

“母语”的由来 Why's it called 'mother tongue'?

Hello. This is 6 Minute English, I'm Sam.

大家好，这里是六分钟英语，我是萨姆。

And I'm Georgina.

我是乔治娜。

Georgina, what languages do you speak?

乔治娜，你会说什么语言？

Well, my mother tongue is English and I also speak Spanish and French badly!

嗯，我的母语是英语，不过我也说西班牙语和法语，就是说得不好！

OK. It's interesting that we say 'mother tongue', isn't it?

好的。我们用“mother tongue”来表示“母语”这一点很有趣，不是吗？

Like many languages, English has a number of gender-specific terms that don't refer to gender-specific ideas and concepts.

跟很多语言一样，英语有很多针对性别的名词，但是它们跟性别概念并没有什么关系。

And this complicated relationship between language and gender is what we will be talking about today.

而语言和性别之间的复杂关系正是我们今天要讨论的内容。

But first, this week's quiz question, which is also on the topic of languages.

不过首先是本周的小问答，也是跟语言有关的。

Which of these languages is the newest?

以下哪种语言是最晚出现的？

Is it A. Esperanto, B. Afrikaans, or C. Light Warlpiri?

是 A. 世界语，B. 南非语，还是 C. 轻瓦尔皮瑞语？

What do you think, Georgina?

你怎么看，乔治娜？

Well, I've only heard of two of these—Esperanto and Afrikaans—so I think I'm going to choose the other one, Light Warlpiri, purely as I've never heard of it, so I think that must be the one.

嗯，我只听过说其中两种语言——世界语和南非语——所以我要选另一个，轻瓦尔皮瑞语，纯粹是因为我没听说过它，所以我想它肯定就是正确答案。

OK, well we'll find out if your intuition is correct later in the programme.

好的，我们会在稍后的节目中看看你的直觉是否正确。

Professor Lera Boroditsky is a cognitive scientist who was a guest on the BBC World Service programme, The Conversation.

雷拉·波洛狄特斯基教授是一名认知科学家，她做客了BBC全球节目《对话》。

添加的词汇

commonly

英:/'kɒmənli/ 美:/'kɑmənli/

adv. 一般地；通常地；普通地



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She was asked about why we use the term 'mother tongue' in English.

她被问到关于为什么英语中有“母语”这个名词。

Different languages actually do it differently, but definitely there's a strong association between mothers as primary caregivers and people who teach us things, and so there's that point of origin metaphor that applies in a lot of languages.

其实不同的语言有不同的叫法，但是毫无疑问作为主要照看者的母亲跟教导我们的人之间有强烈的联系，并且很多语言中都有这样的隐喻的源头。

So, how does she explain the use of mother tongue, Georgina?

所以它是如何解释人们使用“母语”这个名词的呢，乔治娜？

Well, she says it's a form of metaphor.

嗯，她说这是一种隐喻。

A metaphor is a way of describing something by comparing it to something else.

隐喻指的是通过将一个事物比作另一个事物的修辞手法。

In a metaphor, though, you don't say that something is like something else, you say that it 'is' something else.

只不过在隐喻的时候你不会说某物像某物，而是说某物是某物。

For example, having good friends is the key to a happy life.

比如，拥有好的朋友是快乐生活的关键。

It is indeed.

确实如此。

In this metaphor, language is seen as coming from your primary caregiver, the person who looked after you most when you were young, and traditionally this was mothers.

在这个隐喻里，语言被认为是来自于你的主要照看者，在你年幼的时候照顾你最多的人，而依照传统，这个人就是你的母亲。

So, this is perhaps the point of origin, the starting place, of the metaphorical phrase, mother tongue.

所以也许这就是母语这个隐喻短语的源头，起点。

Let's listen again.

我们再听一遍。

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Language is very powerful in society and culture, and when it comes to gendered language, it can cause some issues.

语言在社会和文化中非常有力，而说到跟性别有关的语言时，它可能会引发一些问题。

Here's Lera Boroditsky again.

我们再来听听雷拉·波洛狄特斯基的话吧。

...in English of course we have some words that are gendered, like 'actor' and 'actress' or 'waiter' and 'waitress', and very **commonly** when there are those two gender forms people perceive the masculine form as being a more prestigious job or a more skilled job than the feminine form, so an actor is a fancier job than an actress and a waiter is a fancier job than a waitress, and so they could then come with pay disparities and so on. So, what's the subconscious difference in attitude towards, for example, an actor and actress?

.....当然在英语中我们有一些词是跟性别有关的，比如“男演员”和“女演员”，或者“男服务员”和“女服务员”，而且往往在存在这两种性别形式的时候，人们会认为男性所从事的工作比女性的更有声望或更需要技巧，所以男演员这个工作比女演员更优越，男服务生这个工作比女服务生更优越，因此它们可能会导致薪酬差距等问题。所以人们对男演员和女演员的态度存在什么潜意识上的差异呢？

Well, she says that people perceive those roles differently.

嗯，她说人们看待这些职务的方式不一样。

This means that we are aware of, or believe there is a difference in the jobs because of the vocabulary.

这意味着因为这些词汇，我们意识到，或认为这些工作是不一样的。

The male form is perceived to be more prestigious-more important, more respected, even though it's exactly the same job.

男性词汇被认为是更有声望的——更重要，更受到尊重，即使工作是一样的。

And this attitude can lead to problems such as disparities in pay.

而这种态度会导致各种问题，比如薪酬差距。

A disparity is a difference, an inequality, and in the world of work it can mean men getting paid more than women for the same job.

差距指的是差异，一种不平等，而在职场，这可能意味着从事同种工作，男性会比女性收入高。

Here's Professor Boroditsky again.

再听一遍波洛狄特斯基教授的话。

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Georgina, what did you say?

乔治娜, 你选的哪一个?

I thought it had to be Light Walpiri, but just because I had never heard of it before.

我觉得只能是轻瓦尔皮瑞语, 但是只因为我之前没有听说过它。

Well, congratulations.

嗯, 恭喜你。

Your instincts were good, that is correct.

你的直觉是对的, 回答正确。

So let's move on to vocabulary and look at today's words and phrases again.

我们继续看词汇吧, 来回顾今天的词汇和短语吧。

A primary caregiver is a person who has most responsibility for looking after someone.

主要照看者指的是承担大部分照顾某人的责任的人。

A point of origin is the place or time when something begins.

源头指的是某事开始的地点或时间点。

A metaphor is a way of describing something.

隐喻是一种修辞手法。

We can say that something is something else that has similar qualities.

我们可以说某个事物是另一个有类似品质的事物。

You're a star!

你是个明星!

Aw, thank you.

嗷, 谢谢你。

No, no, I meant, you're a star, is an example of a metaphor.

不, 我的意思是, 你是个明星, 这是隐喻的例子。

Oh, OK. Of course, I knew that.

哦, 好吧。我当然知道。

Mmmm, OK, if you say so.

嗯, 好吧, 如果你这么说的话。

To perceive is to think of something in a particular way.

看待指的是以某种方式认为某事。

We might perceive the value of different jobs based on the vocabulary used to describe them.

我们可能会基于用于描述不同工作的词汇来看待它们的价值。

Something prestigious is important and respected.

有声望的东西是重要的，且受到尊重的。

And finally, a disparity is a difference, an inequality and is often used when talking about how men and women aren't always paid the same for the same job.

最后，差距是一种差异，一种不公平，而且常常被用来讨论男性和女性是如何同工不同酬的。

And that is all from us.

以上就是我们的所有内容。

We look forward to your company again soon.

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Bye for now.

再见啦。

Bye!

再见！
