

**Predictors of poor and average reading comprehension
in Hong Kong Chinese children**

by

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A Thesis

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the degree of

MASTER of ARTS

Major Subject: PSYCHOLOGY

Department of Psychology,
Faculty of Social Science,
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(June 2015)

DECLARATION

I, PUI MAN LEUNG, declare that the contents of this thesis represent my own unaided work, and that the thesis has not previously been submitted for academic examination towards any qualification. Furthermore, it represents my own opinions and not necessarily those of The Chinese University of Hong Kong.

Signed

25th June 2015

Date

Abstract

The present study examined the role of cognitive skill of rapid automatized naming (RAN); lower-level skill of word reading; higher-level linguistic skills of phonological awareness, morphological awareness and vocabulary knowledge, as well as socio-economic status (SES) in terms of fathers' income, mothers' education levels and foreign domestic helpers, in reading comprehension proficiency. More specifically, the objective of this study was to investigate whether the same set of variables would predict reading comprehension, in both Chinese and English. 141 Hong Kong Chinese children, aged 10, from a longitudinal study were administered a set of corresponding measures. Participants of the lowest 30% on reading comprehension tests were categorised as poor comprehenders in each orthography respectively. The 'poor' groups were matched to 'average' groups of children from the same sample whose reading comprehension scores was above 30%, and matched on age and nonverbal reasoning at age 4. Separate logistic regression analyses with all variables indicated that only word reading was the unique predictor of both Chinese and English reading comprehension. Linguistic variables as a set was found to be a predictor in reading comprehension of both orthographies, with phonological awareness being marginally significant only when predicting Chinese reading comprehension though. Helper was another marginally significant variable in predicting English reading comprehension. Other variables failed to distinguish the groups regardless of the orthographies. Our findings support current literature of the role of word reading, with the applicability of Simple View extended to both Chinese as a morphosyllabic language and English as an alphabetic language. The considerable

difference between the two language systems should be highlighted in order to facilitate reading comprehension