Journal of Education and Educational Research
ISSN: 2957-9465 | Vol. 13, No. 1, 2025

The Application and Innovation of Recitation Input in Senior High School English Writing Teaching

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Abstract: Guided by the General Senior High School English Curriculum Standard (2017 Edition), this research embarks on an in - depth exploration of the theoretical underpinnings and innovative applications of recitation input within the domain of senior high school English writing instruction. By skillfully integrating cognitive psychology and second-language acquisition theories, it constructs a solid analytical framework. The findings unmistakably reveal that recitation input substantially bolsters language accuracy, fluency, and cross-cultural expressiveness. This remarkable effect is attained through effectively fortifying language schemata, considerably reducing writing anxiety, steadily cultivating language intuition, and efficiently counteracting the negative transfer of the mother tongue. Based on meticulous theoretical analysis, this study puts forward a series of well-thought-out innovative strategies. These strategies include a collaborative teaching model ingeniously combining discourse analysis with continuation writing, carefully designed hierarchical recitation tasks precisely in line with the curriculum standard, corpus-based screening of high-frequency chunks, elaborately crafted multimodal input design, and theme-integrated unit-level recitation tasks. The overarching objective is to seamlessly transform mechanical memorization into creative output, thereby effectively promoting language internalization and transfer. This study not only furnishes valuable theoretical and practical insights for English writing pedagogy but also indicates potential future directions, such as technology-enabled applications and cross-cultural adaptation of recitation strategies.

Keywords: Innovative Teaching Strategies; Recitation Input; Second-language Acquisition; Senior High School English Writing.

1. Introduction

In language learning, the five core skills are "listening, speaking, reading, viewing, and writing." Among these, "listening, reading, and viewing" are categorized as receptive skills, while "speaking and writing" are productive skills. As a productive skill, writing complements receptive skills, enhancing students' language proficiency, logical thinking, expressive techniques, and cultural awareness, thereby laying the foundation for real-world communication. With advancements in technology and pedagogy, emerging teaching methods such as project-based writing and process writing have gained prominence. However, traditional approaches, particularly recitation input, are often criticized as equivalent to "rote memorization." On the other hand, senior high school students in China face persistent challenges in English writing, including monotonous expression, insufficient language proficiency, limited critical thinking, and frequent occurrences of Chinglish. To address these issues, revitalizing recitation input—through innovative formats, heightened engagement, and effective use of materials—can serve as a practical strategy to improve writing competence. This study explores three key questions: Does recitation input have a solid theoretical foundation in language learning? What specific roles does recitation input play in enhancing senior high school students' English writing abilities? How can recitation input be effectively applied in writing instruction to foster student progress? By integrating innovative language learning theories with traditional recitation practices, this research aims to provide new pedagogical insights for advancing students' writing skills and comprehensive language abilities, offering valuable references for English writing instruction.

2. Theoretical Foundations of Recitation Input

Cognitive psychology and second language acquisition (SLA) theories form the theoretical basis of recitation input. From the perspective of cognitive psychology, Skehan (1998) and Sinclair (1991) propose that language acquisition involves two complementary systems: a rule-based analytical system and a memory-dependent prefabricated chunk system. The former, while efficient for memorization and low in cognitive load, often leads to rigid or inaccurate expressions in real-time communication. The latter relies on stored lexical chunks (e.g., fixed expressions, common sentence patterns), which can be rapidly retrieved in communicative contexts to ensure accuracy, fluency, and naturalness in language output. Recitation input facilitates the transfer of language knowledge from short-term to long-term memory through repetition and reinforcement, forming a repertoire of formulaic expressions. These expressions reduce cognitive burden and enhance fluency and accuracy in both writing and speaking.

Krashen (1982), in his seminal study on the impact of recitation input on second language writing, established a theoretical framework supporting this pedagogical approach. His Input Hypothesis posits that language acquisition fundamentally relies on exposure to comprehensible input (i.e., language materials at the "i+1" level). Such input must meet two criteria: semantic accessibility aligned with learners' cognitive levels and sufficient contextual richness. Recitation systematically provides i+1 materials, enabling learners to internalize new linguistic structures through repeated reinforcement. Notably, Krashen's Monitor Hypothesis underscores the role of explicit grammatical knowledge in

monitoring output quality, effectively suppressing mother tongue interference and negative transfer (Deng & Wang, 2007). Furthermore, the repetitive nature of recitation aids in converting explicit knowledge into implicit knowledge, which is readily accessible for language use.

Piaget's (1969) Schema Theory further supports recitation input by emphasizing that learners enrich their cognitive frameworks through assimilation (integrating new knowledge into existing schemata) and accommodation (modifying schemata to fit new knowledge). Recitation activates and expands learners' language schemata by providing abundant comprehensible input, thereby promoting the internalization of linguistic knowledge and cognitive development. This theoretical foundation validates the effectiveness of recitation in language learning.

Regarding the cognitive processing of language input, Schmidt's (1990) Noticing Hypothesis and Ellis's (1995) Cognitive Model converge on a key principle: focused attention is essential for converting input into intake. A lack of directed attention disrupts the acquisition process. Recitation-based language learning strengthens sustained attentional focus, bridging the gap between mechanical memorization and autonomous application. It directs learners' attention to formal features of the target language while heightening awareness of discrepancies between intended and actual expressions. This process consolidates language input and improves output quality.

Bialystok's (1978) SLA model categorizes language knowledge into explicit and implicit systems. Explicit knowledge refers to consciously accessible rules (e.g., syntax, phonology) stored in working memory, while implicit knowledge involves subconscious, automatized processing of language rules through procedural memory formed by extensive practice. Although learners may struggle to articulate implicit knowledge, it enables natural and fluent language use, often termed "language sense." Bialystok's model suggests that the richness of implicit knowledge directly correlates with proficiency in the target language.

3. The Role of Recitation Input in Enhancing Senior High School Students' English Writing Competence

The positive impact of recitation input on students' writing abilities can be systematically explained through cognitive, affective, and language transfer perspectives, with its mechanisms manifested in the dynamic interaction of the following four dimensions.

3.1. Reducing Learning Anxiety and Increasing Writing Motivation

In second language acquisition (SLA), learners' personality traits, motivation, interests, emotional attitudes, and self-efficacy significantly influence language input and acquisition. According to Horwitz et al.'s (1986) Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Theory, anxiety primarily stems from self-doubt about language competence and fear of language output. As an effective learning strategy, recitation input significantly reduces anxiety in English writing. By memorizing model texts or high-frequency sentence patterns, students accumulate rich linguistic resources and discourse templates, thereby building confidence. For example, when teaching the "Stage and Screen" unit (from the Foreign Language Teaching and Research Press's Compulsory English 1), instructors guide students to analyze film review structures and recite exemplary texts. This practice reduces anxiety about review writing, lowers the "affective filter," and promotes the conversion of explicit knowledge (e.g., grammar rules) into implicit knowledge (e.g., intuitive language use). As students master the memorized content, their anxiety diminishes, fostering greater interest in writing.

3.2. Cultivating Language Sense and Reducing Chinglish

Recitation input strengthens exposure to authentic language, helping learners internalize English thinking patterns and develop "language sense." When students systematically recite texts with idiomatic expressions, their brains automatically deduce syntactic rules and collocations through statistical learning, a key mechanism in implicit language acquisition. Odlin's (1989) Language Transfer Theory explains that Chinglish arises from directly mapping Chinese structures onto English. Recitation enables learners to accumulate prefabricated chunks (e.g., "make a difference," "take...into consideration"), which can be directly retrieved during writing without word-for-word translation. Nattinger and DeCarrico's (1992) research on lexical chunks confirms that this approach significantly reduces negative transfer.

3.3. Improving Accuracy and Fluency

Recitation input systematically reinforces normative language forms and enhances retrieval efficiency, thereby improving writing accuracy and fluency. Anderson's (1993) Adaptive Control of Thought (ACT) theory posits that language learning involves converting declarative knowledge (e.g., vocabulary, grammar rules) into procedural skills through practice. By memorizing standardized sentence patterns (e.g., "It is undeniable that...") and discourse frameworks, students can swiftly access internalized language modules during writing, minimizing grammatical errors caused by on-the-spot sentence construction. For instance, precise memorization of passive voice ("The proposal was approved") or subjunctive mood ("If I were...") prevents tense misuse or structural confusion. Additionally, the "mental lexicon" formed through recitation reduces cognitive load, allowing students to focus on content logic and rhetorical refinement, thereby enhancing coherence.

3.4. Mitigating Negative Transfer from the Mother Tongue

Negative transfer refers to systematic interference caused by structural differences between Chinese and English, where learners apply Chinese syntactic rules or pragmatic logic to English expressions (Odlin, 1989). Common errors in students' writing include:

(1)Syntactic issues: Subject omission (e.g., "Very like this movie") or verb redundancy (e.g., "I very like reading books") due to Chinese paratactic features.

(2)Pragmatic issues: Literal translations (e.g., "People mountain people sea" for "It's overcrowded") stemming from cultural differences.

These errors reflect insufficient internalization of English norms, allowing Chinese cognitive frameworks to dominate output. Recitation input counteracts this by providing high-density exposure to target language models. According to Wen Qiufang's (2015) Production-Oriented Approach,

effective internalization of language forms requires ample high-quality input. Recitation achieves this by repeatedly exposing learners to standardized texts, reinforcing syntactic structures (e.g., subject-verb agreement, tense markers) and pragmatic norms (e.g., indirect requests). For example, memorizing complex sentences like "It is essential that we protect the environment" suppresses Chinese topic-prominent structures (e.g., "Protect environment is important"), while fixed expressions like "There is no denying that..." replace literal translations (e.g., "Have no way to deny..."). This input-driven cognitive restructuring gradually weakens the dominance of Chinese processing habits, facilitating deeper acquisition of English rules. Empirical studies confirm that systematic recitation training significantly reduces syntax errors caused by negative transfer and improves pragmatic appropriateness in cross-cultural contexts (Wen, 2015).

4. Innovative Application Strategies of Recitation Input in Senior High School English Writing Teaching

4.1. Discourse-Oriented Continuation Writing Collaborative Model

The integration of discourse input and continuation writing creates a dual "language-logic" scaffolding through recitation, forming a closed-loop system of input internalization and output transfer. Based on Halliday's Discourse Function Theory (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014), teachers can select texts with typical discourse features—such as the "claim-evidence-conclusion" structure in argumentative essays or the "setting-conflict-resolution" framework in narratives—as recitation materials. Students are guided to analyze cohesive devices (e.g., pronouns, conjunctions) and information progression (e.g., theme-rheme structures). For example, when reciting an essay on environmental protection, students not only memorize thesis statements like "It is undeniable that plastic pollution has reached an alarming level" but also analyze how transitions like "However, feasible solutions still exist" enhance logical coherence, thereby internalizing English discourse mechanisms.

In continuation writing tasks, recitation input transforms into "discourse imitation" and "creative tension." Wang Chuming's (2018) Continuation Theory emphasizes that continuation writing combines "content completion" and "language alignment," prompting students to utilize memorized language resources. A three-stage task chain can be designed:

(1)Discourse Deconstruction and Recitation: Students recite original texts while annotating discourse markers (e.g., causal connectives, reference chains).

(2)Scaffolded Continuation: Students complete a truncated text using memorized chunks to maintain stylistic consistency.

(3)Independent Creation: Students draft new texts on the same theme, applying internalized discourse rules.

Empirical studies show that this model reduces language errors by 27% and increases cohesive device usage by 43% in continuation tasks (Sui, 2023), confirming the feasibility and effectiveness of recitation input in writing instruction.

4.2. Discourse-Oriented Continuation Writing Collaborative Model

The General Senior High School English Curriculum Standard (2017 Edition) emphasizes language accumulation and sense cultivation through an "input-driven, output-facilitated" approach. Recitation input, as a key form of language input, should align with the four core competencies—language ability, cultural awareness, thinking quality, and learning capacity—by designing hierarchical, theme-based tasks.

For instance, the revised New Standard English textbook (FLTRP, 2021) adopts a thematic framework ("understanding-development-practice") to support recitation. In the "Cultural Heritage" unit (Compulsory Book 1), students recite culturally rich texts (e.g., "Preservation and Inheritance of Dunhuang Mogao Caves") to accumulate high-frequency chunks (e.g., "preserve cultural diversity," "enhance mutual understanding") while analyzing discourse logic to understand cultural value transmission. The teacher's guide recommends a phased recitation method:

(1)Initial Phase: Focus on memorizing lexical chunks (e.g., fixed collocations, transitional phrases).

(2)Intermediate Phase: Reinforce discourse structure replication (e.g., argument chains in essays).

(3)Advanced Phase: Integrate creative imitation tasks (e.g., reconstructing viewpoints based on original themes).

Zhang Lianzhong (2021), a contributor to the textbook revision, stresses that recitation materials should adhere to the "i+1" principle—slightly exceeding students' current proficiency but accessible through context. For example, the "Scientific Breakthroughs" unit (Selective Compulsory Book 2) introduces expository texts with complex syntax (e.g., "hypothesis validation," "quantitative analysis"), supported by mind maps to aid memory and schema construction.

4.3. Targeted Input: Corpus-Based Screening of High-Frequency Academic Chunks

Targeted Input is a pedagogical strategy in senior high school English writing instruction that centers on precisely identifying learners' linguistic needs. Its core objective is to address common issues such as fragmented logic, insufficient academic rigor, and Chinglish expressions by providing customized recitation materials tailored to students' weaknesses. These materials focus on high-frequency, high-value academic chunks. The theoretical foundation of this strategy lies in the integration of the Lexical Approach and Data-Driven Learning (DDL). Linguists Nattinger and DeCarrico (1992) argue that language is not merely a collection of isolated vocabulary and grammar rules but a system built on prefabricated chunks (e.g., fixed collocations, sentence frameworks, logical connectors). These chunks can be directly retrieved by learners, significantly reducing the cognitive load of real-time sentence construction while improving the accuracy and fluency of language output. Corpus-based Targeted Input further refines this concept by scientifically analyzing high-frequency academic chunks, pinpointing students' writing challenges, and offering data-driven support for designing recitation materials.

Taking logical coherence in academic writing as an example, Biber et al. (1999) analyzed large-scale academic English corpora and identified logical connectors (e.g., "however," "moreover") and data description patterns (e.g., "The data indicates that...") as critical elements for constructing rigorous arguments. For instance, "however" clarifies contrastive relationships between sentences, while "the data indicates that..." enhances the credibility of arguments through objective statements. However, senior high school students often struggle with logical leaps or vague

expressions due to a lack of systematic exposure to these chunks. By using corpus tools (e.g., COCA or BNC), teachers can screen high-frequency chunks related to specific themes and design targeted recitation tasks. In argumentative writing instruction, for example, teachers may require students to memorize sentences like “It is undeniable that...” or “Nevertheless, it should be noted that...”, alongside contextual analysis of their functions, to help students understand how chunks connect claims and evidence.

The implementation of Targeted Input must align closely with students’ actual writing challenges. Wang Chuming’s (2010) Length Approach provides a dynamic adjustment pathway. This approach encourages students to expose their linguistic weaknesses through extensive writing practice. Teachers then assign targeted recitation materials based on recurring errors (e.g., logical gaps, repetitive vocabulary, Chinglish). For instance, in an environmental essay assignment, one class overused “because” as the sole causal connector, resulting in monotonous structures. The teacher analyzed environmental-themed corpora to identify high-frequency logical terms (e.g., “due to,” “as a result”) and designed focused recitation tasks. Students were asked to imitate sentences like “The deterioration of ecosystems is primarily due to excessive industrialization” and replace “because” in subsequent drafts. After three weeks, the diversity of causal connectors used by students increased by 40%, with marked improvements in coherence.

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4.4. Multimodal Recitation Input: Constructing Multi-Dimensional Processing Pathways

Rooted in Krashen’s Input Hypothesis and Ellis’s Implicit Learning Theory, multimodal recitation integrates visual, auditory, and kinesthetic stimuli to strengthen input retention. Unlike traditional text-only recitation, this approach builds a "meaning-sensory-emotion" network. For example, in a "Wildlife Protection" unit:

(1)Visual Input: Students watch documentaries on endangered species, noting key vocabulary.

(2)Auditory Input: They mimic native pronunciations using audio clips.

(3)Kinesthetic Input: Role-playing activities internalize discourse structures.

Research by Xu Xiaodan (2021) demonstrates that multimodal tasks reduce errors by 27% and improve the use of advanced connectives (e.g., "Nevertheless," "In contrast"). This stems from cross-modal synergy: visual cues enhance semantic networks, auditory input improves phonological encoding, and dynamic contexts promote contextualized memory storage, forming an "input-internalization-output" cycle.

4.5. Macro-Unit Teaching: Thematic Integration and Systematic Recitation Design

Macro-unit teaching organizes language knowledge, skills, and cultural awareness around central themes, aligning with the curriculum’s "competency-oriented" goals. Wang Qiang (2020) advocates for theme-centric recitation materials (e.g., "Technology and Society") that systematically link academic chunks (e.g., "artificial intelligence," "ethical dilemma"). For instance, in an "Environmental Issues" unit, hierarchical recitation tasks integrate data description patterns, policy terminology, and argumentative excerpts to build a cohesive knowledge framework.

Theoretical Basis: Schema theory explains that learners integrate new knowledge into existing cognitive frameworks. Isolated memorization of vocabulary or sentences leads to fragmented knowledge, whereas theme-based recitation enables students to construct interconnected schemata for efficient retrieval during writing.

5. Conclusion

This study addresses the three core questions raised in the introduction regarding the application of recitation input in senior high school English writing instruction. First, by integrating cognitive psychology and second language acquisition (SLA) theories, the research confirms that recitation input has a solid theoretical foundation. The Input Hypothesis and Schema Theory elucidate the mechanisms of language acquisition, while the interplay between explicit and implicit knowledge explains how recitation facilitates language internalization. Second, at the practical level, recitation input significantly improves students’ writing competence by reducing anxiety, cultivating language sense, enhancing accuracy and fluency, and mitigating negative transfer from the mother tongue. Finally, the study proposes innovative strategies—such as discourse-oriented collaborative teaching, multimodal input pathways, and theme-integrated macro-unit design—to shift learners from rote memorization to creative output, promoting the internalization and transfer of language knowledge.

The originality of this research lies in its deep integration of theory and practice. On one hand, it transcends the mechanical limitations of traditional recitation by incorporating Discourse Function Theory, multimodal pedagogy, and corpus technology into recitation design. This strengthens the logicality, precision, and contextualization of language input. For instance, the collaborative continuation writing model builds an "input-internalization-output" closed loop, while multimodal tools activate multi-dimensional cognitive pathways, significantly improving the efficiency of language retrieval and application. On the other hand, guided by the General Senior High School English Curriculum Standard, the study develops a hierarchical, theme-based framework for recitation tasks, harmonizing language proficiency, cultural awareness, and critical thinking into a systematic solution for writing instruction under the new curriculum.

Despite these contributions, the study has limitations. First, as a non-empirical study, it lacks long-term classroom tracking to validate the sustained effectiveness of the proposed strategies. Future research should incorporate empirical data to test their applicability. Second, the exploration of technology integration remains preliminary. Advanced domains such as AI-powered personalized recitation systems and data-driven dynamic input adjustments require further investigation. Additionally, the study insufficiently addresses cross-cultural adaptations of recitation strategies—for example, how to tailor input materials for students from diverse cultural backgrounds. Future studies should focus on developing intelligent recitation tools and conducting cross-cultural comparisons to expand the global applicability of recitation input in education.

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