

Abstract

The Home Literacy Model introduces the relations between home literacy environment (HLE) and the acquisition of language and literacy (Sénéchal & LeFevre, 2014). Previous studies about HLE and children's reading development were mostly conducted in Western contexts. There was not much literature about the mediating role of metalinguistic awareness, such as phonological awareness (PA), orthographic awareness (OA) and morphological awareness (MA), in the relationship between HLE and children's Chinese reading development, and even less research conducted in the context of Hong Kong. Unlike the alphabetic systems used in the Western languages, Chinese is a morphosyllabic system and has relatively complex character-sound mappings compared with other languages (McBride et al., 2021). Past studies indicated significant differences in the relationship between HLE and children's reading development varying in orthographic consistency (Inoue et al., 2020; Silinskas et al., 2020). Thus, this study aimed to enrich the prior knowledge of the Home Literacy Model by examining the mediating role of underlying metalinguistic awareness involved in children's Chinese reading development. Results revealed that MA was a significant mediator of HLE and children's Chinese reading skills after controlling children's age and family socioeconomic status. Formal literacy experiences and access to literacy resources were positively associated with MA, and through its effect, children's Chinese reading skills.

Keywords: home literacy environment, metalinguistic awareness, Chinese reading development, reading development in Hong Kong children