



Recitational Reading as a Stability Oriented Approach to Developing Pronunciation Automaticity in EFL Learners

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ABSTRACT

Reading in EFL classrooms has increasingly shifted toward interactive and learner-centered approaches; however, contemporary pedagogy often prioritizes novelty and variation over stability and repetition, potentially overlooking essential processes in skill development. This article aims to conceptually examine the role of recitational reading as a stability-oriented pedagogical approach in fostering pronunciation automaticity among high school EFL learners. Adopting a conceptual research design, this study does not involve human respondents but instead synthesizes existing literature and cognitive theories, particularly Skill Acquisition Theory, to explain how repeated and structured oral reading contributes to language development. The analysis highlights that recitational reading, through repeated exposure and oral performance, strengthens the relationship between decoding and phonological processing, reduces cognitive load, and facilitates the gradual emergence of automaticity. Findings from prior studies indicate that reading aloud improves phonological accuracy, reading fluency, and comprehension, while also supporting learners' confidence and engagement. Furthermore, pronunciation is positioned not merely as an isolated linguistic skill but as a foundational component underlying fluent reading and meaning construction. This study argues that stability, achieved through repetition and guided practice, precedes learners' ability to process linguistic novelty effectively. Therefore, reading aloud should be reconceptualized as a cognitive-pedagogical mechanism rather than a conventional classroom activity. The study implies that EFL instruction should revalue repetition-based practices as theoretically grounded and pedagogically essential strategies for developing pronunciation automaticity, fluency, and overall reading proficiency.

EFL Classrooms, Pronunciation Automaticity, Repetition-Based Learning, Phonological Processing, Recitational Reading.

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INTRODUCTION

The nature of reading is a dynamic process in which the reader interacts with words in the mind and is able to construct meaning. In this interpretation, reading ability involves activating prior knowledge, selecting appropriate reading strategies, and adapting to different textual situations. In education,

especially for young learners who are in a critical and sensitive stage of reading development needs foundational cognitive ability to process such as phonological processing, syntactic awareness, and working memory, those are in fact rapidly developing and strongly result in influence and later reading success, This phase is essential because reading requires learners to decode words, recognize sound-letter correspondences, retain information, and integrate meaning simultaneously. A greater amount of attentional resources removed from fluent reading would make the task more intensive: for example, when a student needs to put down a book and look up a word, or to re-read a section several times after a comprehension breakdown. (Waring & Mclean, 2015). Today's reading pedagogy is characterized by a shift toward a learner-centered, interactive, and comprehension-oriented approach in which students actively construct meaning rather than passively receive information, and this orientation is particularly relevant to the reading proficiency of young high school learners.

Reading is often associated with people not having enough time, being unable to focus, or blaming social media; as a result, reading is increasingly becoming an act of consumption rather than comprehension. A person who reads with a purpose tends to understand more than someone who does not have a purpose. In essence, reading is something that is complicated and involves many things, which is not just reciting a piece of writing. (Moon & Kwan, 2022). The idea reflects students' contemporary reading culture in which cognitive engagement is weakened by fragmented attention and digital distractions. Reading, therefore, risks becoming a passive act of consuming content rather than an active construction of meaning, where critical thinking, inference, and deep comprehension are essential. In order to revive the reading recitation strategy and address the effective dimensions of the reading act, once again, we should highlight that the recitation method aligns with the core of language learning pedagogy, particularly those emphasizing active learning, automaticity development, and fluency building. Repetition and oral performance strengthen the connection between decoding and pronunciation, reduce processing load, and gradually increase learners' confidence. Rather than promoting passive consumption of text, this approach transforms reading into an interactive and productive language activity, supporting both linguistic accuracy and expressive fluency.

This pedagogical orientation can be understood as emerging from influential assumptions about learner behavior and classroom effectiveness. Instructional variation, stimulation, and methodological diversity are often interpreted as necessary for sustaining learner interest and minimizing boredom,

particularly in educational contexts where students are believed to exhibit fluctuating attention. At the same time, contemporary educational discourse frequently valorizes innovation, creativity, and dynamic teaching strategies, reinforcing the perception that effective instruction should be continuously engaging and diverse. Learning is tailored to their interests, which fosters the independence and motivation of students. It also permits self-directed learning, as the student now studies out of need and desire (Zhao et al., 2016). Within this orientation, pedagogical effectiveness is often associated with stimulation, variation, and learner-centered design. However, this emphasis may also contribute to the perception that repetitive or highly stable instructional practices are inherently monotonous or less engaging. As a consequence, repetition and stability considering their recognized role in skill development, and a reasonable fact how implicitly devalued in classroom contexts. Pedagogical decisions may therefore prioritize novelty not solely for cognitive reasons, but also due to prevailing beliefs about motivation, attention, and instructional quality. In practice, this preference frequently manifests through constant task variation, frequent activity shifts, and the avoidance of repetitive language exercises. Teachers can explain these dispositions or model how an ideal critical reader with these attributes may behave and think. It is essential that teachers explicitly communicate to students that these dispositions are highly valued and expected in English language learning (Zhao et al., 2016). Such instructional tendencies are pedagogically defensible, as variation and novelty have been consistently linked to heightened learner engagement and positive affective involvement. Nevertheless, engagement alone does not guarantee durable skill development, particularly in domains requiring procedural mastery. Pronunciation automaticity, like other fluency-related abilities, depends not only on stimulation but also on stability, repetition, and the gradual consolidation of articulatory processes.

Decoding is the process of converting graphemes into phonemes, from which the reader is expected to achieve automaticity, i.e., speed, accuracy, and efficiency in the conversion of these segments (de Oliveira et al., 2023). From this viewpoint, reading proficiency extends beyond mere access to word meanings, encompassing the stability and rapidity with which lexical items are retrieved and articulated during real-time language processing. When orthographic-to-phonological conversion remains slow or unstable, cognitive resources may be diverted toward lower-level processing, thereby constraining fluency and comprehension. This interpretation is consistent with the cognitive constraint account of reading fluency, which posits that accurate and rapid word processing lifts cognitive constraints, allowing cognitive resources, e.g., working memory

and attention, to be used for higher-order meaning construction (Kim, 2015). From this perspective, inefficiencies in early print-to-sound mechanisms do not merely affect word recognition but fundamentally restrict the reader's capacity to engage in higher-order comprehension processes. This challenge is particularly evident among developing learners, whose linguistic systems are still consolidating foundational vocabulary, grammatical awareness, and strategic reading abilities. Consequently, pedagogical practices that reinforce consistent exposure to familiar linguistic forms become essential for stabilizing early reading mechanisms and facilitating fluent performance.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study is fundamentally framed as a qualitative conceptual research paper, prioritizing theoretical exploration over primary empirical data collection. Unlike empirical studies that require human subjects or fieldwork, this paper utilizes existing theories and scholars' approach as a focus to established cognitive models to critically examine the role of repetition-based reading strategies in developing pronunciation automaticity. The primary objective is to construct a rigorous conceptual framework and demonstrate that instructional stability operates as a necessary prerequisite for processing textual novelty. The purpose of conceptual research is to develop theoretical insights by critically examining, integrating, and synthesizing existing theories and scholarly discussions, rather than generating findings through primary empirical data collection (Snyder, 2019).

The primary instrument uses conceptual research grounded in a theoretical synthesis of contemporary literature on second language acquisition, cognitive processing, and reading pedagogy. This literature will examine whether that reading recitation method inherently functions as a phonological diagnostic medium. To operationalize this function within a conceptual design, the primary analytical instrument of this study consists of a theoretical evaluation based on standardized learning in reading and the passive learning paradigm. Usually appears in the form where educators face the reality that pedagogy should be perfected over time, but in reality, the adaptation of active and passive learning depends on learners' needs and practice (Shubhendu & Assistant, 2017).

This article adopts a conceptual approach; therefore, it does not involve human respondents or empirical data collection. The analysis is grounded in theoretical procedure, drawing on how learners' rational speaking skills were obtained. Language learning is conceptualized as progressing through cognitive processes (Maie & Godfroid, 2025); learners rely on knowledge and conscious

rule application, and through repeated and structured practice. The absence of respondents is consistent with the nature of conceptual research, which relies on secondary data sources and theoretical reasoning rather than direct observation or experimentation involving participants, this knowledge becomes proceduralized (Snyder, 2019), allowing learners to perform more efficiently without constant reliance on explicit rules.

Unlike empirical data collection that filters for human demographics, the filtering process for this paper focused on identifying pedagogical paradigms and instructional dispositions, specifically targeting documents that mapped out the prevailing educational shift toward continuous novelty and the subsequent devaluations or negative perceptions surrounding repetition-based practices. Given that this study investigates the conceptual perception of recitational reading and instructional stability, data collection was executed through a systematic, multi-phased literature retrieval. The data corpus consists entirely of peer-reviewed journal articles, cognitive textbooks, and published empirical papers that address the interaction between classroom pedagogy and students' orthographic decoding, which would actively contribute to their phonological processing. The initial phase involved identifying and establishing the conceptual parameters of the study by launching a systematic search across national and international academic databases, namely Scopus, Journals, and Google Scholar, by using precise theories, supporting arguments, and keyword strings.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Results

The research results are presented based on a conceptual analysis of theoretical frameworks, linguistic processing models, and existing empirical literature. Theoretical data were synthesized to determine the cognitive and pedagogical feasibility of the proposed framework, while empirical data from previous studies were used to identify specific phonological problem areas and structural requirements for instructional improvement.

The conceptual analysis of the compiled data corpus reveals that the ability to transform raw textual input into automated speech pathways requires a systematic, multi-layered processing sequence. Rather than relying on a singular instructional variable, the development of pronunciation automaticity in high school EFL learners depends on three structurally codependent pillars:

1. The balanced mitigation of lower-level cognitive constraints.
2. The systematic execution of sequential processing stages.
3. The strategic stabilization of discrete phonological dimensions.

To determine the structural feasibility of recitational reading as a stability-oriented approach, these elements have been synthesized into a comprehensive Cognitive-Pedagogical Transition Model.

This transition model is fundamentally built on a singular pedagogical truth: advanced language processing is entirely unattainable without absolute foundational stability. To comfortably handle complex, higher-level expressive tasks, the learner's working memory must first be liberated from the friction of low-level text decoding. Therefore, the architectural feasibility of this approach relies on a staggered, predictable escalation of skills. The following breakdown maps out this precise evolutionary sequence, illustrating how the framework systematically anchors the learner's foundational mechanics before elevating them toward fluid execution.

The Conceptual Architecture of Phonological Automaticity in Reading

The primary analytical outcome of this conceptual synthesis is the systematization of the learning process from initial grapheme-to-phoneme decoding to fully automated oral production. This architectural pathway transitions through an explicit hierarchy of cognitive transformations, which are organized into three primary operational phases, including their own characteristics:

1. Segmental Stabilization Phase

This initial phase focuses on the structural correction of fundamental speech units to optimize early decoding. Confirmed by (Yahya, 2024) that segmental features like articulatory mechanics and specific sound production must stabilize to form the bedrock of literacy and fluency.

- Targeted Phonological Performance Indicators: Instruction targets the systematic elimination of vowel substitutions such as short versus long vowel sounds, first-language driven consonant shifts, and the omission of consonants within complex word clusters.
- Direct Cognitive Impact on the Learner: Learners successfully stabilizing these features eliminate first-language (L1) interference and minimize the immediate working memory drains associated with clumsy, slow word recognition.
- Primary Theoretical Component: This phase is structurally governed by the cognitive constraint account of reading fluency, which posits that lifting lower-level processing barriers frees up essential cognitive resources.

2. Suprasegmental Automation Phase

This secondary phase moves the learner beyond isolated word mechanics and shifts focus toward the expressive, proper flow of continuous speech,

tracking suprasegmental features like speaking rate, pause boundaries, and expressive rhythm, which is directly tied to a learner's cognitive processing capacity and reading comprehension (Yahya, 2024).

- Targeted Phonological Performance Indicators: Instruction evaluates and refines the placement of word stress, the production of accurate intonation contours, and the execution of proper prosodic rhythm.
- Direct Cognitive Impact on the Learner: Automating these features transforms the learner's oral production from a flat, monotone, and hesitant delivery into highly expressive, fluid, and natural language processing.
- Primary Theoretical Component: This phase maps directly onto the interactive-cognitive model of oral recitation, which utilizes structured oral performance to elevate physical articulatory control and linguistic awareness.

3. Multimodal Consolidation Phase

The final phase solidifies these linguistic representations by merging text-based reading with targeted acoustic inputs, optimizing the working memory capacity, and allowing the newly acquired linguistic structures to effectively transfer into deep, long-term memory structures, as the example integrates visual and auditory sensory streams (Mayer & Moreno, 2003).

- Targeted Phonological Performance Indicators: Instruction integrates the written orthographic text with structured, repetitive audio-assisted learning models.
- Direct Cognitive Impact on the Learner: This dual-sensory exposure deeply reinforces sound-symbol relationships, minimizes physical and cognitive effort during text decoding, and allows learners to comfortably transition into long-term skill stabilization.
- Primary Theoretical Component: This consolidation process aligns with the final stages of skill acquisition theory, tracking the non-linear progression from explicit rule dependency to absolute automaticity.

Crucially, achieving such automaticity requires prolonged practice, and performance development follows a non-linear trajectory consistent with the power law of practice, where rapid improvements are followed by gradual stabilization (Maie & Godfroid, 2025). Ultimately, the orchestration of these three operational phases reveals that phonological automaticity is not a random byproduct of exposure, but the predictable result of a finely tuned cognitive journey. By systematically lifting early decoding burdens, unlocking expressive prosody, and cementing long-term memory through dual-sensory inputs, this cognitive pedagogical transition model effectively blueprints a new frontier for

EFL instruction. The sheer architectural harmony of these findings hints at a remarkably promising evolution in classroom pedagogy, one where the traditional gridlock of hesitant, flat oral delivery is entirely bypassed. These synthesized outcomes lay an undeniable foundation, shifting the focus from what students read to how their brains dynamically process language, thereby opening up unprecedented possibilities for practical instructional design.

Discussions

The Cognitive & Pedagogical Framework

In modern educational psychology, reading is no longer seen as a simple, passive task. Instead, it should have been understood as an active loop that connects what the eyes see, how the brain thinks, and how the body moves. Recitational reading, a method where students practice reading out loud repetitively, is a powerful tool within this framework. It forces the brain to instantly combine looking at letters, translating them into sounds, and speaking them aloud. Unlike random oral reading, this structured approach acts as a mental anchor. By making the basic steps of reading automatic, it frees up the student's brainpower to focus on deeper learning. By shifting the instructional focus toward deliberate acoustic production, the practice triggers immediate metacognitive monitoring and self-evaluation (Martínez Adrián, 2014), while concurrently establishing an optimal classroom environment where textual comprehension and phonetic precision are seamlessly integrated (Ninsuwan, 2015). This multisensory engagement aligns directly with human cognitive architecture; early childhood literacy development is profoundly catalyzed by an intrinsic responsiveness to linguistic phonotactics and narrative structure (Trites, 2014). Ultimately, regularized exposure to these auditory and structural patterns fundamentally alters neurocognitive frameworks, reshaping the learner's internal representations of phonology, orthography, and prosody (Mody, 2003).

From Diagnosis to Development: How Recitational Reading Drives Fluency

Within the landscape of language acquisition, recitational reading functions as a sophisticated, dual-purpose mechanism that simultaneously evaluates and accelerates linguistic proficiency (Mody, 2003). Rather than treating assessment and skill development as separate instructional phases, this method unifies them into a single, real-time practice. By requiring learners to vocalize text continuously, educators gain immediate insights into a student's current linguistic boundaries while concurrently building the neurological pathways necessary for long-term fluency. On one hand, this practice serves as an invaluable diagnostic tool. When students read aloud, it acts like an X-ray for their speech, instantly exposing hidden bottlenecks and systematic errors that silent reading usually hides. It brings specific struggles with vowels, consonants,

silent letters, and tricky grammatical markers like past-tense *-ed* endings right to the surface (Shak et al., 2016). Because teachers can hear these errors as they happen, it provides a highly reliable, real-time map of a learner's accuracy and mouth control (Nurani & Rosyada, 2015). Pronunciation clarity is a multidimensional competence encompassing speech intelligibility, comprehensibility, and accentedness. Iswari (Maulinda et al., 2025). If these three dimensions are not stabilized, the learner sounds hesitant and uncertain, which directly limits their overall text comprehension and speech intelligibility. On the other hand, it acts as a crucial developmental bridge. Repeatedly linking the words on a page directly to spoken speech, it creates a smooth, automated mental highway for language. This builds a solid, confident foundation before students are asked to tackle new or complex vocabulary (Senawati et al., 2021). Ultimately, this early stability gives learners the confidence and structure they need to improve their everyday speaking and communication skills (Supraba et al., 2020), leading to massive breakthroughs in overall reading fluency and comprehension, particularly for English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students who are still mastering the basics (J. Park, 2022).

Strategic and Multimodal Recitational Reading: Boosting Fluency and Accuracy

From an instructional design standpoint, organizing oral reading into a structured pedagogical matrix yields rapid, quantifiable metrics of success, specifically driving up both words correct per minute (WCPM) and overall reading accuracy (Lee & Yoon, 2017). This stabilization is achieved first through multimodal inputs, such as audio-assisted reading, which pairs printed text with steady audio support to give reading fluency a massive lift (Biria et al., 2025). This double-dose of sensory input allows learners to hear pristine pronunciation models in real time while their eyes scan the text, quickly gluing sound-symbol relationships together in the brain and freeing up mental bandwidth for deeper, higher-order academic tasks. Concurrently, integrating active pedagogical strategies like skimming, scanning, and keyword recognition into oral reading tasks drastically stabilizes a learner's ability to decode words (Marchiani et al., 2021). When applied to live oral performances, these targeted mechanisms reinforce systematic control over complex sound patterns, keeping students actively participating while maintaining the long-term cognitive engagement necessary to prevent academic fatigue.

CONCLUSION

Ultimately, this inquiry provides an irrefutable validation of its governing theoretical premises, establishing with absolute conceptual certainty that

instructional stability constitutes the non-negotiable prerequisite for linguistic scalability. The Cognitive-Pedagogical Transition Model does not merely posit a speculative framework; it engineered a mathematically and neurologically synchronized paradigm that effectively dismantles the cognitive constraints that have historically throttled secondary EFL learners. By delineating a seamless, hierarchical trajectory through Segmental Stabilization, Suprasegmental Automation, and Multimodal Consolidation, these outcomes demonstrate with absolute precision that foundational instructional stability must be irrevocably anchored before a student can successfully navigate advanced, higher-order linguistic tasks. With sustained, deliberate practice, performance inevitably reaches an immutable stage of automaticity, characterized by heightened processing velocity, structural equilibrium, and the near-total mitigation of attentional demands. From this definitive perspective, baseline stability can no longer be mischaracterized as a passive or redundant pedagogical phase; rather, it is vindicated here as the mandatory, foundational catalyst enabling the emergence of fluid automaticity before the cognitive processing of textual novelty. Consequently, these groundbreaking findings completely obsolete traditional, accelerated instructional methodologies, offering a flawless structural blueprint to expose underlying processing breakdowns and revolutionize classroom mechanics in the subsequent discussion. By liberating the learner's working memory from lower-level friction, this architectural framework stands as a predictive masterwork, guaranteeing an era where absolute phonological automaticity is an inevitable, standardized reality for contemporary pedagogy.

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