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## Young children should be taught in their mother tongue, not in English

儿童教学宜采用母语，而非英语

English perfectly exemplifies the “network effects” of a global tongue: the more people use it, the more useful it is. Over a billion people speak it as either their first or second language; more still as a third or fourth language.

英语这门语言完美地诠释了全球化语言的“网络效应”：越多的人使用这门语言，这门语言就会变得越有用。超过十亿人将英语作为母语或是第二语言，还有更多的人将它作为第三或第四语言。

Parents’ desire for their children to master English is spurring the growth of private schooling. Education authorities are switching to English medium, in part to stem the outflow of children into the private sector.

父母希望孩子可以精通英语，这一点正刺激着私立学校的发展。而各国的教育部门正转向英文教学，在某种程度上是想阻止儿童流向私立学校。

Teaching children in English is fine if that is what they speak at home and their parents are fluent in it. But that is not the case in most public and low-cost private schools. Children are taught in a language they don't understand by teachers whose English is poor. The children learn neither English nor anything else.

如果孩子们在家说的也是英文，并且他们父母的英语也很流利，那用英语教学是可以接受的。但在大多数公立学校和收费低廉的私立学校，情况并非如此。在那些地方，孩子们在一个他们听不懂的语言环境中接受教育，而授课的老师本身并不擅长英文。孩子们既学不到英语，也学不到其他东西。

Research demonstrates that children learn more when they are taught in their mother tongue than they do when they are taught in any other language. In a study of children in the first three years in 12 schools in Cameroon, those taught in Kom did better than those taught in English in all subjects.

研究证实，儿童在接受母语教学时，学到的知识比在接受其他语言教学时更多。一项研究调查了 12 所学校内的喀麦隆儿童，观察他们在入学前三年的表现，发现比起那些接受英语教学的孩子，接受科姆语教学的孩子在所有科目上的表现都更好。

English should be an important subject at school, but not necessarily the language of instruction. Rather than switching to English-medium teaching, governments fearful of losing custom to the private sector should look at the many possible ways of improving public schools.

英语应该是学校中一门重要的学科，但不一定得是教学语言。那些担心生源流向私立学校的政府，应该多考虑一些改进公立学校的合理方案，而不是将授课语言改成英文。

----- 文章来源 / 经济学人

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## 重点词汇

### **mother tongue**

母语

- 英文释义：the first language that you learn when you are a baby

### **exemplify**/ɪg'zemplɪfaɪ/

v. 作为...的典范，是...的典型

### **spur**/spɜːr/

v. 促进，激励

- 词性拓展：spur (n.)
- 搭配短语：spur into action
- 例句：I was spurred into action by her speech.

### **switch**/swɪtʃ/

v. 突然改变；转换，调换

- 词性拓展：switch (n.)
- 搭配短语：light switch (n.)
- 英文释义：to change suddenly or completely, especially from one thing to another

### **medium**/ˈmiːdiəm/

n. (传播或表达的) 媒体，方法；教学媒介语言

- 相关词汇：media (n.)
- 搭配短语：medium of instruction
- 例句：English is still the main medium of instruction in Nigeria.

### **stem**/stem/

v. 阻止，遏制

- 例句：These measures are designed to stem the rise of violent crime.
- 搭配短语：stem the tide of sth.
- 搭配短语：to stem the tide of immigration

### **outflow**/ˈaʊtfləʊ/

n. 外流，流出

- 词根词缀：out- (向外)，flow (流，流动)
- 相关词汇：inflow (n.)
- 搭配短语：the outflow of water
- 搭配短语：capital outflow

### **language of instruction**

教学语言

- instruction 英文释义：the act of teaching sth. to sb.
- 例句：In Malaysia, the primary language of instruction is English.

### **custom**/ˈkʌstəm/

n. (经常性的) 顾客，客源

- 相关词汇：customer (n.)
- 例句：Thank you for your custom.

**look at**

思考，考虑

- 英文释义：to think about, consider or study something