**Name:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Class:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ ( )**

**Tuesday English News Report**

*‘****Mother-tongue*** *teaching policy to blame’ as Hong Kong slides down English* ***proficiency*** *index for second year in a row*

Broadcast Date: 17th November

Hong Kong has dropped on a **global** English proficiency ranking for the second consecutive year, raising concerns over English education becoming “**stratified**” under the government policy of mother-tongue teaching.

On the latest English proficiency index compiled by EF English First, a Swedish-owned international English training institution, Hong Kong ranked 33rd among 70 countries and territories, a slight decrease in the ranking from last year’s 31st.

Hong Kong’s position has fallen almost continuously since 2011, when the city ranked 12th among 44 countries and regions. The only exception was in 2013, when the city rose from 25th to 22nd. In 2011 and 2013 Hong Kong ranked higher than South Korea and Japan, but both were above the city in 2012, last year and this year.

Although the methods used in compiling the rankings remain debated, particularly over the lack of an English speaking test, some believed it did raise concerns over Hongkongers’ falling English proficiency.

“If Hong Kong scored 10 out of 10 in the past, now it only has 6,” said Civic Party lawmaker Claudia Mo Man-ching, a proficient English speaker herself.

Mo said it was the government’s mother-tongue teaching policy, **adopted** since the handover in 1997, that should be blamed for such a drop.

She said after the introduction of the policy those who had the **resources** insisted on sending their children to kindergartens, primary schools and secondary schools that taught in English, or international schools, and then sent them to overseas universities. Those who could not enter these schools would face **rote learning** and drilling.

“There were children telling me that they hated English very much,” Mo said. “They said English was like a **nightmare**.

“[Children] started to learn ABC at the age of two, but when they entered university, they didn’t **dare** to speak English … because the whole Hong Kong society had forced them to think since their childhood that English is high class, is superior … If you are not at a school taught in English, you are a second-class student.”

Jeremy Young Chit-on, **former** political assistant at the Education Bureau, said he agreed that the mother-tongue teaching policy had created a lot of pressure on pupils. He said English learners should not be afraid to communicate with others in the language.

[](http://www.google.com.hk/imgres?imgurl=http://cdn4.scmp.com/sites/default/files/2015/05/28/img_8335.jpg&imgrefurl=http://www.scmp.com/comment/insight-opinion/article/1811311/hong-kongs-sad-state-english-how-our-readers-see-it?page%3Dall&h=744&w=1200&tbnid=Vq_J_9BurVvjZM:&docid=MAPaaKv9P59_CM&hl=en&ei=UIM5Vor0Nqe-mgXMwLTwDw&tbm=isch&ved=0CDMQMygTMBNqFQoTCIrc5J_x9cgCFSefpgodTCAN_g)

Example of poor English blamed on mother-tongue policy

1. What do you think?
2. Vocabulary

*Fill in the blanks in the sentences below using words from the box.*

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| mother-tongue | stratified | rote learning | former |
| proficiency | adopted | nightmare |  |
| global | resources | dare |  |

1. This is a synonym for worldwide. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ warming is beginning to affect climates in many countries.
2. Meaning a supply of money, materials or assets that allow you to do what you want. China now has enough \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ to send a person to the moon.
3. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ teaching means educating students in the language they learnt as a child. So in Hong that means learning in Cantonese.
4. Yesterday was a \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_! I got up late because my alarm failed to go off, then on my way to work I lost my wallet. Just when I thought it couldn’t get any worse I was knocked over by a taxi. I’m now in hospital with a broken leg!
5. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ is a way to memorising information without comprehending the meaning.
6. My mother was very angry because her favourite bag had been stolen. I didn’t \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ tell her I’d failed my Maths test!
7. Her \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ boss was from Africa and had lots of interesting stories to tell her about life there. Her current boss is boring.
8. In this article \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ means divided into different graded status levels.
9. He is English but has lived in India for so long that he has \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Indian eating habits and traditions. He no longer wears western clothes.
10. Her \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ in Japanese is good and she has no difficulty living in Japan.

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