

**Rethinking the “Native Speaker”/“Nonnative Speaker” Dichotomy**  
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**Abstract**

The study focuses on the concept of the “native speaker” and the “native”/“nonnative speaker” dichotomy. It recognizes the “native speaker” concept primarily as a political and ideological construct and the “native”/“nonnative speaker” dichotomy mainly as a basis for division and discrimination. The study believes that a strict adherence to “native”/“nonnative speaker” dichotomy as a framework of analysis in linguistics, especially applied linguistics, overlooks certain alternative ways of understanding the speakership of a given language and the possibility of there being covert but more intense forms of language-based division and discrimination. Based on the findings of empirical research conducted at Ohio University in 2011/2012, involving 173 Ohio University undergraduates who considered themselves “native speakers” of English, the study recognizes certain patterns that indicate that the divisions within the “native speaker” category are stronger and more intense than the division between the “native speaker” and “nonnative speaker” categories.

**Keywords:** *Native speaker, Nonnative speaker, The native speaker/nonnative speaker dichotomy, Accent*