

The Native Speaker through the lens of Prototype Theory of Concepts

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This presentation proposes a new way of viewing in particular the notion *native speaker*, taking into consideration not only arguments from theoretical and sociolinguistics, but also a theory of human cognition.

While on the one hand being used frequently and perhaps without much conscious effort, and on the other hand being a topic of considerable debate, the notion of *native speaker* (and its implied 'contrary' *non-native speaker*) is an important concept, affecting all areas of applied linguistics (Davis, 2003). This presentation aims to provide a particular way of viewing the notion that considers not only both theoretical and applied frameworks of linguistics (Chomsky, 1965; Cook, 1999; Crystal, 2003; Grosjean, 1994, 1998; Skutnabb-Kangas and Phillipson, 1989) but also a theory of human cognition, Prototype Theory of Concepts (Rosch, 1978; Rosch & Mervis, 1975; Rosch et al., 1976). The aim of taking this multidisciplinary view is to provide not only a comprehensive view, but also to allow for an explanation of how it is that we more or less understand each other when we use terms like *native speaker*. The presentation will outline arguments for definitions of *native speaker*, coupled with usage of the notion in literature from different fields. Further, the presentation will outline Prototype Theory of Concepts and posit its utility in understanding notions like *native speaker*, and perhaps other related concepts widely used in applied linguistics.

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