superfluous, as well as comical.' And one female NNS

(aged 40–50) makes the same distinction stating, in fact, that she chooses not to use *thusly* since her model variant is British English.

Although interesting for further exploration, the differences between the respective groups of respondents were found not to be significant in the present study. The only significant difference we found was that among age groups for *thusly*<sub>2</sub>. The younger the respondents, the less likely they were to opt for the response ‘unacceptable’. Whereas less than half (46.6%) of those aged below 40 rated *thusly*<sub>2</sub> as unacceptable, almost three quarters of those above 40 (72.2%) did the same. In the initial report of the survey, in the light of this finding, we argued for a potential change in progress, with younger speakers showing a more tolerant attitude towards the formerly stigmatised feature. Furthermore, the US American television sitcom *The Big Bang Theory* may have also contributed to the popularisation of the word among younger speakers. ‘I have informed you thusly’ (instead of ‘I told you so.’) is a well-known quote from the series introduced by the character of the theoretical physicist, Dr. Sheldon Cooper (cf. Lukač & Tieken-Boon van Ostade, in press).

The responses to the question ‘If you disapprove of *thusly* as an adverb, why is that?’ were interesting in their own right, with a number of respondents describing *thusly* as a hypercorrection and an incorrect substitute for *thus*. Others describe it as excessively formal, archaic or belonging to World Englishes. All in all, the comments echo the descriptions found in the usage guides (§6.2), pointing to the fact that our respondents, many of whom are language professionals (translators, editors and linguists), are perhaps also familiar with the prescriptions

against *thusly* found in the usage guides. Few among the respondents argued that they consider *thusly* to be acceptable in an appropriate context. And interestingly, I found a number of opposing statements describing the usage of *thusly* either as extremely formal or informal and jocular, as the following examples illustrate:

- (8) It is OK in informal chat among friends when it is used consciously as something of a joke. (male, NS British, over 75)
- (9) I hardly ever come by it. It sounds EXCESSIVELY formal. (male, NNS, below 25)

In further exploring the contexts in which *thusly* is used (be it formal or informal) as well as the genres in which it appears, I analysed 112 occurrences of *thusly* in the COCA corpus. Moreover, since most usage guide authors describe *thusly* as a ‘needless’ variant of *thus* (§2), I additionally decided to explore a random sample of 100 occurrences of *thus* in the COCA corpus and compare them with the *thusly* sentences taking into account the genre in which the two words occur (§6.4.1), the meaning of the word (§6.4.2), and the group of verbs that it modifies (§6.4.3).

## 6.4 Actual usage

### 6.4.1 Genre differences in the usage of *thus* and *thusly*

The *OED* puts *thus* in band 7 out of 8 frequency bands,<sup>4</sup> which ‘includes the main semantic words which for the substance of ordinary,

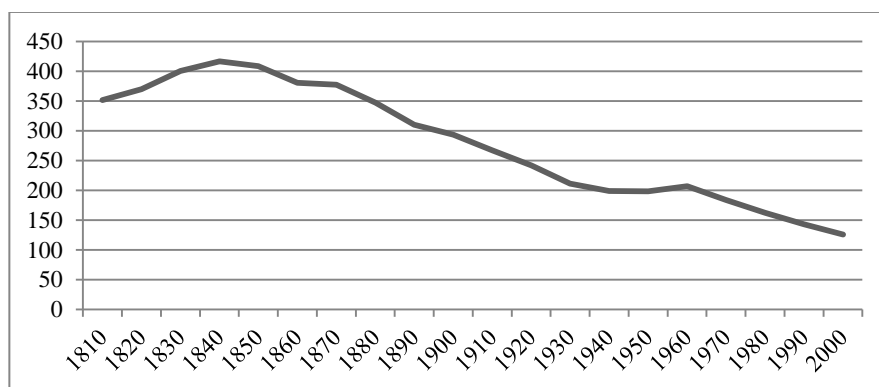
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<sup>4</sup> Each non-obsolete word in the *OED* is assigned to a frequency band based on its overall frequency score in present-day English (1970–). Bands run from 8 (very high-frequency words) to 1 (very low-frequency). The scale is logarithmic: words in Band



everyday speech and writing'. *Thusly* belongs to band 4 in the *OED* 'marked by much greater specificity'. This categorisation stands the test of corpus analysis: in the COCA corpus *thusly* occurs with the frequency of 0.21 and *thus* 130.52 per million words. As big as these differences are, the two words seem to follow different trends: the overall usage of *thus* is decreasing, whereas there is evidence for the slight increase in the usage of *thusly* since it first appears in corpora in the 1860s. Consider Figure 6.3 and 6.4 below, both of which are based on the frequencies from the Google Books corpus.

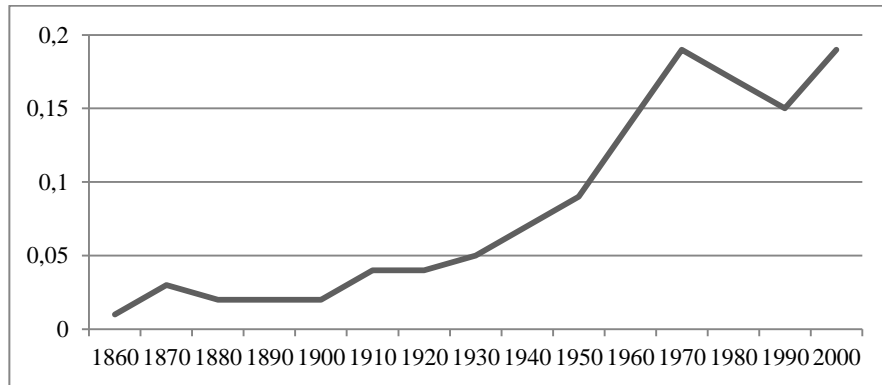
Although the Google Books corpus does not enable a genre-specific search, the data from the COHA corpus, admittedly scarcer, provides additional information on the trends in usage. Despite the fact that *thus* has decreased in usage across all four genres (fiction, non-fiction, magazine and newspapers), in present-day English, it remains the most frequent in non-academic texts (Figure 6.5).



**Figure 6.3** Frequency per million words in the usage of *thus* in the Google Books (American) corpus

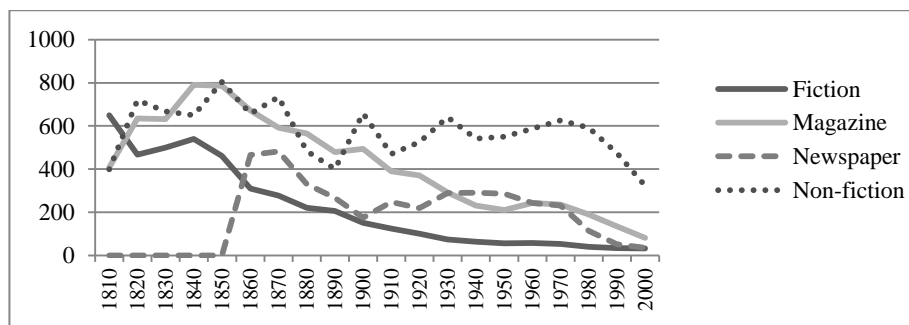
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8 are around ten times more frequent than words in Band 7, which in turn are around ten times more frequent than words in Band 6.

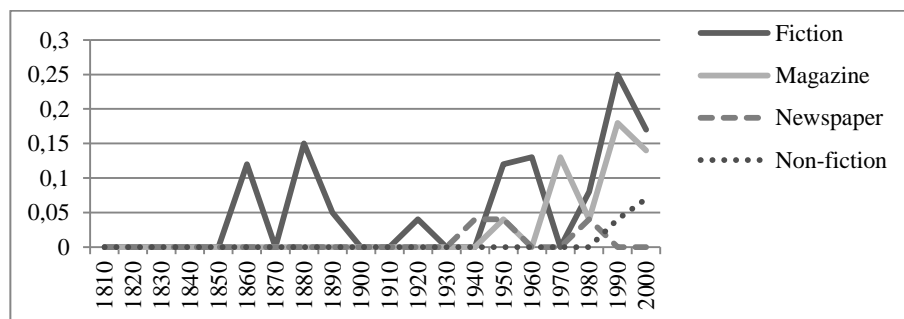


**Figure 6.4** Frequency per million words in the usage of *thusly* in the Google Books (American) corpus

Based on the sparse data on *thusly* (47 hits) from the COCA corpus, it seems that the usage of this word is following the opposite trend: whereas it originally appeared only in fictional writing, over time it spread to other genres as well (Figure 6.6).

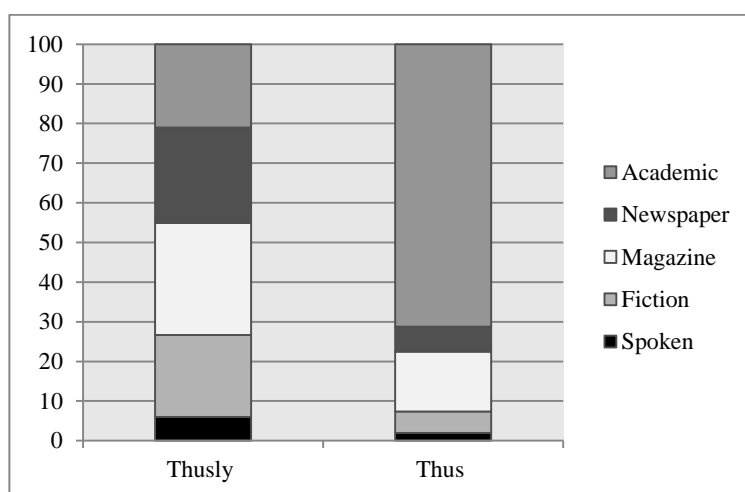


**Figure 6.5** Frequency per million words in the usage of *thus* per section of the COHA corpus



**Figure 6.6** Frequency per million words in the usage of *thusly* per section of the COHA corpus

The data from the COCA corpus summarised in Figure 6.7 suggest that the distribution found in the newer parts of the COHA corpus mirrors current usage: whereas *thus* is overwhelmingly used in academic writing (71.25%), *thusly* is more evenly distributed across the five genres included in the corpus. Both words are infrequent in the spoken section of COCA.



**Figure 6.7** Distribution of *thus* and *thusly* per section of the COCA corpus (%)

In order to explore not only the genre differences, but also the contexts in which the two words are used, I extracted their occurrences from COCA, which were the starting point for the analysis in the next sections.

#### 6.4.2 Differences in meaning between *thus* and *thusly*

Seeing that the acceptability levels among the survey respondents were significantly higher for *thusly*<sub>2</sub> than *thusly*<sub>1</sub> (cf. §6.3), I explored the differences in the frequency of the two meanings. The 112 sentences in which *thusly* was used from COCA were classified either under *thusly*<sub>2</sub> or *thusly*<sub>1</sub> (as in examples 5 and 6) by four different raters, two NSs and two NNSs of English, all of whom are language professionals. The classification resulted in substantial agreement (Fleiss' kappa:  $\kappa = 0.8$ ). Out of the 112 sentences as many as 92 were finally classified under *thusly*<sub>2</sub>,<sup>5</sup> which, based on this sample, indicates that this is the primary way in which *thusly* is used. Considering moreover that *thus* is according to a number of usage guide authors and survey respondents seen as the natural replacement for *thusly*, I additionally looked at the 100 instances of *thus*, which I then classified under *thus*<sub>1</sub> ('therefore') or *thus*<sub>2</sub> ('in this way'). The exception were four instances of the phrase *thus far* which were categorised under *thus*<sub>3</sub> ('until now'). The sentences in (10) – (12) illustrate the threefold categorisation.

- (10) Thus, Klebanov and his group were exploiting some special cases of the duality between supergravity and strongly coupled gauge theory. (COCA:1998:ACAD:Physics Today)

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<sup>5</sup> Where there was disagreement among the raters, I settled on the interpretation preferred by the majority.

- (11) The ISMGF established ties to the International Olympic Committee (IOC), thus expanding the scope of wheelchair sports. (COCA:2004:ACAD:African Arts)
- (12) North American botanists marveled at Hubbell's 300 tropical species, but that number pales in comparison to the 800 or so identified thus far in the Malaysian plot. (COCA:1994:MAG: Science News)

A subset of 48 sentences from the random *thus* sample was classified by a NS of American English, resulting in substantial agreement (Cohen's Kappa:  $\kappa = 0.78$ ).<sup>6</sup> *Thus* and *thusly* significantly differ in how frequently they were paraphrased as either 'therefore' or 'in this way' ( $\chi^2 [2, N = 212] = 13.6, p = .001$ ), with *thusly* more commonly paraphrased as 'in this way' (82%) than *thus* (58%). Moreover, in spite of the many comments made both by the survey respondents and usage guide authors that *thusly* is used ironically, by examining further the contexts in which *thusly* is used, I identified only two instances in which the authors used *thusly* in the respective context.

- (13) A neat mind did a neat job and a neat job thusly made for a neat mind. He actually used the word when he told them. Thusly. But they like him anyway (COCA:2003:MAG:Boys Life).
- (14) He's a downscale Bill Moyers of the Insinkerator, an aproned P.C. guru of Ethnic Self-Esteem... And his message might be summarised (as he says) 'thusly': The Oppressed make better sausages. Give him Latvian dwarfs in funny hats cooking up a

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<sup>6</sup> The disagreement in some instances was the result of two possible interpretations of a given clause (*thus*<sub>1</sub> categorisation indicates a consequence, and *thus*<sub>2</sub> a reason for something), which were occasionally difficult to separate, like in the following sentence 'He played only 100 games in the outfield, *thus* missing more than a third of the season..' After applying this final criterion ('consequence' as opposed to 'reason'), I resolved the disagreements, and the final categorisation is the result of my own interpretation. The above example was finally classified as *thus*<sub>2</sub>.

mess of tripe and snails in peanut butter and blueberry sauce.  
(COCA:1992:MAG:Harpers Magazine)

Occasionally authors do make metalinguistic comments on the usage of *thusly* as in (13) and (14), as well as in the following citation from Jack Lynch's *Lexicographer's Dilemma* (2009), for whom *thusly* is a quintessential example of a linguistic shibboleth: 'People have always depended on shibboleths of various sorts. We all do it unconsciously: when someone speaks with a regional accent, we make certain assumptions about the speaker; and when a writer uses words like *thusly* in an essay, we make other assumptions.' Much more often than not, however, *thusly* is used in neutral contexts. Its status as a shibboleth, as Lynch describes it, is changing, if we take the results of the survey as indicative of general attitudes. The word, which may have its origin in the usage of humourists, is used neutrally today in standard American English.

#### **6.4.3 Verbs modified by *thus* and *thusly***

To explore further the different contexts of usage, I semantically categorised all of the verbs modified by *thus* and *thusly* according to the UCREL Semantic Analysis System or USAS (Rayson et al., 2004). The USAS taxonomy, which was originally based on the *Longman Lexicon of Contemporary English* (McArthur, 1981), includes 21 major discourse fields (cf. Table 3.1).

When *thus* and *thusly* were used as conjunctive adverbs as in (15) and (16) below, I left out the semantic verb categorisation.

- (15) By then the virus and its associated diseases, as well as a closely related monkey virus, had also been found in Africa. Thus, researchers assumed the virus had come to the Caribbean by way of the slave trade. (COCA:1993:ACAD:Natural History)
- (16) Thusly, I will sign off, as always, your friend, confidante, and troubled soul... (COCA:2006:FIC:A tale of two summers)

The overall frequencies of verbs per semantic category are shown in Table 6.5.

The difference between the categories to which the verbs modified by *thus* and *thusly* belonged was significant. Adjusted residuals were calculated for each score in the table to determine which differences were significant at .05 level.

**Table 6.5** Number of verbs per semantic category (Fisher's Exact,  $p < 0.0001$ )

	A	K	M	N	Q	S	T	X	Total
	<i>be</i>	<i>croon</i>	<i>go</i>	<i>massify</i>	<i>read</i>	<i>treat</i>	<i>originate</i>	<i>identify</i>	
<i>thus</i>	28	0	2	3	3	8	2	4	50
<i>thusly</i>	19	1	6	0	67	2	2	6	103

As can be seen from Table 6.5, the biggest difference is that in the number of verbs belonging to the category Q: Linguistic Actions, States & Processes. Most of the verbs modified by *thusly* are speech act verbs belonging to this category:

- (17) He was quoted in the article thusly: 'I don't even worry about it,' said Gonzalez, who was 71-91 in 2007 and 84-77 last year. (COCA:2009:NEWS:Atlanta Journal Constitution)
- (18) [I]ts spokesman officially proclaimed it thusly: 'Minnesota, the state of Walter Mondale, Hubert Humphrey and Kirby Puckett....' (COCA:2003:MAG:Sports Illustrated)

On the other hand, the verbs from the categories A: General & Abstract Terms (19) and S: Social Actions, States & Processes (20) are significantly more frequently modified by *thus*:

- (19) In 1984 one of the largest menhaden processors acquired its closest competitor, thus gaining ownership of 7 of the 11 active plants in the Gulf of Mexico. (COCA:1991:ACAD:Marine Fisheries Review)
- (20) Many young people grew up with BE and had an opportunity to see successful black professionals in the corporate arena profiled in the magazine, thus providing role models for success. (COCA:1990:MAG:Black Enterprise)

What we can observe here is yet another nuance to the distinction in the usage of the two words. The most striking finding in this part of the analysis is the frequency with which *thusly* occurs with speech act verbs. As the examples in (17) and (18) show, *thusly*, when used with speech act verbs, almost always introduces a quotation, which seems to be its most common function.

Finally, as we can see from data in Table 6.5, *thus* functions as a conjunctive adverb as frequently as it modifies a verb (50/50 occurrences in COCA). *Thusly* is infrequently (10/112) used as a conjunctive adverb: the sentence in (21) is one among the few examples of such usage in the COCA corpus.

- (21) Thusly, it is imperative to utilise the best instrument for assessment as well as the best assessment specialist with instrument administration. (COCA:1996:ACAD:Education)



## 6.5 Conclusion

In the fourth edition of *Garner's Modern English Usage* (2016), *thusly* is classified at Stage 1 on Garner's language-change index. The words belonging to Stage 1 are described as 'innovations' and as 'displacing a traditional usage'. If anything, this paper has shown based on corpus analysis that *thusly* is hardly an innovation, but rather a word that has existed in standard American English for more than 150 years and which has become a distinct adverb that cannot be described merely as an erroneous form of *thus*. Whereas *thus* is predominantly found in academic genres, the usage of *thusly* is less genre-specific. *Thusly* is most commonly paraphrased as 'in this way' and it by and large modifies speech act verbs and introduces quotations. *Thus*, on the other hand, in half of the occurrences analysed in this paper acts as a conjunctive adverb, which is hardly ever the case with *thusly*. Although the word remains low in frequency and is still ranked as unacceptable by the majority of speakers, its rise in frequency and the rising acceptance rates among younger speakers indicate that its usage may spread in the future. Finally, whereas Garner indicates that he uses the Google Ngram Viewer as a basis for his recommendations, this paper shows that the analysis of word frequency is just the first step in accounting for actual usage of a particular linguistic feature. Without exploring the actual context and regularities in a word's usage, corpus-based advice remains incomplete and inaccurate.

