

Abstract

In the Chinese language, simplified and traditional scripts are used in different geographical locations. With the simplification process, consistency and regularity of grapheme-phoneme mapping are affected. Thus, it is hypothesized that using different scripts during Chinese learning would lead to different outcomes in metalinguistic awareness. This paper investigates how learning Chinese in different scripts results in differences in associations between metalinguistic awareness and reading measures. A total of 131 students in grades 2 and 3, in which 67 students from Taiwan and 64 students from Beijing, were recruited in this study. 127 students were included in the final analysis. It was discovered that phonological awareness showed unique correlation and prediction towards character and word reading in simplified script readers. Orthographic awareness, measured by delayed copying, showed greater association with character and word reading in traditional script readers than in simplified script readers. Both orthographic awareness and morphological awareness could also predict character and word reading in traditional script readers with IQ, grade, age, and rapid automatized naming (RAN) controlled. These results supported that simplified script readers rely more on extracting phonological information during reading, while traditional script readers may be able to extract more orthographic information, as well as use different strategies, when reading Chinese. Potential reasons in terms of script and use of different phonetic systems, as well as how teaching may reduce these differences, are also discussed.