

Abstract

Children who learn to read in Chinese are demanded to develop visual-orthographic skills in order to understand Chinese characters. Due to the differences in features and education style for traditional Chinese scripts and simplified Chinese scripts, children from the two groups may acquire different levels of visual-orthographic knowledge. This study examined the ability of Hong Kong children (who learned traditional Chinese scripts) and Beijing children (who learned simplified Chinese scripts) with the aid of Delayed Copying Task, which was measured by requesting children to copy novel Chinese characters (low-frequency words) in their learned script after a brief exposure. The children were expected to complete the task relying on their visual-orthographic knowledge because the perceived stimuli were unfamiliar to them. With grade and reading level being statistically controlled, the results conveyed that learning simplified Chinese script at an early age may be advantageous for children in acquiring visual-orthographic knowledge. Findings in the present study also underscored the importance of education strategies used for learning Chinese reading and writing.