

Abstract

In this study I examined Cantonese-speaking children's learning of a small English sight vocabulary, under conditions in which the items were either pronounced or not. Participating children included: (i) Guangzhou children who were familiar with Pinyin; (ii) Hong Kong children who had learned English phonics; (iii) Hong Kong children who had had no phonics training. I hypothesized that children who had had some alphabetic training (i.e., Pinyin or English phonics) would benefit more from the availability of item pronunciations in sight vocabulary learning than those who had had no alphabetic training. The phonics group was more efficient overall in learning than the Guangzhou and the non-phonics group, but no difference was found between the Guangzhou and Hong Kong non-phonics group. The availability of item pronunciations did not affect group performance differentially. I concluded that training in English phonics has a general positive effect on learning an English sight vocabulary, regardless of whether item pronunciations are provided or not.