

Abstract

This study investigated the effects of using Putonghua as the medium of instruction for Chinese Language (PMIC) in Hong Kong on children's Chinese and English literacy development. One hundred and three native Grade one students studying in local Primary schools were recruited. They were assessed, both concurrently and one year later, on Chinese reading comprehension, word reading, word dictation, English word reading and word dictation. Results showed that PMIC negatively predicted performance in Chinese word reading while positively predicted performance in English word reading and dictation one year later. No significant prediction was found on Chinese reading comprehension and word dictation. The author attributed the poorer Chinese word reading performance in students receiving PMIC to confusion of pronunciations, whereas the better performance in English word reading and dictation was due to cross-language transfer of improved phonological awareness. These findings necessitate further researches on the effects of PMIC on children's literacy learning, particularly in the novel English domain, to justify whether PMIC should be implemented in Hong Kong.

Keywords: medium of instruction, Putonghua, literacy development