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

**Tuesday English News Report**

Broadcast Date: 3rd May

**Brouhaha** over Putonghua is a recipe for failure (Alex Lo)

***Localists*** *must understand that to succeed in the world today, you must be able to speak and write the languages of business*

My late father was a teenager when the Japanese occupied Hong Kong. By the end of the war, he and many of his friends were **fluent** in Japanese, having been forced to learn the language and sing the national anthem at school.

After the war, he made a conscious effort to unlearn Japanese, as he considered it the language of imperialism. By the time he qualified as a solicitor, he couldn’t speak the language anymore, though he still understood it when spoken to.

That was unfortunate as it was the 1960s, when the Japanese economy was taking off. Many Japanese companies such as car dealerships came to Hong Kong to set up shop, and they all needed legal services. There were clearly good business opportunities for my father. But he became self-conscious and easily embarrassed when he tried to speak Japanese.

The lesson he wanted to **impart** to his children was that learning a new language or dialect is never a bad thing, under whatever circumstances. And never let pride get in the way of learning new things.

It’s therefore sad that many young people today, especially those who are politically motivated, are increasingly **rejecting** Putonghua and simplified written Chinese scripts in the name of localism.

Since 1997, the government has actively promoted biliteracy and **trilingualism** – often referred to as mastering two languages (Chinese and English) and three ways of speaking (Cantonese, Putonghua and English).

It’s **a tall order**. But as a goal, there was for many years a **consensus** that such abilities were necessary for success. That consensus has broken down, thanks to our highly divisive politics.

The issue is so highly charged that mere mention of teaching simplified Chinese characters in schools is enough to spark an outcry. The latest **furore** focuses on the Curriculum Development Council, which has just completed a consultation on Chinese language curriculum. It wants to adopt the teaching of simplified characters but only as an eventual goal with no time frame for introduction.

Critics and activists say such a policy is just to **placate** Beijing. That may well be the case, but so what? Cantonese localism is all very well. But you need Putonghua and English to succeed in the world today.



1. What do you think?
2. Vocabulary

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

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| brouhaha | localist(s) | fluent | impart |
| reject(ing) | trilingualism | a tall order | consensus |
| furore | placate |  |  |

1. He wanted to finish the marathon in under 4 hours to get his personal best but it was

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1. He is \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ in Spanish. He speaks it perfectly.
2. Cantonese people who don’t want to have anything to do with the mainland are known

 as \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

1. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ is the ability to speak 3 languages.
2. A noisy and overexcited reaction to something is called \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.
3. There was a general \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (agreement) that we should meet at 7am the next morning.
4. Teachers \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ a great deal of knowledge to their students.
5. The saleswoman tried very hard to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ the angry customer. She even offered him a discount.
6. Public anger or excitement. There was a \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ when the government said it would pull down the historic building.
7. The government is going to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ the proposal of a 3-day weekend that was put forward by the teachers’ union.

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