

Abstract

This study aimed to investigate the development of orthographic and phonological awareness in Chinese children through the neighborhood density effect proposed in the lexical restructuring theory. Twenty-one Cantonese speaking Chinese aged nine were recruited to participate in a battery of tests on orthographic awareness, phonological awareness, vocabulary and other cognitive functions. The results showed that Cantonese speaking Chinese developed strong orthographic awareness but weak phonological awareness. This difference in orthographic awareness and phonological awareness had several implications in cross-language transfer and Chinese reading development.

Keywords: Orthographic awareness; Phonological awareness; Lexical restructuring model; Neighborhood density effect; Alphabeticity