

## Abstract

In this study, the developmental pattern of Chinese children's use of analogies in getting the semantic information of Chinese characters was examined. Twenty first-graders and 20 third-graders from two primary schools in Hong Kong took part in this study. They were first asked to select the correct semantic category of the test characters, which could be divided into three types:

Analogous, common phonetic and control character, in the pre-training part. Then, they received a training in which the meaning of the clue characters was learned. After training, there was a post-training part that participants were asked to do the same task as in the pre-training part. Results indicated that both first-graders and third-graders were able to use analogies to find the semantic category of analogous characters. Additionally, reading ability was significantly correlated to analogy ability for first-graders in pre-training part, but this correlation disappeared in post-training part. This correlation was also absent among third-graders. The findings were consistent with Goswami's (1986) in a way that even beginning readers possessed analogy ability. Therefore, teacher could teach beginning readers the relationship between radical and the meaning of the corresponding character, even before children knew how to check dictionary, in order to help them to make progress in reading ability.