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The relations of Chinese phonology, morphology and orthography to Bilingual reading acquisitions of Hong Kong Chinese Grade 3 students

*Abstract.* This present study investigated the concurrent contributions of phonology, orthography, and morphology to Chinese and English word reading acquisition in 355 Grade 3 Chinese–English bilingual students. Tasks in Chinese tapping phonological processing skills (phonological memory, phonological awareness and RAN), orthographic knowledge, and morphological awareness were administered. English and Chinese word reading performances of students were also tested. The study found that Chinese RAN and morphological awareness uniquely explained variance in Chinese word reading. Cross-language phonological transfer was demonstrated in this study. Chinese phonological memory explained a modest amount of variance in English word reading. Chinese RAN alone made a significant unique contribution to variance in both Chinese and English word reading. However, significant cross-language transfer at Chinese morphological and orthographic level to English word reading was unfound in this study. Taken together, these findings indicated that there are shared phonological processes in Chinese-English bilingual reading acquisition, whereas the orthographic process may be language specific. Specifically, findings further highlighted the specific role of Chinese RAN in Chinese and English word reading, and the importance of Chinese morphological awareness in Chinese word reading, as well as Chinese phonological memory in English word reading.

*Introduction.* Word reading is the fundamental ability that students learn in literacy education, with a range of cognitive processing involved. Orthography, phonology,