

### **Abstract**

This study investigated the contribution of English morphological awareness to Chinese word reading ability in Cantonese Chinese-English bilingual students in Hong Kong and compared the results across grades to see if the contribution increases with age. Chinese and English are taught in schools from a very early age simultaneously. Four hundred and twenty-seven children from Grade 1 to Grade 5 were recruited for this study and were divided into Low-Grade group and High-Grade group according to their grades. They were tested on a set of comparable Cantonese Chinese and English tasks tapping into nonverbal reasoning ability, morphological awareness, word reading and vocabulary knowledge. Results showed that English morphological awareness explained a significant amount of variance in general and more in the High-Grade group than the Low-Grade group, suggesting the cross-language transfer of linguistic abilities increase with age. Furthermore, the potential bilingual program teaching strategies was discussed, aiming to optimize Cantonese Chinese and English language development in primary students in Hong Kong.