This study aims to explore how EFL learners store and represent formulaic sequences (FSs) in their mental lexicon from the aspect of phonological features. It is predicted that FSs ought to be relatively resistant to internal disfluency and inaccuracy, having fewer pauses and errors within formulaic strings, based on the holistic hypothesis of FSs (Wray, 2002, 2004). However, empirical research on phonological coherence of FSs in L2 speech is still scarce (see Lin, 2010) and the phonological features of FSs in the minds of less proficient EFL learners are yet largely unknown. Isobe (2012) conducted a reading aloud task on non-advanced Japanese learners of English, presenting three types of word strings (i.e., FSs, NonFSs, and ungrammatical sequences) out of context. The data revealed that FSs were processed significantly faster and more accurately than the counterparts in terms of reading latency, speech rate and error rate, indicating the possibility of their cohesive phonological representation in mind.

To further explore the holistic nature of FSs within context, the reading aloud task was administered in this study by using the FS-embedded and NonFS-embedded sentences. The results demonstrated that FSs were articulated with the faster speech rates with fewer pauses, suggesting phonological coherence of FSs in L2 mental lexicon.


Keywords: EFL learners, formulaic sequences, reading aloud, phonological coherence.