

## MASTER'S THESIS

### A comparison of English reading comprehension abilities of secondary students in Hong Kong and Taiwan

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A COMPARISON OF ENGLISH READING COMPREHENSION  
ABILITIES OF SECONDARY STUDENTS  
IN HONG KONG AND TAIWAN

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## A COMPARISON OF ENGLISH READING COMPREHENSION ABILITIES OF SECONDARY STUDENTS IN HONG KONG AND TAIWAN

### Abstract

Although sharing many common features, Hong Kong and Taiwan are two Chinese societies where the English language has quite different social status and educational roles. In this study the English reading comprehension abilities of secondary students of various grades from the two regions were compared by typical reading tests. In general, Hong Kong students attained higher scores, especially in Secondary 1 level (difference in mean score was 57%). This was expected because Taiwan students started to learn English only in the secondary school. However, the differences in higher grades were found to be much smaller. For Secondary 6, the difference in mean score was 15%. The Secondary 3 mean scores of the two regions were almost the same. Analyses of partial scores did not indicate any text-related or reading subskill-related factors which could explain the inter-regional difference. Correlation analysis on test score and English background of Taiwan subjects revealed positive correlations between reading test performance and the amount of after-school English tutoring, and to a lesser degree, extra-curricular English reading. No such correlation was observed in Hong Kong students. The implications of these results to the English education system in Hong Kong, and suggestions for further studies were discussed.

### 香港及臺灣中學生英文閱讀理解能力比較

#### 論文撮要

雖然香港與臺灣有不少相同之處，英語在兩地中國社會的地位及教育功能則頗為不同。本研究採常用的閱讀測驗，比較兩地不同年級中學生的英文閱讀理解能力。香港學生成績一般較臺灣學生高，尤其是中一級(平均積分差為百份之五十七)。這是預期的結果，因為臺灣學生由中學才開始學英語。然而高年級的差別比較少，中六級平均積分差為百份之十五。兩地中三級的平均積分更大致相等。分析部分積分顯示，兩地差別未能由課文有關或閱讀次技考(reading subskill)等因素解釋。以臺灣學生積分及其英語背景所作的相關分析顯示，閱讀表現與校外英語補習量有正相關，與課外英文閱讀量亦有稍弱的正相關。香港學生則無這類相關關係。這些結果對香港英語教育的含意，與及對進一步研究的建議文中均有討論。

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