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International Education Institute

Exploring the Critical Listening Assessment Conundrum on Pre-Sessional EAP Programmes in Higher Education

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NAME OF SUPERVISOR: Dr Mark Carver_____

SUBMISSION DEADLINE: 12th August 2022_____

DATE SUBMITTED: 12th August 2022_____

DECLARATION

I hereby certify that this dissertation, which is 16478 words in length, has been composed by me, that it is the record of work carried out by me, it conforms to the University's GAP Policy, and that it has not been submitted in any previous application for a higher degree. This project was conducted by me at the University of St Andrews from February 2022 to August 2022 towards fulfilment of the requirements of the University of St Andrews for the degree of MSc TESOL with a Specialism in Assessment and Evaluation under the supervision of Dr Mark Carver.
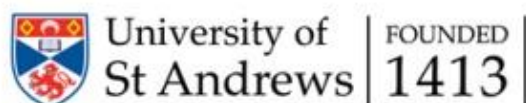
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Ethics Approval Form

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International Education Institute Ethics Committee

18 May 2022

Dear Peter

Thank you for submitting your ethical application which was considered at the School Ethics Committee meeting on 18 May 2022.

The International Education Institute Ethics Committee, acting on behalf of the University Teaching and Research Ethics Committee (UTREC), has approved this application:

Approval Code:	ET16226	Approved on:	18-May-2022	Approval Expiry:	18-May-2027
Project Title:	Exploring the Critical Listening Assessment Conundrum on Pre-Sessional EAP Programmes in Higher Education				
Researcher(s):	Peter Bannister				
Supervisor(s):	Mark Carver				

The following supporting documents are also acknowledged and approved:

1. Participant Information Sheet
2. Participant Consent Form
3. Participant Debrief
4. Questionnaire
5. Advertisements
6. Interview Questions

Approval is awarded for 5 years, see the approval expiry data above.

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International Education Institute Ethics Committee
Julie Smith
International Education Institute, University of St Andrews, Kinnessburn, Kennedy Gardens,
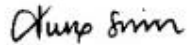St Andrews, KY16 9DJ
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Approval is given on the following conditions:
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  - the details provided in your ethical application
  - the University's Principles of Good Research Conduct
  - the conditions of any funding associated with your work
- that you obtain all applicable additional documents (see the 'additional documents' webpage for guidance) before research commences.

You should retain this approval letter with your study paperwork.

Yours sincerely,

Julie Smith

cc. Mark Carver

For the full compendium of documentation submitted as part of the Ethics Approval process, please refer to Appendix A of this dissertation.

Acknowledgements

First and foremost, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to my supervisor, Dr Mark Carver, who has kindly lent a critical ear throughout the dissertation process. The support, guidance and encouragement received have been invaluable at every turn.

A further word of thanks is for Dr Blair Matthews, who thoughtfully provided a wealth of information in response to my tentative enquiries into the assessment procedures and policies on the course he leads.

I am indebted to the intrepid members of the expert panel without whom the entire dissertation would not have been possible. Your enlightening contributions to this study, and hopefully to the wider field, have provided some much-needed clarity and excitingly illuminated additional avenues for future scholarly exploration.

Last, but by no means least, on a personal level, many thanks to my family and friends for their continued and unwavering support throughout.

Abstract

Critical listening is a key component of international student study success in Higher Education (Field, 2011). Going somewhat against their remit to help students '...to understand their disciplines, to establish their careers or to successfully navigate their learning' (Hyland, 2018, p. 383), the use of discreet-item listening comprehension tests on PSE courses has been found to fall short on many counts (Buck, 2001; Pearson, 2020). Critical listening assessment alternatives were sought in extant literature and professional guidance documentation (BALEAP, 2013; QAA, 2014) but no solace was found. This dissertation aspired to address these incongruences by elaborating an alternative assessment instrument, and so, the development of a critical listening assessment checklist prototype began.

Building on the wisdom-of-(expert)-crowds (Surowiecki, 2005), an exploratory international Delphi method was used as a means of idea building, expert opinion aggregation, and consensus consolidation on potential assessment criteria and analytical descriptors for the assessment checklist. This novel application of the mixed-methods approach in EAP combined three iterative Delphi questionnaire rounds and two interjacent online focus group sessions with a panel of five international experts. Numerical and narrative data were gathered and analysed using descriptive statistics and thematic analysis, respectively.

The Critical Listening Competency Assessment Checklist was the outcome of this process and achieved expert consensus (100%) on all counts. This prototype, and the ensuing elaboration of the original tentative practice-informed theoretical definition of applied doctoral critical listening competency, are further novel contributions which take a step towards addressing the ambiguities and gaps in both critical listening assessment extant literature and praxis.

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Glossary of Abbreviations

BALEAP   British Association of Lecturers in English for Academic Purposes

CLCAC   The Critical Listening Competency Assessment Checklist

EAP   English for Academic Purposes

HE   Higher Education

PSE   Pre-sessional English Programme

QAA   The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education

SELT   Secure English Language Test

UKVI   United Kingdom Visas and Immigration

1. Introduction

1.1. Rationale

1.1.1. Listening assessment in praxis and theory.

Results reporting of listening assessment yield highly concerning general tendencies of poor performance amongst test-takers of all demographic backgrounds. This occurs in both English language proficiency tests used for Higher Education admission (Taylor and Weir, 2012), such as IELTS, TOEFL, Pearson Academic, amongst others, and in general English proficiency assessments too, for instance, Cambridge Assessment English's Main Suite Examinations (Cambridge Assessment English, 2019).

Whilst such tests are usually elaborated based on scholarship-informed praxis in the development of test construct (ALTE, 2011), the prioritisation of certain properties, such as reliability or validity, over others, means that certain sacrifices need to be made in listening competency assessment. Thereby, to satisfy the requirements of UKVI (Government of the United Kingdom, 2022), other priorities, such as the assessment of critical listening competency, have a far less prominent role, and may subsequently become more ambiguous in the overall balance of the test construct. Nevertheless, the consequential validity of these test constructs means that current and well-established assessment procedures ought to be subject to critical examination.

Scholars, such as Field (2008), point to a potential link between these unfortunate trends and an overall pessimistic disposition amongst test-takers and tutors towards the skill altogether. This may go some way to account for the comparatively limited amount of listening comprehension instruction academic literature (Rost, 2016) and the finite quantity of

listening assessment publications which becomes continuously more limited as the thematic specificity sharpens. He and Jiang's (2020) research synthesis is an informative work which summarises recent listening assessment research publications. However, even here, there are no papers referenced which specifically address certain areas of importance, such as critical listening competency assessment. This lack of scholarly discussion is remarkable given the importance afforded to critical listening within the sphere of academia (Field, 2011).

1.1.2. Academic listening assessment concerns.

A case in point would undoubtedly be the scenario of a high stakes EAP pre-sessional course in HE, in which syllabus designers are tasked with furnishing a cohort of international students with opportunities to learn the linguistic and academic skills pertaining to the requirements of their future academic contexts (de Chazal, 2014; MacDiarmid et al., 2021). Current listening assessment praxis, forged through the prism of assessment of learning, as many authors, such as Field (2019) and Goh and Vandergrift (2022), are keen to point out, has several shortcomings which do little to appease the rather unenthusiastic sentiment held of what is taken to be a legitimate reflection of test-taker academic listening competence on which university entrance decisions are generally made.

One additional concern of note here is the lack of authenticity in current testing approaches in relation to the students' future academic contexts which tend to rely on the administration of a repertoire of comprehension questions upon listening to an academic text (Alexander et al., 2008; Bruce, 2011). Whilst little fault may be found in the genre of the text usually provided (Goh & Vandergrift, 2022), students are normally required to demonstrate comprehension almost immediately without the possibility of being able to reflect on what

has been said, make the necessary connections to previous knowledge, or even being given the opportunity to autonomously and asynchronously investigate concepts in greater depth, as would be expected having attended a lecture of a module on their chosen programme of study (Rodgers & Webb, 2016).

In addition to this, there are other shortcomings which test-takers may come across in one-off summative assessment. For example, test-taking anxiety or other extenuating circumstances which may have a negative impact on performance and could be detrimental given the high stakes nature of the assessment in question (Stobart, 2008). Moreover, the assessment itself may not be fit for purpose, as it is rather a test of the limits and constraints of working memory, note-taking skills, or even of reading comprehension rather than of listening competence (Buck, 2001). This would once again seemingly point to the discernible necessity of establishing alternative assessment arrangements particularly for the skill of academic listening in this context.

The issues raised thus far in the subsection may be defined as symptoms of a broader incongruency, that is, the lack of constructive alignment (Biggs & Tang, 2011) between the use of discreet-item listening tests and PSE programme learning outcomes forged out of future study context needs. Critical listening competency assessment is one of those such important future needs (Floyd & Clements, 2005) which falls victim to this. In light of this, and the lack of scholarly discussion highlighted previously, critical listening assessment in PSE English for Academic Purposes HE programmes was defined as the research problem to be addressed throughout this dissertation.

1.2. Research Aims

The concerning gap highlighted between the importance given to critical listening proficiency in HE, and the lack of alignment with this in gatekeeper assessment procedures for international students is explored here. Further fuelled by ambiguities, disparities, and gaps in praxis and in scholarly literature, addressed in detail in later chapters, this study aims to explore this by creating an alternative assessment instrument to evaluate international student critical listening competency. To that end, the creation of a notional critical listening competency assessment checklist protype is pursued as a means of addressing this critical listening assessment conundrum on pre-sessional EAP programmes in Higher Education.

1.2.1. Pedagogical setting.

A doctoral pre-sessional programme at a UK university was selected as the practical didactic context in which to ground the dissertation. This 4-week course is held for full-time and visiting PhD scholarship holders prior to the commencement of their doctoral studies at the university. The focus is threefold: an introduction to doctoral-level study; an induction to the University; and research and communication skills. Aspirant participants are required to hold a minimum of IELTS 6.0 in each skill and a score of 6.5 overall to be considered for admission.

Having exchanged correspondence with the course leader, it was confirmed that the main emphasis is on the development of productive skills, i.e. academic speaking, and writing (B. Matthews, personal communication, May 12, 2022). Competency in these skills is evaluated using assessment checklists considering the degree of evidence observed demonstrated in relation to a series of analytical descriptors. The concept of critical listening is not explicitly referred to in these or assessed according to the course leader (B. Matthews, personal

communication, May 12, 2022). Nevertheless, it is apparent that in the analytical criteria used to evaluate academic speaking that criticality and critical engagement are assessed implicitly. This is once again in line with the limited role of explicit critical listening assessment in current praxis and scholarship.

1.3. Dissertation Overview

Building on the rationale and contextualisation of the research problem, the following chapters expand on the issues alluded to here and aim to cumulatively broach the titular research conundrum. In Chapter Two, the findings of the literature review are presented and the recurring themes of lack of explicit clarity and discussion on critical listening and critical listening assessment are highlighted together with the inadequacies of current assessment praxis. Assessment rubrics are discussed as a plausible alternative assessment mechanism, however, the challenges associated with their use are also contemplated.

Developing the concluding remarks on the need to elicit knowledge and establish expert consensus in the research focus section of the preceding chapter, Chapter Three presents a methodological overview of the exploratory international modified Delphi study used to address the RQs with the philosophical and paradigmatic assumptions underpinning this. The results from the practical implementation of the research design presented in Chapter Three, are reported in Chapter Four with reference at each stage to the consequent contribution to the elaboration of the assessment checklist. The presentation of the final iteration of the novel Critical Listening Competency Assessment Checklist rounds off the chapter.

Chapter Five critically analyses the results which are then considered in terms of their applicability, empirical and theoretical credibility, novelty, and breadth of impact. The limitations are presented, and suggested future lines of investigation conclude the chapter. Chapter Six draws the study to a close and an overall summary of findings in relation to RQs is presented together with concluding remarks, and a final reflection.

2. Literature Review

This literature review visits the key tenets that constitute the theoretical contextualisation of the dissertation. Scholarly works of note were reviewed and curated to illustrate both the state-of-the-art within the field and the gaps therein. In other words, the lines of this chapter establish the theoretical framework that underpins the scholarly exploration addressed in the following chapters.

Firstly, key cognitive theoretical frameworks of relevance to the conceptualisation of academic listening are presented. The titular critical listening assessment conundrum is then addressed with reference to the ambiguities and lack of discussion in both practice and the extant literature. The research focus and rationale of eliciting expert domain-specific knowledge and expert consensus to address these disparities, and, thus, determine an operationally viable definition of critical listening proficiency with assessment criteria and descriptors are then explored in the concluding section of the chapter.

2.1. Academic Listening

The definition and nature of academic listening is broached from differing perspectives, and the following key comprehension processing theoretical frameworks were selected given their significant relevance to the project.

2.1.1. Field's (2013) Cognitive Process Listening Model.

Field's (2013) cognitive processing framework serves as one of the key theoretical foundations through which the construct of academic listening is conceived in the dissertation. The following figure illustrates the cognitive processes theorised by Field (2013):

Figure 1

Cognitive Process Framework of Listening Processes (adapted from Field, 2013)
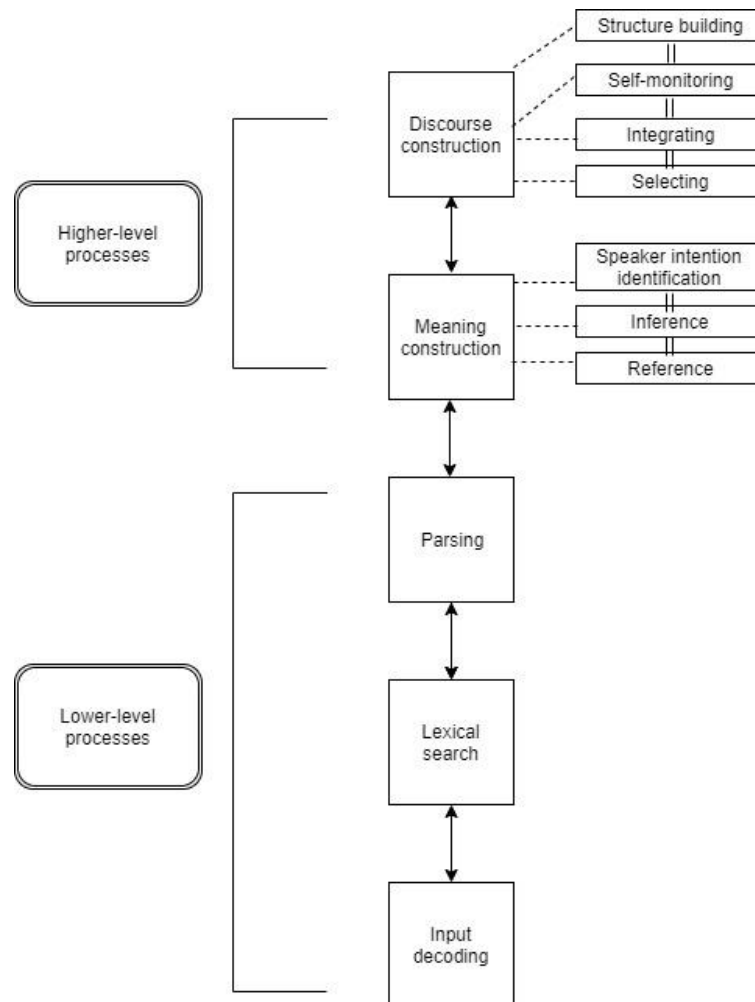
Field (2013) stipulates that the first three processes, input decoding, lexical search, and parsing, constitute lower-level listening processes that occur whilst a listener decodes an aural message. The higher-level processes, meaning and discourse construction, occur afterwards when the decoded message is complemented with semantic and pragmatic information to identify speaker intention and context (Field, 2011). At this stage, listeners arguably critically engage with the message through a process of selection based on an assessment of its relevance in relation to previous points and the central topic, to then

integrate and relate it to the discourse representation based on conceptual association (Field, 2013). Self-monitoring affords the listener a further opportunity to formulate a critical stance and to question whether the judgement call from the previous process is valid (Field, 2013). Finally, criticality is also present in the final process in which a proficient listener evaluates and prioritises the information to provide a coherent organisation of the overall discourse (Field, 2011).

This theoretical framework is advantageous here, as it considers both individual learner attributes and the connection between a listener and a given listening task (Rost, 2016). Moreover, key characteristics specific to an academic setting, such as higher-level processes that competent L2 listeners employ for success (Rukthong, 2013), are addressed. It may therefore be suggested that criticality, and thus critical listening, is an inherently fundamental and implicit component of L2 academic listening proficiency.

2.1.2. Khalifa and Weir's (2009) Cognitive Processing in Reading.

The multimodal nature of academic listening entails engaging other cognitive processes simultaneously, for example, reading slides or taking notes whilst listening. Khalifa and Weir's (2009) Cognitive Processing in Reading framework is a further model which is of significance here. The conceptualisation proposed by the authors is presented in Figure 2 below:

Figure 2

Cognitive Processing in Reading (Khalifa & Weir, 2009, p. 43)
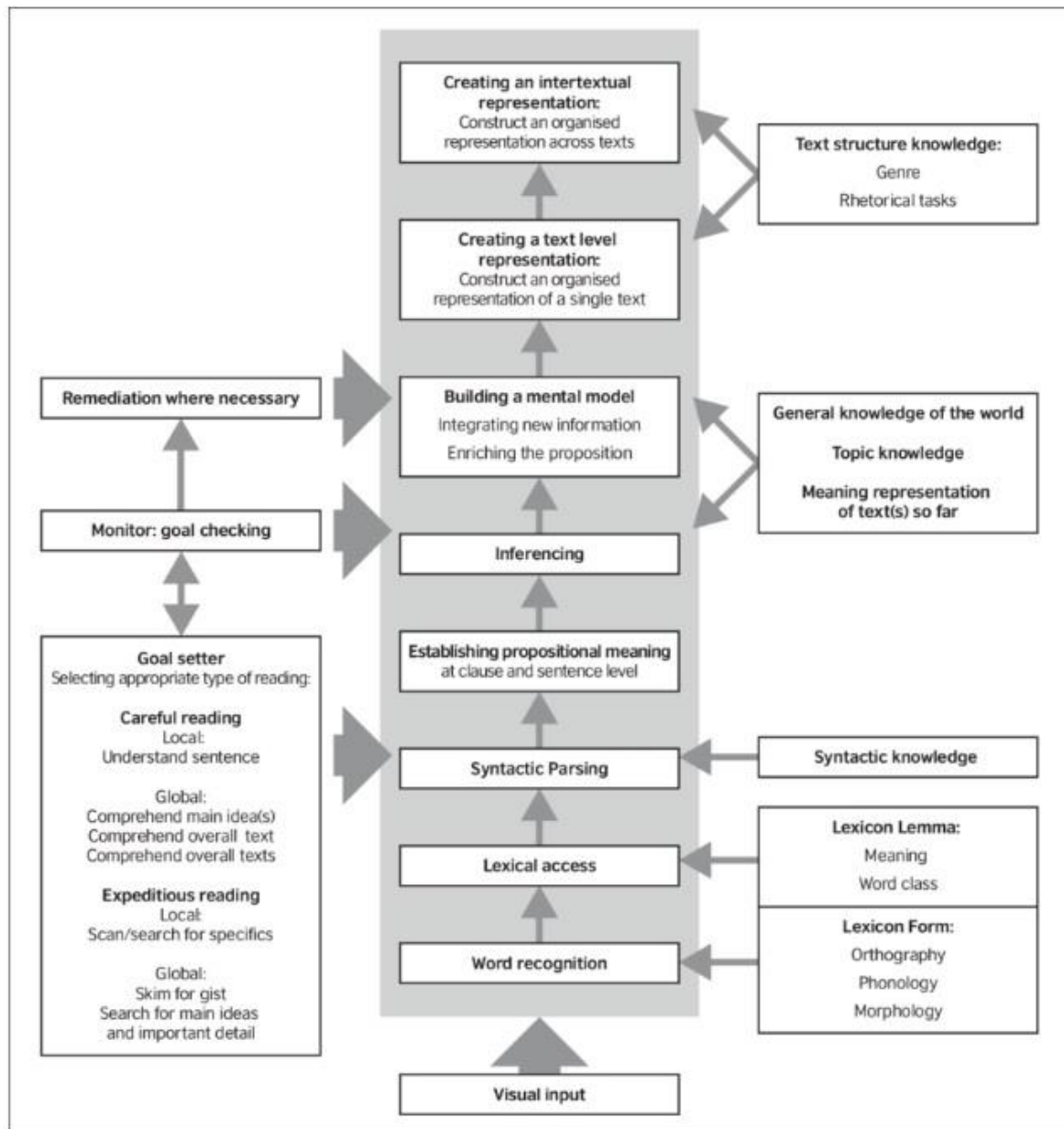
Whilst on first inspection, this comprehension processing model might seem more complex than the Field (2013) conceptualisation, there are notable similarities between the operationalisation of the cognitive processes in both frameworks, as is illustrated in Table 1:

Table 1

Correlation of Listening and Reading Cognitive Processes

Cognitive Process Framework of Listening Processes (Field, 2013)	Cognitive Processing in Reading (adapted from Bax, 2013)
Discourse construction (structure building; self-monitoring; integrating; selecting)	Text level representation and intertextual representation creation
Meaning construction (speaker intention identification; inference; reference)	Propositional meaning, inferencing, and building a mental model (integration of new information and enriching the proposition)
Parsing	Syntactic parsing
Lexical search	Lexis (word matching; synonym and word class matching)
Input decoding	Visual input

The significant correlations here suggest that when such frameworks are used in conjunction a more comprehensive overview of the complexity of academic listening can be gleaned. However, outliers here are the processes of integration of new information, intertextuality and remediation pertaining to the latter stages of the Khalifa and Weir (2009) conceptualisation. These three cognitive processes, which may be additional potential indicators of criticality, are revisited in later chapters.

2.1.3. Aryadoust et al.'s (2012) L2 Academic Listening Model.

Building on the importance afforded to the cognitive dimension seen thus far, Aryadoust et al.'s (2012) L2 Academic Listening Model complements the others and expands on the overarching complexity of academic listening in greater depth by introducing other key

components such as memory and concentration, relating input to other materials, and lecture

structure, as is illustrated in Figure 3:

Figure 3

L2 Academic Listening Model (adapted from Aryadoust et al., 2012, as cited in Ellialti & Batur,

2021, p. 21)
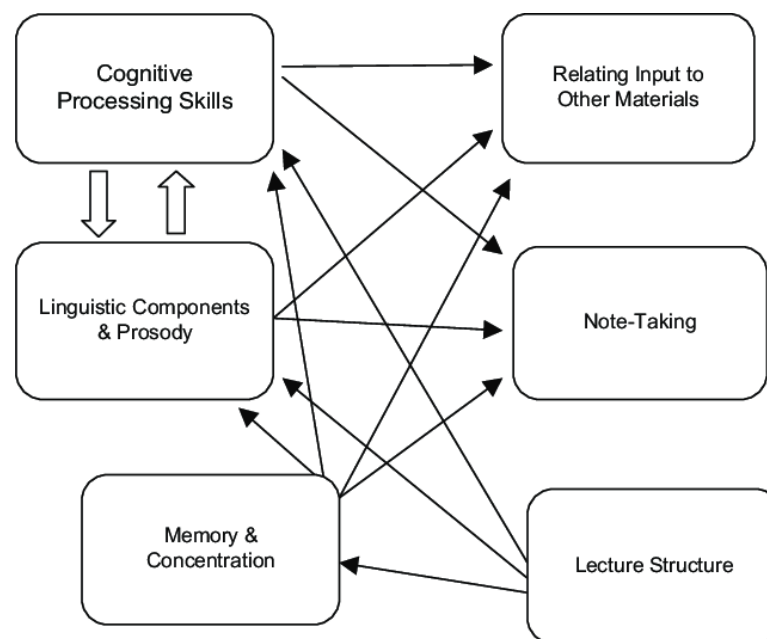
This comprehension processing model captures an additional dimension of academic

listening, that is, the multifaceted nature of the concept, by including several distinct but

interconnected subskills. The scholars identify cognitive processing skills and linguistic

components and prosody, commonly known as higher- and lower-order listening abilities,

respectively, as the two main elements of general listening ability. These are both seen as

being crucial to academic listening (Aryadoust et al., 2012).

In juxtaposition to Field (2013), the model also highlights the listener's personal qualities, such as language proficiency, as well as the external contextual elements, such as discourse structure, that are related to academic listening. In contrast to Young's (1994) Lecture Structure Model, which theorised the macro-structures and micro-features of lecture discourse, this framework recognises the interaction between the listener and the listening skills required in various contexts, emphasising the active role of the academic listener during the process (Aryadoust et al., 2012).

Such an emphasis overcomes the misconception of academic listeners as passive conduits (Siegel, 2014), and seemingly reaffirms the importance of student criticality in the process. The interaction between the listener and the academic text affords the opportunity to formulate a critical stance, relate the information to prior knowledge, and use the full array of higher order thinking skills during the process, thus underlining the link between critical listening and deeper approaches to learning (Entwistle, 2018) in HE.

These key comprehension processing theoretical models and subsequent discussions are revisited in the Discussion chapter and provide significant contextualisation to the dissertation's findings.

2.2. Academic Listening Assessment and Higher Education

2.2.1. The discreet-item listening test.

English language proficiency tests are one of the key requirements for university admission and compliance with UKVI (Government of the United Kingdom, 2022). The consequential validity of high-stakes tests is of importance (Bachman & Palmer, 2010) and reiterates the

gatekeeper characterisation such examinations have received (Bachman & Purpura, 2008). Considering this, and given the vital role of critical listening skills in academia, a cross-section of the listening tests of SELT and non-SELT exams used for university admission is included for reference, with information adapted from BALEAP (2021) and Kang et al. (2016), in Appendix B.

From the data, remarkably, despite constituting one of the key admissions pathways for UK HE study, many proficiency tests do not assess the full complement of subskills and higher order thinking skills associated with critical listening. For instance, LanguageCert has limited in scope to assess a test-taker's higher-level listening skills and in particular critical listening competency assessment. The term 'critical listening' was not found in the sources consulted and highlights the need for expert clarification in terms of the subskills pertaining to critical listening competency.

This also limits the ability to determine the validity of the diverse test constructs. On all counts, greater focus could be given to the assessment of critical listening proficiency, given its magnitude in international students' future programmes of study. Nevertheless, even though educators would like this to be prioritised, critical listening subskills probably were sacrificed in favour of serving other purposes, perhaps such as reliability, in the overall balance of the test construct. This is a compromise that has prioritised satisfying UKVI requirements (Government of the United Kingdom, 2022) over the assessment of critical listening proficiency.

2.2.2.   Pre-sessional EAP programme assessment praxis.

A pre-sessional English course constitutes a further HE entrance pathway for international students. Such courses notably afford opportunities for the development and assessment of academic listening and other skills (de Chazal, 2014; Ding & Bruce, 2017; MacDiarmid et al., 2021). The requirements of a student's future academic context are prioritised and developed over a given period (Green, 2007), as opposed to, as Wagner (2022) notes, the narrow scope of proficiency examinations referred to in the previous section.

Nevertheless, many programmes still elect a final discreet-point summative listening examination (Flowerdew & Miller, 2012), not entirely dissimilar to the SELT and non-SELT proficiency tests used for university entrance, as one of the principal assessment mechanisms to gauge student academic listening competency (Alexander et al., 2008; Bruce, 2011). Whilst this might appear to be an apparent disregard for calls for academic listening assessment alternatives from the past decades (e.g. Powers, 1986; Flowerdew, 1994; Jeon, 2007; Rost, 2016; amongst others), as Wrigglesworth (2019, p. 24) points out, such decisions may in fact result from the 'considerable investment of time and resources' the creation of assessment alternatives would need.

An additional salient concern is the lack of authenticity (MacDonald et al., 2000) of traditional testing approaches in relation to the students' future academic contexts. Thereby, in the disciplines, students are not required to answer comprehension questions immediately after a lecture. Comprehension is required to be demonstrated by other means (Field, 2011). Whilst little fault is found in the genre of the text usually provided (Taylor & Geranpayeh, 2011), students are normally required to demonstrate comprehension almost immediately without employing higher order thinking skills (Baghaei et al., 2020), to make connections to

previous knowledge (Batova, 2013), or even to autonomously and asynchronously investigate concepts in greater depth both prior to and after the listening event, as would be expected on their chosen programme of study (Rodgers & Webb, 2016).

There are other shortcomings of note, for example, testwiseness and test-taking anxiety (Winke & Lim, 2011) or other extenuating circumstances that may challenge test validity, which could be detrimental given the high stakes nature of the assessment (Stobart, 2008). Moreover, the assessment itself might not be fit for purpose (Papageorgiou et al., 2021), thereby, it might be more of a test of the limits and constraints of working memory (Kheirzadeh, 2016), note-taking skills (Carrell, 2007), or even of reading comprehension rather than of academic listening competence (Buck, 2001). This again indicates the discernible necessity of exploring alternative academic listening assessment arrangements here.

Despite many EAP departments' efforts to ensure the implementation of constructive alignment (Biggs & Tang, 2011) in PSE course design, work may still need to be done regarding the teaching and assessment of academic listening skills. The conclusions reached thus far are seemingly in line with those penned by Pearson (2020) that highlighted several studies (e.g. Atherton, 2006; Allwright & Nanerjee, 1997; Lloyd-Jones et al., 2012, as cited in Pearson, 2020) which outlined that not all PSE graduates go on to achieve the academic success that these courses intend to prepare them for. Thus, these findings arguably question the validity and reliability of summative academic listening discreet-item proficiency exams and appear to suggest that, in their current guise, they do not fully test all the requirements of the students' future academic contexts.

A similar instance of lacking constructive alignment (Loughlin, et al., 2021) between educator-preferred critical listening competency and assessment procedures was identified in reference to English proficiency tests earlier in the chapter. On both counts, this can be attributed to the prioritisation of UKVI-established visa requirements over the expertise of both EAP practitioners (Sheppard et al., 2015) and discipline lecturers (Ferris & Tagg, 1996) whose documented positions are examined in the following section. This difference becomes more acute if the notably high pass rates on PSE courses (Pearson, 2020) are contemplated.

This may be symptomatic of the mounting financial pressures from the wider, and notably more hegemonically capitalistic, sections of academic institutions to facilitate ever-increasing lucrative international student access to the UK HE system (Ding & Bruce, 2017). This is in line with the well-documented thesis of the commodification of higher education (Shumar, 1997), which conceptualises university as a corporate marketplace driven by the practices of production and commodity (Naido & Jamieson, 2005). In other words, the guarantee of a degree certificate at graduation, in return for (international) student financial investments, has a disenfranchising impact on assessment. The analogy can arguably be drawn between this, and gold medals being indiscriminately awarded to all participants in a race, with no precise means of distinguishing between those who were able to complete it from those who weren't. In this model of education, the consumer is subject to a conceptualisation of HE which is not only transactionally dehumanised (Yao & Viggiano) but also potentially contrary to critical discernment development (Moore, 2016). This line of argument is revisited in the Discussion chapter.

2.3. Defining Future Academic Needs

The premise referred to is in juxtaposition to EAP practitioners' commitment to focus on a student's future study needs by helping them '…to understand their disciplines, to establish their careers or to successfully navigate their learning' (Hyland, 2018, p. 383). In the following lines, the conceptualisation of future student needs from both EAP practitioner and subject matter lecturers' perspectives are addressed. This is of relevance due to the contrast illustrated between the lack of alignment between current gatekeeper English proficiency assessment procedures accepted for UK HE entrance, on the one hand, and the key linguistic and academic skills international students need for study success, on the other.

2.3.1. BALEAP.

The British Association of Lectures of English for Academic Purposes (BALEAP) is a professional membership organisation which 'supports the development of those involved in learning, teaching, scholarship, and research in English for Academic Purposes (EAP)' (BALEAP, n.d.). The organisation has produced professional reference documents that outline future academic student needs and how best to prepare them for these, such as, the Competency Framework for Teachers of English for Academic Purposes (BALEAP, 2016). Here the role of fostering criticality amongst HE PSE students is one of the key competencies for practitioners (BALEAP, 2016). Furthermore, how this competency can be evidenced through classroom practice is indicated below in Table 2:

Table 2
Student Critical Thinking (BALEAP, 2016, p. 20)

Knowledge and understanding of-	Ability to-	Possible indicators-
how critical thinking underpins academic practice

the elements of critical thinking

critical approaches to knowledge to enable its evaluation and expansion | make links between critical thinking and study competence explicit for students

provide opportunities and stimulus for critical thinking in sequences of learning activities | show students' development incrementally across time through syllabus/tasks/lesson plans/ materials

demonstrate that syllabus/materials/ assessment contain knowledge transforming tasks and activities

show how students review and evaluate their own learning aims/ materials/ activities/ assessment in terms of usefulness for future study |

The Can Do Framework for EAP Syllabus Design and Assessment (BALEAP, 2013) builds on this by operationalising tacit knowledge to inform practice by tabularising a limited range of international student competencies from the perspective of discipline lecturers. In relation to academic listening skills, further limited contributions can be found:

L1.1 Adopt critical stance to information provided in lectures

L1.2 Use lecture extension materials to support understanding

L1.3 Cope with different lecturing styles

L1.4 Recognise allusions to recent events (UK/Euro-centric) (p. 20)

In sum, although the development and assessment of student critical thinking and critical listening competency are notionally referred to in these key professional guidance

documents, these do not take full stock of the nature of critical listening skills in sufficient depth.

2.3.2. Graduateness.

One further measure of the future academic needs of graduating PSE cohorts is the concept of 'graduateness', which also 'should be recognised as the basis of employability' (Rust & Froud, 2016, p. 1) and lifelong learning (Barrie, 2006). Graduate attributes are 'skills academics want, regardless of discipline- analytical, evaluative, deductive, critical thinking, problem solving, communication, etc…' (Rust & Froud, 2016, p. 1). Individual HE institutions have crafted frameworks to inform academic development amongst students, and in a seminal work on the matter, Wong et al. (2021) mapped the contributions of 137 universities in this regard.

Whilst critical listening is again not expressly referenced in their findings, the following observation arguably goes some way to address this: 'Jones (2009a, 2009b)…found that discipline-specific interpretations and meanings for the same attribute (e.g. 'critical thinking') are not always the same (Wong et al., 2021, p. 1341) and is supported by the sole scholarly work found of its practical application in a PSE context (Wrigglesworth, 2019). Despite this additional evident ambiguity, the 'critical engagement in the context of academic research' which involves 'evaluating evidence, making use of appropriate processes and resources', 'contributing new knowledge or ideas', and 'forming conclusions and recommendations' referred to in Wong et al. (2021, p. 1349), is confirmatory of the need to foster and assess critical listening skills amongst PSE students.

This again demonstrates an acknowledgement of the importance of critical listening proficiency evaluation procedures as part of a PSE course assessment diet. Nevertheless, both concurrently and problematically, there is a lack of terminological clarity and consensus on a comprehensive list of graduate attributes which could be used to evidence and assess critical listening competency.

Despite this, the concept of 'graduateness' adds to the previous conception of critical listening proficiency by explicitly enumerating subskills, such as evidence evaluation and forming conclusions, which were not previously found in the BALEAP professional documentation reviewed. This contribution therefore elucidates additional key components of critical listening proficiency but is again not tantamount to the full picture.

2.3.3. QAA postgraduate benchmarking statements.

The Frameworks for Higher Education Qualifications of UK Degree-Awarding Bodies penned by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (2014), goes some way to triangulate findings from BALEAP and the Wong et al. (2021) mapping of graduate attributes. Thereby, critical listening skills are implicitly referred to by policy makers and little lineage is dedicated to the nature and the scope of such skills.

Nonetheless, implicit references are found across all qualification descriptors- from FHEQ levels 4 to 8 and examples of additional critical listening subskills are present on subject benchmarking documents (e.g. the copious examples in the Subject Benchmark Statement for Philosophy (QAA, 2019)). The disperse nature of such examples appears to highlight a

recognition of critical skill proficiency importance at all levels of HE. However, the ambiguity here in terms of the full array of assessable skills and attributes continues to be a limitation.

The ability to reason autonomously and reinterpret ideas considering evidence from other sources (QAA, 2019) are examples of further subskills associated with critical listening competency. These add to the contributions identified from the BALEAP documentation and those from the scholarly literature on 'graduateness'. Nonetheless, the prevailing ambiguity here does little to encapsulate a comprehensive definition of critical listening proficiency and is in line with the lack of clarity across the range of key professional documentation consulted.

2.4. Critical Listening in Extant Literature

The L2 Academic Listening theoretical frameworks and the analysis of the professional guidance documentation has yielded implicit allusions to critical listening proficiency on which a partial definition has been deducted and inferred. Building on this, attention now turns to the existing body of scholarly literature in pursuit of additional missing pieces to try to complete the puzzle.

Despite the finite quantity of literature available, relevant contributions can still be found. For instance, Imhof's (2004) understanding of critical listening as a two-stage process in which information is selected, organised, and integrated before the listener then actively engages with, interprets, analyses, and evaluates the message, supporting the notion of interaction advocated by Lam (2014). Traditionally, other definitions have also highlighted the implicit subjectivity in the latter stage of making value judgements (Tutulo, 1975; Feyten, 1991; Floyd & Clements, 2005). Nonetheless, Thompson et al.'s (2004, p. 43) definition somewhat differs

by describing it as 'the ability to (1) recognize patterns, (2) compare and contrast new information with prior knowledge while comprehending, and (3) re-evaluate prior knowledge in light of new information'.

Building on this, the more recent work of Ferrari-Bridgers, Vogel, and Lynch (2017) provides a more comprehensive offering:

> 'a listener's critical ability to (a) recognize patterns, (b) compare and contrast new information with prior knowledge while comprehending, (c) re-evaluate prior knowledge in light of new information, and (d) evaluate the content of a message (i) for adhering to specific patterns and structural requirements that constitute the message itself and (ii) for its completeness and accuracy, such as its lack of faults, illogicality, and omission of critical components' (Ferrari-Bridgers, 2020, p. 10).

Although empirical validation for this definition was attempted, the authors themselves concede that despite the positive findings, the limited sample size of the study, as opposed to a statistically more significant figure, is a limiting factor (Brysbaert, 2019).

The findings presented in this section are arguably complementary to, and build on, those offered in the previous section from the professional praxis documentation consulted. Nonetheless, the contributions thus far continue to offer a partial representation of critical listening competency, which is not ideal if international students on a PSE course are to be assessed on this. To develop a full array of effective assessment criteria and analytical descriptors, expert consensus on this ought to be sought in this study.

2.5. Assessment Checklists and Rubrics

Although there is a similarly finite quantity of cognate studies that address the use of assessment checklists and rubrics in the field of English for Academic Purposes, Banerjee & Wall (2006) did indeed pen a notable publication that holds certain parallels. The resulting exit assessment checklists do contemplate both academic productive and receptive skills, however, once again, there is no reference to critical listening competency. The limited range of subskills listed for listening do not appear to indicate that critical listening competency is contemplated either. This reiterates the gap here and provides additional justification to this research study in its pursuit to develop an assessment checklist to evaluate critical listening proficiency in line with future student academic needs.

Quintessentially, assessment checklists identify the specific elements of a given student competency which require evaluation. These are then used to determine the degree to which evidence for each of the descriptors is observed and can be used as powerful tools to facilitate student learning in HE (Shohamy, 2001; Bearman & Ajjawi, 2021). Sadler (2013) illustrates this point eloquently and emphasises that rubrics may be a potential catalyst for 'productive dialogues' (2010, p. 537) as part of a bid to reconceptualise feedback in HE. However, the timing of their use is instrumental in operationalising this dialogue, for instance, as is the case with the pedagogical setting chosen to ground this study, exit assessment checklists offer very little margin for dialogic engagement with PSE tutors and act almost as a sort of handover document for the students' doctoral supervisors to address. Some authors (Brindley, 1989; Brown & Abeywickrama, 2010) also note the limited capacity to reflect the full spectrum of

achievement, particularly in this context (Douglas, 2000). However, as Broad (2003) posits, they still can provide a foundation for more detailed analytical rubrics or performance lists.

Analytic rubrics, in turn, allow for more detailed evaluation of student proficiency- the work of scholars at the University of Virginia, in particular Palmer et al. (2017), is most informative on rubric creation. Rubrics can also facilitate the provision for greater specificity in the feedback offered to learners (Carless, 2015). Certain components may be afforded greater weighting than others, reflecting relative importance of certain practices (Boud, 2010), which is advantageous and can enable positive washback in the context of a PSE course. Furthermore, this stance is concurrent with current academic debate surrounding the theoretical principles of Legitimation Code Theory which advocates 'revealing 'rules of the game' for achievement and bases of cumulative knowledge-building across different kinds of practices' (Maton, 2016, p. 18).

2.5.1. Limitations.

Nonetheless, there are constraints here, for instance, Fulcher (2010, p. 209), states 'the main problem with multiple trait rating scales is that raters are highly likely to suffer from the halo effect'. This concept, identified by Thorndike (1920), refers to 'a rater's cognitive bias, where the judgement of a rating criterion is influenced by that of related other rating criteria of test taker's performance' (Kim, 2020, p. 1). This phenomenon is not exclusive to EAP assessment, and as Malouff et al. (2014) concluded, it is present in subjective assessment in a range of disciplines in HE.

Whilst numerous scholars advocate the use of rubrics to assess student productive and receptive competencies in the context of EAP (Sabbaghan et al., 2019; Machili et al., 2020; Hamp-Lyons, 2022), the characterisation as 'myths' of the viability of using them to achieve transparency and transparency neutrality in HE assessment cannot be ignored (Bearman & Ajjawi, 2018). Academic assessment criteria in rubrics are described by Bloxham & Boyd (2012, p. 617) as being 'continuously co-constructed by academic communities and ferociously difficult to explain to a lay audience', thus emphasising they are social constructs which struggle to explicitly capture the holistic tacit knowledge that they seek to assess (Orr, 2007; Sadler, 2009; Bloxham et al. 2016). This stance suggests that whilst a rubric might help to evaluate international student critical listening competency, they may pose challenges in practice. These challenges may also go some way to explain the lack of consensus in practice and limited scholarly discussion on critical listening proficiency assessment alternatives development.

Furthermore, Tummons (2014) notes an additional disparity in the purported neutrality of transparent assessment criteria, whereby the application and interpretation of criteria are, to a certain extent, subjective for both assessor and student who are informed by their respective 'frames of reference' (Bearman & Ajjawi, 2018, p. 3). Bloxham et al. (2011) highlight an added challenge to the supposed transparency neutrality of such assessment tools in practice. They observed instances of a total disregard of published assessment criteria or 'the use of implicit standards' not available to students (p. 664). However, Orr (2010) does not disparage the innate subjectivity in the application of assessment checklists and rubrics, but rather acknowledges 'an interrelationship and co-dependency between the subjective and the objective' (p. 22), which is inherent to assessor connoisseurship. This indicates that,

despite challenges related to the use of rubrics and assessment checklists in assessment, they are, nonetheless, still a potentially valuable assessment instrument, particularly in scaling up and supporting novice markers and temporary PSE tutors often found in this context, that, with the according assessment criteria and analytical descriptors, can address the titular critical listening assessment conundrum.

2.6. Research Focus

To address the scholarly and practical gaps and ambiguities highlighted, the creation of a critical listening competency assessment checklist prototype is proposed. The impetus for this is for its notional use to evaluate critical listening competency amongst international students on the UK doctoral PSE course in which this study is grounded. To achieve this several key issues need to be addressed.

Firstly, the ambiguity previously identified concerning the nature of critical listening itself ought to be clarified with a definition being validated based on expert consensus. From this operational definition, the key components of critical listening competency could then be identified and used as the basis for the creation of assessment criteria, i.e. areas of student performance that could be quantified or measured to determine a degree of proficiency.

Furthermore, to facilitate the work of an assessor, a series of descriptors could be developed for each of the assessment criteria. Considering the ambiguities, incongruencies, and gaps identified in both extant literature and practice, the problem stated here cannot be addressed through descriptive or causal primary or secondary research, but rather an exploratory

methodological approach is needed which facilitates knowledge building and expert consensus to address the research problem and pertaining research questions.

2.6.1. Research questions.

Considering the above, the following research questions (RQs) were established:

- RQ1: What expert consensus can be reached on the identification and conceptualisation of criteria for assessing critical listening competency on a doctoral pre-sessional course?

- RQ2: How would EAP Assessment experts concordantly theorise and delineate analytical critical listening proficiency descriptors for a notional assessment checklist to be used with international doctoral PSE students?

The exploratory methodology chosen to address the RQs is the Delphi method (Linstone & Turoff, 2002) as it stimulates the elicitation of the knowledge and expert consensus that has found to be lacking thus far. This technique was selected to establish best practice (Beech, 2001) and therefore, contribute to the existing body of knowledge as a result of expert consensus (Marques & de Freitas, 2018). Epistemologically, the generalisability of such expertise affords certain concurrent validity (Bogner & Menz, 2009) and reliability (Cuhls, 2005) to evidence. This is thanks to expert domain-specific knowledge (Green, 2014) that can address the lack of theoretical and practical consensus identified throughout this section. In the following chapter, further particulars of the methodology and its practical application are addressed.

3. Methodology

Building on the theoretical tenets and conclusions of the literature review, the following lines set out the particulars of the methodology and methods used in this study. After examining the nature of the Delphi method and potential issues that may affect validity and reliability, the research design is described. Data collection procedures and a rationale are provided with reference to steps taken to address the possible issues of concern.

Sample size, and participant selection and recruitment together with the pertaining inclusion and exclusion criteria are then addressed. Before presenting the data analysis procedures used, the key issue of the definition of consensus employed in this study is clarified. Finally, the philosophical and paradigmatic assumptions underpinning the research design are discussed to justify and provide additional context for the methodological choices taken

3.1. The Delphi Method

The Delphi technique is an established research method that seeks to establish consensus by eliciting expert knowledge through several rounds of iterative questionnaires. Round after round, this knowledge building exercise offers a structured and focalised means of collecting data, which allows participants to express their opinion and then to review and reflect on all responses from previous rounds and consequently reposition their opinions accordingly (Scheibe et al., 2002). Given the resounding lack of consensus outlined in the previous chapter and, as per Ambrosiadu and Goulis (1999), this technique was chosen to explore RQ1 and RQ2 by achieving expert consensus on the definition of assessment criteria and analytical descriptors of a notional assessment checklist to evaluate critical listening proficiency of international doctoral students on a UK PSE course.

Here an exploratory international modified Delphi study, following an integrated mixed-methods approach, was used, which combined rounds of iterative questionnaire completion with focus group sessions to discuss results and inform item creation of subsequent rounds. This variant has been employed widely in a range of disciplines, particularly in the field of Health Sciences, as is reflected in the provenance of numerous publications cited in this chapter. Nevertheless, there is precedent for its use in the field of HE (e.g. Mirata et al. 2020, amongst others), however, studies that have applied the Delphi methodology within the field of EAP have not been localisable at the time of writing.

There are, however, saliant disadvantages to the technique, such as the high levels of attrition between rounds which may severely impact the validity and reliability of results (Gargon et al., 2019). Some scholars attribute this, to the impracticalities of the time commitment needed to complete several comprehensive questionnaires whilst also attending other commitments (Williams & Webb, 1994). Furthermore, as Chan (2022) notes, there is a paralleled inconvenience for researchers due to the elevated questionnaire response time allowance. Moreover, others note that the highly structured nature of the questions do not allow informants to fully elaborate their views and important data might not be captured (Goodman, 1987).

3.2. Research Design

3.2.1. Data collection.

Numerical and narrative data were gathered asynchronously and synchronously during three rounds of iterative Delphi questionnaires and two focus group sessions, which took place

between Delphi rounds I and II, and II and III, respectively. Throughout, a general-to-specific approach was used to allow experts to opine in increasing depth, as is represented in the progressively specific combination of closed and open-ended questions used throughout the process (Dörnyei, 2003). A Likert scale was not employed to avoid an expression of a value judgement from informants as opposed to consensus or lack thereof. Data collection took place online using questionnaires on Microsoft Forms and focus group sessions to discuss feedback on Microsoft Teams.

Afterwards, participants were contacted individually by email and were provided with a Participant Debrief Form. Both are included in Appendix C for reference.

A general overview of the research design is provided in Figure 4 below:

Figure 4

Research Design Structure

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┌─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐    ┌──────┐
│                    Preliminary Preparation Phase                    │    │ A    │
│                                                                     │    │ s    │
│                         Literature Review                           │    │ y    │
│                    Panel Recruitment and Formation                  │    │ n    │
├─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┤    │ c    │
│                  Stage 1: Delphi Round I Questionnaire               │    │ h    │
│                                                                     │    │ r    │
│ Asynchronous completion of open-ended survey on Microsoft Forms to  │    │ o    │
│ generate ideas and freely respond on the definition of critical     │    │ n    │
│ listening.                                                          │    │ o    │
│                                                                     │    │ u    │
│                                                                     │    │ s    │
├─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┤    └──────┘
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Preliminary Preparation Phase

Literature Review
Panel Recruitment and Formation

Stage 1: Delphi Round I Questionnaire

Asynchronous completion of open-ended survey on Microsoft Forms to generate ideas and freely respond on the definition of critical listening.

Stage 2 Phase 1: Focus Group I

Synchronous online session to discuss feedback on responses collected from Delphi Round I Questionnaire.

Stage 2 Phase 2: Response Analysis

Analysis of participant responses and development of survey statements and questions.

Stage 2 Phase 3: Delphi Round II Questionnaire

Synchronous online completion on Microsoft Forms to gauge expert consensus on analytical assessment criteria delineation and define descriptors.

Stage 2 Phase 4: Focus Group II

Synchronous online session to discuss feedback on responses collected from Delphi Round II Questionnaire.

Stage 2 Phase 5: Response Analysis

Analysis of participant responses and development of survey statements and questions.

Stage 2 Phase 6: Delphi Round III Questionnaire

Synchronous online completion on Microsoft Forms to quantify expert consensus on analytical assessment criteria and descriptors for notional assessment checklist of critical listening competency.

Stage 2 Phase 7: Response Analysis

Post data collection analysis of participant responses to determine in which analytical assessment criteria and descriptors expert consensus has been reached.

Asynchronous — *Synchronous two-hour live session*

3.2.2. Rationale.

This mixed-methods approach was chosen, in line with the wisdom-of-crowds effect (Surowiecki, 2005), to address the RQs, because the collective opinion of a group is more valid and reliable than that of an individual, and arguably even more so if the group is composed of experts. In this case, alignment is found between the Delphi technique and the wisdom-of-crowds extant scholarly works, thereby the independence of decision making (Westrate et al., 2019) is reflected in the partial anonymity of questionnaire response and the decentralisation of the process (Santonen & Kaivo-oja, 2022), thus the researcher acts as a

facilitator throughout the process. Finally, the research design allows for empirical aggregation as respondent data inform the increasing specificity in the formulation of consequent iterative questions and the final consensus is the result of the statistically significant amalgamation of the data from participants (Jorm, 2015).

The impetus for this integrated mixed-methods research design does not only stem from the affordance to congregate expert opinion on critical listening assessment, but also from the way in which the constraints outlined previously, which may negatively impact the validity and reliability of results, are addressed. To deal with the potential risk of high levels of attrition during the study, perhaps due to the elevated time commitment required, a live online two-hour synchronous session in which the subsequent rounds and focus group sessions were completed to optimise available time. This was significant because the time investment and waiting time between rounds were exponentially reduced.

Nonetheless, in the first stage, participants completed the initial open-ended survey asynchronously and had seven days to do this. The open-ended and general nature of the questions here acted as a springboard or foundation which generated knowledge that was refined throughout the consequent phases. Even though this does not reduce the time investment, the potential benefit of facilitating a wider range of more in-depth responses at this key stage outweighed the drawbacks.

The focus group sessions were included to allow for greater in-depth discussion to occur and thus provide respondents with greater opportunities to elaborate on opinions given. Partial anonymity was given as each participant's contributions in the three rounds were

pseudonymised. Nevertheless, the participants' involvement in the live focus group sessions and subsequent lack of anonymity amongst themselves may potentially affect the validity of the data. This, in fact, might go some way to address the lack of accountability and the risk of 'snap judgements' (Goodman, 1987; Sackman, 1974, as cited in Fletcher & Marchildon, 2014) associated with participant anonymity in other studies using the methodology.

3.2.3.   Ethics approval.

This study was granted Ethics Approval by the University of St Andrews International Education Institute School Ethics Committee on 18th May 2022, the letter for which can be found in the first pages of this dissertation. For reference, the Ethics Approval application form is included in Appendix A.

3.2.4.   Population.

3.2.4.1.   Selection and recruitment.

A stratified sample of education experts were actively recruited to join the study directly by email and were provided with the Participant Information Sheet- both are included for reference in Appendix D. In the invitation, potential respondents were also invited to respond to the asynchronous online Round 1 Delphi questionnaire even if they were not able to attend the synchronous online live session. Given the open-ended nature of the initial round, it was determined that this may facilitate the inclusion of an even wider range of expert opinions and enrich the data collection process at this key stage.

3.2.4.1.1.   Inclusion and exclusion criteria.

As mentioned in the previous chapter, the expert domain-specific knowledge of the participants affords both concurrent validity and reliability to results (Green, 2014), which offer a means to address the gaps and ambiguities on critical listening proficiency assessment. Thus, as Beiderbeck et al. (2021, p. 11) state, 'it is rather not about the representativeness of a population but the identification and inclusion of the highest-level expertise in the panel'. In this study, an expert, albeit somewhat difficult to define precisely (Jorm, 2015), was conceptualised based on three core components: knowledge, experience, and ability to influence policy (Baker et al., 2006). The criteria developed to inform the selection and recruitment process are presented in Table 3:

Table 3

Summary of Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

	Inclusion Criteria	Exclusion Criteria
Knowledge	-Holds or is working towards a PhD qualification in a subject related to EAP, Assessment, or another cognate discipline. -Has a compendium of research publications broadly related to the topic of the research study. -Has an excellent understanding of academic (and critical) listening pedagogy and assessment.	-Does not hold the required minimum qualifications equivalent to TEFL-Q status as stipulated by British Council (2018). -Has never published research related to the subject matter of the study. -Does not have knowledge of academic (and critical) listening pedagogy and assessment.
Experience	-Possess a minimum of six years teaching experience in HE. -Has worked extensively with postgraduate international students	-Has no or limited HE teaching experience. -Does not have or has limited experience with postgraduate international students in

	in EAP HE Programmes such as pre-sessional courses.	EAP HE Programmes such as a pre-sessional course.
Policy influence	-Holds a position of responsibility and contributes to the pedagogical output within a HE department. -Has previously contributed to the design of assessment policy.	-Does not make any contribution towards the development of assessment policy within professional context.

3.2.4.2.   Sample size.

An attempt was made to recruit a wide range and number of participants, not as much in the hope of achieving statistical power, which is seemingly not commonplace in such studies (Okoli & Pawlowski, 2004; Slade et al., 2014), but rather to reflect the diversity of international expert voice within the wider field of EAP. Whilst the methodological literature is somewhat ambiguous on a desired minimum number of respondents (Lilja et al., 2011), Thangaratinam & Redman (2005) stipulate that the figure usually ranges between 4 and 300 participants. However, given the temporal limitations and constraints in scope of the present study, the expectation for participant recruitment was placed towards the lower end of this scale. In addition to the practical amenity of this, scholarly support is found in the work of Akins et al. (2005), who conclude that stability of results in a Delphi study may be achieved with a much-reduced number of panellists.

3.2.5.   Defining consensus.

The precedent set for the definition of consensus varies broadly in studies which use the Delphi technique, meaning that there is no widely-accepted statistically significant threshold to default to. Nonetheless, Diamond et al. (2014) in their systematic review, suggest that

there are tendencies to establish consensus at 75 or 80%. In the present study, > 80% was used as the benchmark to determine that consensus was achieved amongst the expert panellists.

3.2.6. Data analysis.

Responses from the expert panel were analysed pseudonymously and were afforded equal weighting in each round. SSPS Statistics (version 28.0) was used to subject numerical data from responses to close-ended questions to numerical analysis using descriptive statistics to establish the degree of consensus amongst participants. The results were then used to inform question creation in subsequent Delphi rounds and to spark discussion in the focus group sessions.

The open-ended questions in surveys and focus group sessions yielded significant narrative data which was analysed using thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2012). This data analysis method lends itself to the research focus, as the in-depth narrative data gathered were used to elaborate the notional critical listening proficiency assessment checklist based on the key aspects and patterns identified and the connections between them. After some reflexive familiarisation with the data, codes were generated and applied iteratively, and overarching themes generated (Braun et al., 2019). These were also then used to inform the development of the questions of the subsequent Delphi questionnaire rounds and to facilitate discussion in the focus group sessions.

3.2.7. Triangulation.

The multi-faceted nature of this exploratory international modified Delphi study does not only provide greater validity and reliability but also yields diverse data sets for analysis. These sets of numerical and narrative data were subjected to data triangulation. Thereby, the empirical data yielded from the numerical analysis of closed question responses in the Delphi questionnaires, carried out using descriptive statistics, were compared throughout the research process with the narrative data obtained from the open-ended questions of the Delphi surveys and both focus group sessions. This was so as this process of triangulation allows for a broader and more in-depth understanding of the given phenomenon under investigation (Rothbauer, 2008).

3.2.8. Philosophical and paradigmatic assumptions.

The work of Plowright (2011) was instrumental here on several counts. Firstly, he emphasises that the understanding of a phenomenon stems from combining both numerical and narrative data in the collection and analysis stages of investigation. In this study, this approach had a certain appeal, considering the substantive lack of discussion and ambiguity identified in the literature and practice, which may be addressed by the complementation of the objectivity of the numerical data with the subjectivity of the narrative data to elicit knowledge.

Furthermore, in line with the exploratory nature of the project, Plowright's (2011) work is significant in his argument for defining a suitable methodology to address the research problem prior to reflecting on underpinning epistemological and ontological assumptions. This approach inherent to integrated mixed-methods methodology and the Frameworks for an Integrated Methodology (FraIM) was used here to inform the conception of the research design. Having addressed the methodology used, the focus now turns to the philosophical

and paradigmatic underpinnings of the study and an in-depth reflection on this is pursued later in the Discussion chapter.

Despite claims of a lack of epistemological basis for the DELPHI technique (Niederberger & Spranger, 2020), the nature of the numerical data collection and analysis procedures of this study favours epistemological essentialism (Vásquez Barba, 2017). Moreover, there is alignment between the aim of the study to provide clarity to the abundant ambiguity highlighted and this assumption, i.e. aspiring to discover 'the true nature or essence' (Barnett, 2009, p. 210) of critical listening competency by reducing it to its constituent parts to inform the creation of an assessment checklist.

This approach in isolation is akin to the classic Delphi methodology (Mitroff & Turoff, 2002). Had it been employed independently here, it would have set the study within a positivist paradigm, which is also supported by the objective and non-intrusive stance of the researcher as observer (Park et al., 2020) who uses empirical data to establish consensus (Alharahsheh & Pius, 2020). However, that is not the case. The decision to employ an exploratory international modified Delphi study was in part motivated by the social constructivist assumption held of, what Gergen (2001, p. 117) refers to as, 'the demise of knowledge as individual possession'.

Shedding further light on this, Brady (2015) claims that the technique favours the interpretative paradigm. The anticipated expert consensus is not solely an essentialist or intrinsic quantifiable phenomenon that exists in isolation but rather results from group interactions and interpretations of experiences, attitudes, and beliefs (Stangor, 2022). In

accordance with social constructivism (Feng, 2016), the ontological assumption is made that multiple realities exist (Andrews, 2012), and meaning is constructed and negotiated due to social interaction with others. This highlights an exogenous conception of knowledge (Perry, 2005), meaning that final expert consensus is an expression of panellist internal representations informed by environmental inputs (Gergen, 1995). The inclusion of focus group sessions to discuss feedback between the Delphi questionnaire rounds also supports this and are additional opportunities for meaning construction and negotiation to occur.

However, this paradigmatic positioning is the polar opposite to that discussed previously. This arguably does little to address the numerical data collection and analysis procedures presented in the earlier discussion which are also a key component of the research design. Nevertheless, Creswell and Plano Clark (2011) provide some welcomed direction here by signposting the pragmatic paradigm and its ontological assumption of a single objective reality which co-exists alongside multiple realities that can be investigated. Further alignment here is found in the social constructivist epistemological assumption which favours the construction and negotiation of knowledge in a social environment.

More support for this is found in the research design itself. Thereby, each participant was able to contribute using their own knowledge, experiences, and beliefs, and the numerical data generated from this were used to establish the degree of consensus in each round of the Delphi questionnaire. However, as respondents participated in each of the ensuing survey rounds and focus group sessions, they had the opportunity to change their position and respond to feedback. This negotiation and construction of knowledge and consequent consensus consolidation facilitated by further structured interpretation and interaction

(Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017) were captured in the numerical and narrative data collected and analysed.

Thus, the internal representations or the interpretations of multiple realities, manifested in the expert consensus, have arguably been shaped through interaction and input from other participants during all stages. In addition to objectively delineating the nature of critical listening proficiency by reducing it to its constituent parts that are represented as assessment criteria and analytical descriptors. This confirms the epistemological and ontological assumptions outlined previously and further validates the alignment of the integrated-mixed methods study with the pragmatic paradigm underpinning the research design.

In this section, the research design employed in the study was presented with reference to the data collection and data analysis procedures. The rationale, outlining potential issues of concern validity and reliability and how these are dealt with, and the underpinning philosophical and paradigmatic assumptions were also discussed. Building on this, the following chapter presents the numerical and narrative results yielded from the practical implementation of the chosen integrated mixed-methods approach.

4. Results

In this section, the results of the research investigation are provided, which illustrate the evolution of the critical listening competency assessment checklist. Details of the conformation of the expert panel open the chapter and are followed by the numerical and narrative analyses of data gathered from the Delphi Round I Questionnaire and the consequent contribution to the elaboration of the critical listening competency assessment checklist.

The narrative findings from the ensuing discussion amongst expert panel members in Focus Group I yielded from the thematic analysis are then presented with information on the impact of these on the creation of the assessment checklist. The empirical consensus data analysis of results and the key narrative themes from the Delphi Round II Questionnaire are then addressed together with the contribution to the development of the assessment criteria and analytical descriptors of the assessment checklist.

The narrative findings from Focus Group II and how these were used in the refinement of the next iteration of the assessment criteria and analytical descriptors of the checklist are reported. The numerical data on the expert consensus of the criteria and descriptors used, with the results of the thematic analysis of data from Delphi Round III Questionnaire, are detailed. The chapter concludes with the presentation of the final iteration of the Critical Listening Competency Checklist created as a cumulative outcome of the results of the differing stages and phases of the study.

4.1. Expert Panel Conformation

The selection and recruitment process yielded numerous international experts (n=6) who consented to participating in the study. Of these, 5 participants agreed to completing the asynchronous and synchronous stages and 1 participant was only able to complete the asynchronous stage of the study.

One invited participant who declined to participate, offered to participate in an interview with the researcher, however, the availability for this fell outside the established timeline for the project, thus this line of investigation will be pursued in future research projects.

A total of 21 email invitations were sent directly to potential participants who met the inclusion criteria stipulated in the previous chapter. The final panel originated from four different countries and either hold or are working towards a PhD in a discipline relating to a subject matter of the study. The participants have extensive international student HE teaching and scholarship experience and have made contributions in research and to assessment policies within the HE contexts in which they work.

4.2. Delphi Round I Questionnaire

This asynchronous questionnaire was completed by 6 participants (100%) on Microsoft Forms. The survey is included in Appendix E for reference and the numerically pseudonymised raw data collected are included for reference in Appendix F.

4.2.1. Agreement on Established Critical Listening Definitions.

The panellists were asked to review three divergent definitions of critical listening competency from the extant literature (Wuryaningrum et al., 2022; Thompson et al., 2004, as cited in Ferrari-Bridgers et al., 2015; Duker, 1962). All definitions can be found together with the questionnaire in Appendix E for reference. 3 (50%) of the participants agreed with the Wuryaningham et al. (2022) definition of critical listening competency. 4 participants (66%) agreed with the Thompson (2004, as cited in Ferrari-Bridgers et al., 2015) definition and only 2 participants (33%) agreed with the Duke (1962) definition. Thus, expert consensus was not found to converge around any of the three definitions on critical listening competency taken from the limited scholarly literature, as none of the definitions met the established > 80% threshold.

4.2.2. Narrative analysis of critical listening definition construction.

The respondents were then asked to construct their own definition of critical listening competency to highlight key areas which could be used as the basis for assessment criteria development with possible descriptors for these to begin to address RQ1 and RQ2 respectively. From their open-ended responses, 18 codes were identified and organised into 16 themes by the researcher. Key themes included: source accuracy and credibility evaluation, development of individual stance, identification of speaker stance, integration and remediation and prior knowledge and intertextuality. The key theme of difficulty in analytical descriptor definition was saliant. The results of the thematic analysis are available in Appendix G.

4.2.3. Consequent contribution to elaboration of critical listening assessment checklist.

The key themes identified in this early stage of the study went some way to address RQ1, thereby the data gathered acted as the initial basis for the identification and conceptualisation of the assessment criteria for the assessment checklist. These were then raised in Focus Group I and put to the expert panel for discussion, revision, and modification.

4.3. Focus Group I

The online synchronous focus group session was conducted with 5 participants (83.33%) on Microsoft Teams with the aim of discussing feedback from the Delphi Round I Questionnaire. The pseudonymised transcript is available in Appendix H.

4.3.1. Narrative analysis of Delphi Round I Questionnaire key themes agreement.

After brief introductions and a warmer, the expert panel engaged in focus group discussions with periodic interventions from the researcher as moderator to encourage interaction amongst all parties and widen the scope of discussions as appropriate. In the discussion of feedback from the Delphi Round I Questionnaire, 15 codes were generated and were organised into 5 key themes by the researcher, which addressed RQ1 and were triangulated with the data collected in the Delphi Round I Questionnaire. The key themes identified were prior knowledge, credibility and accuracy evaluation, remediation and integration, speaker stance and student stance. The results of the thematic analysis are available in Appendix I.

4.3.2. Consequent contribution to elaboration of critical listening assessment checklist.

The triangulation of data gathered thus far formed the refined foundations on which the assessment criteria for the critical listening checklist were established. During this process, knowledge was elicited from panellists to review the results and suggest modifications and

clarifications. For instance, attention was given to the criteria terminology, such as the appropriacy of the use of 'stance' in academia and how this would apply across disciplines which are founded on objectivity and the use of empirical evidence. A similar modification was suggested to rename the assessment criteria 'accuracy and credibility evaluation' to 'reliability evaluation' to reflect the full scope of the criterion.

A more extended discussion dealt with not only the terminology of the 'prior knowledge' criterion, but also the plausibility in assessment of this if it solely refers to declarative knowledge. Despite the detailed discussion, at this stage the expert panel were unable to identify and reach consensus on a more appropriate alternative terminology and pin down the scope and remit of the criterion. In the consequent elaboration of the Delphi Round II Questionnaire, the wording of the assessment criteria was maintained and, in line with RQ2, analytical descriptors were elicited to provide a further opportunity for knowledge building. The discussion of the terminology itself was revisited in the Focus Group II discussions.

4.4. Delphi Round II Questionnaire

Informed by the results of the Delphi Round I Questionnaire and the triangulation with the data obtained from Focus Group I, the Delphi Round II Questionnaire sought to seek consensus on the assessment criteria and facilitate idea building amongst the expert panel on the analytical descriptors. 5 participants (83.33%) completed this. The survey is included in Appendix J for reference and the numerically pseudonymised raw data collected are included for reference in Appendix K.

4.4.1. Agreement on critical listening competency assessment criteria.

Addressing RQ1, 100% of respondents expressed agreement with the assessment criteria of 'remediation and integration', surpassing the 80% benchmark established to denote consensus. The change of name from 'stance' to 'position' and from 'accuracy and credibility evaluation' to 'reliability evaluation', considering the data from Focus Group I, also achieved approval from 100% of the expert panel. However, only 40% of the expert panel expressed agreement with the conceptualisation of the assessment criteria of 'prior knowledge and intertextuality', meaning consensus was not reached on this.

4.4.2. Narrative analysis of critical listening competency descriptors.

The open-ended questions aimed to elicit knowledge to inform the elaboration of analytical descriptors pertaining to the assessment criteria on which consensus was reached, in line with RQ2. In the thematic analysis 19 codes were identified and organised into 5 themes by the researcher. Of these, 18 codes related to descriptors which correlated with the revised assessment criteria from Focus Group I and are presented below in Table 4:

Table 4

Key Themes from Delphi Round II Questionnaire in relation to Critical Listening Competency Assessment Criteria

Assessment Criterion	Analytical Descriptors
Position	Justification of Stance
	Use of Evaluative Language
	Originality of contribution

	Identification sections of speech representative of speaker stance
	Evaluation of language used by the speaker
	Value judgement of nature of speaker's message
Prior Knowledge	Identification of nuance and meaning in context
	Compare and contrast information
	Analysis of relationship between new information and previous knowledge
	Relate to other sources covered on course
Reliability Evaluation	Accuracy
	Currency
	Purpose and Bias
	Authority
	Reliability
Remediation and Integration	Summarising
	Paraphrasing

	Synthesising

1 further code related to the inadequacy of the conceptualisation of the assessment criteria of 'prior knowledge and intertextuality' as was highlighted in the numerical analysis referred to in the previous section. The thematic analysis results are available in Appendix L.

4.4.3. Consequent contribution to elaboration of critical listening assessment checklist.

The confirmatory expert consensus on assessment criteria identification and conceptualisation, as per RQ1, lead to the definitive establishment of the following assessment criteria at this stage: 'position', 'reliability evaluation' and 'remediation and integrating'. Notably, this took stock of the proposed changes in terminology from 'stance' to 'position' and 'source credibility and accuracy' to 'reliability evaluation'. The outlier here, was the lack of consensus on the conceptualisation and terminology of the 'prior knowledge and intertextuality' criterion. This criterion returned for further discussion in Focus Group II.

Moreover, this round, in accordance with RQ2, yielded a series of preliminary analytical descriptors for the assessment criteria which were then taken to the expert panel in Focus Group II for subsequent discussion, modification and refinement. This occurred despite the difficulty of the task highlighted as a key theme from the Delphi Round I Questionnaire.

4.5. Focus Group II

This online synchronous focus group session was again conducted with 5 participants (83.33%) on Microsoft Teams with the aim of discussing feedback from the Delphi Round II Questionnaire. The pseudonymised transcript is available in Appendix M.

4.5.1. Narrative analysis of Delphi Round II Questionnaire key themes agreement.

In the discussions lead by the expert panel with sporadic interventions by the researcher as moderator, the results from the Delphi Round II Questionnaire were reviewed, and refinements were negotiated. 10 codes were generated and organised into 4 themes by the researcher. Addressing both RQ1 and RQ2, the key themes identified were 'schema and pragmatic competence' replaced 'prior knowledge' as assessment criterion, 'position' criterion and descriptor clarification, 'reliability evaluation' criterion and descriptor evaluation, and 'remediation and integration' criterion and descriptor clarification. The results of the thematic analysis are included for reference in Appendix N.

4.5.2. Consequent contribution to elaboration of critical listening assessment checklist.

The triangulation of the data gathered from Delphi Round II Questionnaire during the Focus Group II discussions and the key themes identified offered another opportunity to examine the key assessment criteria and the descriptors proposed. Each of the assessment criteria was reviewed and the experts examined the descriptors generated from the previous round. Consequently, consensus was reached on 'position', 'reliability evaluation' and 'remediation and integration', although some minor modifications in the wording of analytical descriptors were suggested and implemented.

Much attention was given to the 'prior knowledge' criterion, as per the discussions in Focus Group I. However, expert panellists were able to refine the remit of the criterion, which one of the participants summarised as assessing three key elements of student critical listening competency: 'thematic knowledge, linguistic competence, and pragmatic competence'. The

descriptors suggested in Delphi Round II were revised and from the negotiations amongst the expert panellists, 'schema and pragmatic competence' was identified as a more appropriate term for the assessment criterion. In sum, the adjustments discussed were implemented and informed the final iteration of the assessment checklist which was presented to the expert panel in the Delphi Round III Questionnaire.

4.6. Delphi Round III Questionnaire

The data gathered previously were triangulated and used to inform the elaboration of the Delphi Round III Questionnaire which aimed to gauge the level of expert consensus on the refined assessment criteria and modified analytical descriptors. 5 participants (83.33%) completed this. The survey is included in Appendix O for reference and the numerically pseudonymised raw data collected are included for reference in Appendix P.

4.6.1. Agreement on final critical listening competency assessment checklist.

In this final round, as per RQ1, expert consensus was achieved, as all 5 participants (100%) fully favoured both the identification and conceptualisation of 'position', 'schema and pragmatic competence', 'reliability evaluation', and 'remediation and integration' as the definitive assessment criteria for the critical listening competency assessment checklist. The refined analytical descriptors, in accordance with RQ2, were also agreed to by 100% of the expert panellists, also signifying that consensus was reached.

4.6.2. Narrative analysis of final critical listening competency assessment checklist feedback.

The responses to the open-ended question yielded 1 theme based on a single instance of 1 code. This related to the homogenisation of the number of analytical in each of the assessment criteria. In its current iteration, all the assessment criteria have a total of 3 analytical descriptors except for 'reliability evaluation' which has 5. The results of this thematic analysis are included in Appendix Q for reference.

4.6.3. Consequent contribution to elaboration of critical listening assessment checklist.

The confirmatory expert consensus established in the Delphi Round III Questionnaire marked the conclusion of the exploratory international modified Delphi process and gave definitive status to the notional Critical Listening Competency Assessment Checklist created.

4.7. The Critical Listening Competency Assessment Checklist

The data gathered and analysed throughout all stages of the research study were instrumental in the operationalisation of the elaboration of the following prototype assessment checklist to be used on a doctoral PSE course at a UK university presented in Figure 5:

Figure 5

The Critical Listening Competency Assessment Checklist (CLCAC)

Critical Listening Competency		No evidence	Some evidence	Clear Evidence
Position	Identification of speaker's point of view, argumentation, and reasoning.			
	Analysis of speaker's language to justify evaluation of their stance.			
	Reflection on and formulation of own justified position with certain degree of originality.			
Schema and Pragmatic Competence	Analysis of relationship(s) between new information and other thematic texts and wider social context(s).			
	Inference of nuance and meaning in context.			
	Comparison and contrast new information with other thematic texts and wider social context(s).			
Reliability Evaluation	Determination of the level of accuracy in the aural text.			
	Judgement of the currency of the information heard.			
	Evaluation of the speaker's purpose and any potential bias or inconsistencies.			
	Clarification of the speaker's level of authority in relation to the topic.			
	Evaluation of information reliability.			
Remediation and Integration	Summary of key points from speaker's line of argument.			
	Paraphrase the essence of speaker's ideas in own words.			
	Synthesis of ideas from an aural text with those from another or other media in a different medium.			

In this chapter, the evolution of the differing iterations of the Critical Listening Assessment Checklist, borne out of the data gathered and analysed was presented. This culmination of knowledge elicitation and expert consensus responds to the RQs set out in the concluding

section of the Literature Review Chapter and is referred to as 'the CLCAC' for concision in the following concluding chapters of the dissertation.

In the following chapter, a discussion of the significance of results detailed here in terms of their novel contribution to knowledge is explored. Further reflections on the wider implications and impact of findings and their relationship with underlying issues of note within the broader context of assessment in HE are also presented.

5. Discussion

In this chapter, an in-depth exploration of findings and their relation to the wider scholarly and practical contexts is presented. A general overview, the empirical credibility and the applicability of results are then discussed before turning to critically analyse the theoretical and credibility of findings by addressing the comparison with and novel contributions to extant literature.

Based on the findings, a practice-informed novel applied doctoral critical listening definition is then provided. The breadth of impact and contribution highlights the novel use of the exploratory international modified Delphi method in the study and how this may impact on the fields of EAP, Assessment and Evaluation, and HE. The chapter then returns to the earlier debate on the commodification of higher education and discusses how findings may inform the role of assessment within HE.

5.1. General Overview

The difficulty of the task at hand was alluded to by Bloxham & Boyd (2012) as mentioned in the Literature Review Chapter. This, in turn, was echoed in the observation of a research participant who made comments to this end. Despite these challenges, albeit a notional offering which is the result of an exploratory study, the CLCAC has been developed with empirical credibility, as consensus was reached (100%) on all the assessment criteria and analytical descriptors.

This assessment instrument also responds to the previously cited calls for academic listening assessment alternatives from the past decades (e.g. Powers, 1986; Flowerdew, 1994; Jeon,

2007; Rost, 2016; amongst others). The timeframe of this study also seemingly challenges the Wrigglesworth (2019, p. 24) assertion referred to earlier that 'considerable investment of time and resources' is needed for the creation of assessment alternatives.

5.2. Applicability

The grounding of this study in the pedagogical setting of a doctoral PSE programme at a UK HE institution is an evident context for the practical implementation of the CLCAC. Nonetheless, in accordance with the importance of critical listening in HE, the findings here may be beneficial for other EAP programmes of other levels as an assessment alternative which may allow course designers and managers to eschew discreet-item listening tests which may not be fit for purpose (Buck, 2001). The findings are not only applicable to assessment policy, but also, given the prioritisation of future student needs in design of the CLCAC, greater constructive alignment (Loughlin et al., 2021) in such courses may be facilitated using the assessment tool.

The CLCAC may not represent a means of fully addressing the divergence between high PSE pass rates and the varying levels of student study success after the course (Pearson, 2020) mentioned previously. However, this change in priorities in assessment development has the potential to facilitate positive washback which can help to enhance critical listening teaching praxis on EAP programmes in HE and further afield. This also keys into the broader discussion on the role of assessment of HE which is presented later in the chapter.

5.3. Comparisons with and Contributions to Extant Literature

5.3.1. Comprehension Processing Theoretical Frameworks.

The Literature Review chapter opened with the presentation and analysis of three comprehension processing models which offer significant contributions to the current understanding of academic listening. Revisiting these in light of the results provides an interesting point of comparison which arguably strengthens the theoretical credibility of the CLCAC.

Firstly, Field's (2013) Cognitive Process Listening Model differentiates between lower-level and higher-level cognitive processes, and it was hypothesised earlier that the latter are implicit in critical listening competency. The processes of information selection, integration, and relation of the information to the discourse representation based on conceptual association, amongst others, were highlighted as potential indicators of critical listening. The consequent elaboration of the CLCAC through expert idea building and consensus has yielded assessment criteria and descriptors which correlate with some of these higher-level cognitive processes and confirm this hypothesis. For instance, the meaning building processes of speaker intention identification, inference, and reference correlate with the identification of speaker's point of view, argumentation, and reasoning, inference of nuance and meaning in context, and analysis of relationship(s) between new information and other thematic texts and wider social context(s) descriptors, respectively. Overlap is also found between the processes of integration and selection and the descriptors of the remediation and integration criteria.

Further comparison to Khalifa and Weir's (2009) Cognitive Processing in Reading Framework also yields further correlation with the CLCAC. For example, remediation is a key component of both. Furthermore, Khalifa and Weir's (2009) conceptualisation of intertextual

representation and further references to topic knowledge and integration coincide somewhat with the schema and pragmatic competence assessment descriptors, which refer to integration of new knowledge with other thematic texts. Additional overlap is found for this in Aryadoust et al.'s (2012) Academic Listening Model, which refers to this process as relating input to other material. The CLCAC's Position descriptor, analysis of speaker's language to justify evaluation of their stance, is also arguably cognate to the linguistic components referred to in the Aryadoust et al. (2012) framework.

The parallels highlighted between the three frameworks and the CLCAC provide concurrent validation and theoretical credibility to results. However, this discussion also paves the way for a broader potential theoretical contribution of the study to extant literature. Thereby, each of the conceptual frameworks cited are complementary to a certain extent, as is illustrated in Table 1 in the Literature Review chapter, in which the pre-existing correlations between the Field (2013) framework for listening and the Khalifa and Weir (2009) framework for reading were addressed.

Nevertheless, the CLCAC not just confirms notional overlaps between the conceptual frameworks identified, but rather embodies the novel amalgamation of the Field (2013), Khalifa and Weir (2009), and Aryadoust et al. (2012) comprehension processing theoretical frameworks with the additional novel knowledge elicited from experts who participated in this study. Moreover, this does not just demonstrate theoretical credibility of the findings, but also underlines that a further theoretical contribution relates to the confirmatory theoretical aggregation of the three aforementioned theoretical frameworks used here together with the results not just to elaborate on the present scholarly theoretical

understanding of critical listening but also to broaden the wider conceptualisation of academic listening competency.

Furthermore, an additional novel contribution here lies in the identification and conceptualisation of assessment criteria and delineation of analytical descriptors, all of which are not accounted for in the extant literature. Therefore, the results of this exploratory study have arguably contributed to the existing body of knowledge by eliciting and achieving expert consensus on previously ambiguous, dispersed, and uncontemplated critical listening subskills for assessment praxis.

5.3.2. The SOLO Taxonomy.

An additional effective comparison between the CLCAC and the SOLO taxonomy (Biggs & Collis, 1982) gives supplementary theoretical credibility to findings. This framework, which fits well with constructive alignment as referred to previously, provides a different perspective on the findings, as it addresses structured observable learning outcomes with a focus on verbs used to formulate these, as opposed to the internal cognitive processes as addressed in the previous section. The taxonomy takes stock of the increasing complexity of learning and five stages are defined: Prestructural, Unistructural, Multistructural, Relational, and Extended Abstract.

There is significant correlation between the taxonomy and the assessment criteria and analytical descriptors as illustrated in the summary of the correlative analysis in Table 5 below:

Table 5

Correlative analysis of the CLCAC in relation to SOLO Taxonomy (Biggs & Collis, 1982; Biggs &

Tang, 2011)

CLCAC Assessment Criteria	CLCAC Descriptor Verbs	Corresponding SOLO Taxonomy Stage
Position	Identify	Unistructural
	Analyse	Relational
	Reflect	Extended Abstract
	Formulate	Extended Abstract
Schema and Pragmatic Competence	Analyse	Relational
	Infer	Relational*
	Compare	Relational
	Contrast	Relational
Reliability Evaluation	Determine	Relational*
	Judge	Relational*
	Evaluate	Extended Abstract*
	Clarify	Relational*

Remediation and Integration	Summarise	Extended Abstract*
	Paraphrase	Extended Abstract*
	Synthesise	Extended Abstract*

The substantive parallels presented in Table 5 illustrate the alignment between the verbs used in the CLCAC analytical descriptors. The correlations represented with an asterisk denote instances in which cognates are found in the taxonomy, and those without, are represented verbatim.

With one sole exception, the CLCAC descriptors find favour with the final three most complex levels of the SOLO taxonomy, in agreement with Potter and Kustra (2012), that criticality can only occur from the relational stage onwards. The notable level of correlation identified here with structured observable learning outcomes corresponds with earlier discussion and the confirmation of the interrelationship between the CLCAC, and the higher-level cognitive processes conceptualised, for instance, in the Field (2013) Cognitive Process Framework of Listening Processes. Thus, theoretical credibility for findings is found from the perspective of external action and internal cognitive processes, which complements the empirical credibility addressed earlier.

This assertion finds favour with Ashwin and Case's (2012) call for 'an ongoing dialectic between methods and theories that allows us to use the outcomes of our research methods

to interrogate and develop the theories that are used to characterise the objects of our research' (p. 271). This stance reiterates that the relationship between underpinning theoretical frameworks and empirical research is by no means a one-way street, as has been identified in this chapter thus far. Although research process-informed theory development is not a frequent occurrence (Tight, 2004), there is a spectrum of scholarly opinion on the matter, ranging from detractors, such as Thomas (2007), to advocates, such as Anyon et al. (2009).

Ashwin (2012) draws on Bernstein's languages of description to justify his stance on exploring ways of theorising in HE. He makes the distinction between the conceptualisation of the research object and the approach to data collection and data analysis, aligning them with Bernstein's internal language of description and the external language of description, respectively (Bernstein, 2000). Ashwin (2012, p. 943) argues that both languages of description 'need to be explicit and related to each other in a non-circular manner' to create a 'discursive gap' (Bernstein & Solomon, 1999, p. 275), in which empirical data may contribute to the development of theory.

Despite Ashwin's (2012, p. 953) stance that research studies that employed mixed methods approaches, as is the case here, are 'the least likely to offer the space for the development of theory'. The 'discursive gap' (Bernstein & Solomon, 1999, p. 275) theorised here has parallels with the approaches taken in this study and, thus, nevertheless, goes some way to support the earlier claim as to the potential theoretical contribution developed through the empirical research findings here.

5.3.3. Defining Critical Listening Competency.

At this stage, in pursuit of narrowing the arising theory-practice gap and to further address the lack of discussion in theory and in practice, the results and consequent analyses here arguably pave the way for a further potential novel contribution to the wider body of knowledge.

The following original tentative practice-informed theoretical definition of applied doctoral critical listening competency is offered:

Applied doctoral critical listening proficiency involves integrated higher-order cognitive comprehension and production processes which underpin active engagement with an aural text. After decoding multimodal input, a critical listener at this level is able to (i) identify speaker posture and justify this through linguistic evaluation; (ii) formulate their own position on the input; (iii) infer nuance and meaning in context; (iv) relate input to other thematic materials and wider social context(s); (v) evaluate reliability based on accuracy, currency, potential bias or inconsistencies and speaker authority; (vi) remediate and integrate input in other contexts by summarising, paraphrasing and synthesising, as appropriate.

This tentative definition not only reflects the results of this study and the correlations between these, and theoretical alignments addressed in the previous section, but also is in accordance with the active nature of the critical listener in academia as proposed by Siegel (2014). Whilst the applied doctoral critical listening definition is by no means intended to be definitive, it has been penned in the hope of contributing to and broadening the scope of the very limited debate in the literature.

5.4. Breadth of Impact and Contribution

Having made a notional attempt to address the critical listening assessment conundrum, the target audience of the study's potential impact is not solely limited to EAP practitioners and HE PSE programme assessment policymakers. The novel methodological approach taken, as was commented previously, has extensive precedent in other fields, such as Health Sciences. Nevertheless, within the fields of HE and Assessment and Evaluation increasingly finite numbers of studies take such an approach. Within the field of EAP, at the time of writing, it has been impossible for the researcher to find studies which have used any form of the Delphi technique as a means of scholarly exploration.

The novel modifications implemented here to the modified Delphi method to tackle the three key issues previously identified to risk validity and reliability of results within the methodological literature are of note for other research contexts. Namely, high level of attrition (Gargon et al., 2019), elevated time investment for participants (Williams & Webb) and researchers (Chan, 2022), and limited opportunity for expert respondent views to be elaborated on (Goodman, 1987). The combination of asynchronous and synchronous stages of data collection and analysis substantially reduced attrition in the study and the time commitment required from stakeholders, whilst still affording respondents time to deliberate and develop a wide range of in-depth responses. The use of focus group sessions also went some way to allow participants to elaborate and explore their views further. These seemingly effective modifications strengthen the argument here for the wider use of the methodology within the fields of EAP, Assessment and Evaluation, and HE.

Furthermore, this model may serve as an interesting alternative to the traditional approaches taken in assessment development praxis in any field, thereby increasing the repertoire of methods available to test developers. The key benefit here lies in the greater objectivity afforded using numerical data and the broader and more in-depth understanding of the given phenomenon under investigation when triangulated with the narrative data the methodology may yield (Rothbauer, 2008).

Ultimately, the epistemological generalisability of expertise, albeit challenging to delineate the parameters of what constitutes an 'expert' (Jorm, 2015), has afforded concurrent validity (Bogner & Menz, 2009) and reliability (Cuhls, 2005) to findings thanks to expert domain-specific knowledge (Green, 2014). This adds further weight to the argument of the unharnessed potential to take advantage of the capacity of expertise through the Delphi methodology to investigate other areas in which knowledge elicitation and expert consensus may provide clarity.

5.5. The Role of Assessment in Higher Education

5.5.1.   Philosophical and Paradigmatic Tensions in Assessment Development.

Throughout this dissertation the problematic current critical listening assessment praxis of discreet-item listening tests not being unfit for purpose has been drawn out (Buck, 2001). This alludes to the overarching testing-assessment dichotomy and the tension between the underpinning paradigmatic assumptions on both sides. Testing may be defined as a product which aims to numerically measure test-taker traits and abilities at a given moment in time. This sits firmly within a postpositivist paradigm in which, language is 'an objective entity that can be measured with the proper tools and procedures' (Lynch, 2001, p. 362). However,

assessment, which in contrast may be defined as a longer-term process, in line with a pragmatic paradigm, as has been held in this study, assumes a social constructivist take on language as 'realms of social life that do not exist independently of our attempts to know them' (Lynch, 2001, p. 362).

The consequent emphasis here on the absence of a 'true score' waiting to be determined is of significance and in line with the pragmatic paradigmatic assumptions of this study (Plowright, 2011). Epistemologically, it is assumed that 'knowledge is "warranted" through persons' enactments in environments where both are changed as a result' (Stone, 2008, p. 266). This social constructivist approach sits well with a more frequent use of assessment checklists in all disciplines, given the productive dialogic potential between stakeholders (Sadler, 2010), heightened specificity in feedback (Carless, 2015) and deeper approach to learning (Entwistle, 2018).

Further benefits may be positive washback, as mentioned earlier, and the active student role in the teaching and learning process. This conceptualisation offers a vision of HE based on an assessment for learning (Sambell et al., 2012; Sambell et al., 2021), which facilitates an ongoing developmental procedure, in which environmental input from feedback for learning may be used to focalise and enhance tacit knowledge development. In sum, this is the antithesis of the prevailing hegemonic commodification of Higher Education and the findings and consequent discussion here add weight to established arguments and proposals that aim to counter this.

5.5.2. Commodification of Education.

The earlier analogy drawn between testing and product keys into the tenets of the commodification of HE referred to earlier in the Literature Review chapter. This, in juxtaposition to assessment, may have negative washback on teaching and learning, as 'teaching to test' may consequently become the principle pedagogical centrepiece to the detriment of learning (Silbaugh, 2011). The results here indicate that there are ways and means to address this from within. The development of alternative assessments using the methodology employed here has the potential to be a fruitful endeavour particularly when academics come together and engage with others in the wider scholarly community and benefit from the wisdom-of-(expert)-crowds (Surowiecki, 2005) as was referred to earlier in the Methodology chapter.

Further solace may be drawn from The University in Dissent penned by Rolfe (2013), who, in line with this notion of assessment development in community, advocates challenging the managerialism and the prevailing hegemony of the associated conception of 'productivity' by coming together to defend the practices that are valued by academics. The results of this study fit well with the salient concept of 'dwelling in the ruins of HE' which build on the posthumously published work of Readings (1997). Thereby, returning thought and deliberation to the forefront of scholarly activity, as has been prioritised here, goes against the corporate conceptualisation of academic productivity. Thereby, taking time to reflect and exchange views with others may be an effective means of sowing seeds of change.

In short, a university is much more than the sum of its corporate constituent parts; it is its' people, their thoughts, and interactions. Only by recognising this, and coming together in

thought and action, can changes in the role of assessment, and the wider university itself, come to fruition.

5.6. Limitations

Despite the novel contributions to the existing body of knowledge and the breadth of potential impact in response to the ambiguities and gaps identified in theory and in practice throughout this dissertation, there are several limitations that were identified.

The generalisability of results is arguably somewhat ambiguous, as in this research study the pedagogical setting was a doctoral PSE course, and, in turn, this focus was woven into the instruments used for data collection. Thereby, in terms of applicability, it is not possible to determine if the assessment criteria and analytical descriptors used are solely appropriate to this specific level of university study. A graded variant of the CLCAC might need to be developed to assess critical listening proficiency, for instance, for aspiring undergraduate students on a foundation course. Moreover, the generic nature of the CLCAC may have limitations considering the plurality of discipline-specific future student needs which are not accounted for at present (Winstone et al., 2020).

The strengths of the chosen method for assessment development were highlighted earlier, however there are several constraints which may impact the validity and reliability and, in turn, the credibility, of results. The selection and recruitment process of the expert panel was based on the use of inclusion and exclusion criteria, detailed in the Methodology chapter, which resulted in the conformation of an expert panel. However, as Fink-Hafner et al. (2019) note, if the exercise were repeated with different panel members, although they met the

same criteria as those who participated in this study, the results may be different. Whilst care has been taken to reiterate to the reader both the exploratory nature of the project and the notional or prototype status of the CLCAC, further investigation to validate the results obtained is needed to address this.

An additional limitation is the use of focus group sessions as part of the exploratory international modified Delphi method used. There are several well-documented issues here, namely, the bandwagon effect, vulnerability to manipulation, and reticence of stance modification in the presence of others (Morgan, 1997; Greenbaum, 1998). These issues are particularly acute in the present study as the expression and modification of opinion throughout are key to constructing and negotiating the knowledge which forms the basis of expert consensus. A potential risk of this may be highlighted in the closing section of the synchronous session in which the Delphi Round III Questionnaire was completed by participants. Thereby, panellists may have simply agreed to the final iteration of assessment criteria and analytical descriptors in response to the timing of this and to avoid further rounds of negotiation.

Another point addressed both in the Literature Review chapter, and by one of the participants in their response to the Delphi Round I Questionnaire, pertains to the 'ferociously difficult' (Bloxham & Boyd, 2012, p. 617) or 'notoriously subjective' nature of assessment criteria, descriptors, and reporting terminology used as part of the CLCAC. This was partially addressed in the planning stage of the research design by not using a Likert scale for respondents to express consensus to close-ended questions, thus avoiding value judgements and further related issues of subjectivity in relation to the terms used on the scale. Returning to the

prototype CLCAC, the author still finds solace in Orr's (2010) assertion on the tension between subjectivity and objectivity as an innate co-dependent trait of assessor connoisseurship. However, some quarters may still argue that the CLCAC is lacking in an accompanying glossary or guidance documentation that delineates the conceptualisation of the terminology used for assessors to refer to that has been beyond the scope and remit of the present research project.

5.7. Future Areas of Scholarly Exploration

Despite the limitations outlined, having produced a novel prototype critical listening proficiency assessment checklist, a first step has been made to bridge the gaps identified in theory and practice, but much more work is needed if the issues identified are to be fully addressed. The results from this study have the potential to pave the way for scholarly discussions and further research to build on the work done here. The following lines of investigation are suggested next steps in future, which, whilst being notionally presented sequentially here, are not intended to be prescriptive:

- Validation and refinement of results through expert review and the formulation of more Delphi expert panels.

- Experimental investigation of the practical implementation of the CLCAC both in the chosen pedagogical setting in which the study is grounded and in other differing pre-sessional contexts.

- Exploration of the development of different degree-level-graded and discipline-specific variants of the CLCAC using a similar approach with the inclusion of subject

matter lecturers as part of the expert panel. Further investigation of the QAA Benchmarking Statements for the discipline could also be instrumental here.

- Investigation of effectiveness of the use of the modified Delphi study and integrated mixed-methods approach in assessment development.

- Development of accompanying assessor guidance documentation with a glossary of key terms and examples of use to be disseminated within the BALEAP community of practice.

- Implementation of a sector-wide comparative study into reporting systems used in assessment checklists and rubrics to identify plausible reporting alternatives to modify the terminology used at present.

- Elaboration of critical listening competency test construct and standardisation materials for assessors as part of an alternative novel academic listening test to be used for HE admission.

- Investigation of implications for Teacher Education, for instance, teaching and assessment of (critical) listening on postgraduate TESOL programmes and other qualifications such as the BALEAP TEAP scheme.

The lines in this chapter have aimed to critically analyse findings and to provide important contextualisation as to their applicability, empirical and theoretical credibility, novelty, and breadth of impact. The following chapter marks the close of the dissertation in which an overall summary of findings in relation to RQs is presented with concluding remarks and a final reflection.

6. Conclusions

6.1. Overall Summary of Findings

This study sought to address the critical listening proficiency assessment ambiguities and lack of discussion in theory and practice by elaborating an assessment checklist prototype for a doctoral pre-sessional course at a UK HE institution. To achieve this, the following research questions were established:

- RQ1: What expert consensus can be reached on the identification and conceptualisation of criteria for assessing critical listening competency on a doctoral pre-sessional course?
- RQ2: How would EAP Assessment experts concordantly theorise and delineate analytical critical listening proficiency descriptors for a notional assessment checklist to be used with international doctoral PSE students?

This study used an exploratory international modified Delph method to address both research questions, which took an integrated mixed-methods approach to collect and analyse data. Sought-after expert consensus was achieved on the identification and conceptualisation of assessment criteria and the delineation of analytical descriptors.

In response to RQ1, expert consensus (100%) was reached on the identification and conceptualisation of the following assessment criteria: position, schema and pragmatic competence, reliability evaluation, and remediation and integration.

In response to RQ 2, experts concordantly theorised and delineated the following analytical

descriptors for each of the assessment criteria agreed upon (100%), in response to RQ1:

- **Position**:
  - identification of speaker's point of view, argumentation, and reasoning;
  - analysis of speaker's language to justify evaluation of their stance;
  - reflection on and formulation of own justified position with certain degree of originality.

- **Schema and pragmatic competence**:
  - analysis of relationship(s) between new information and other thematic texts and wider social context(s);
  - inference of nuance and meaning in context;
  - comparison and contrast new information with other thematic texts and wider social context(s).

- **Reliability Evaluation**:
  - determination of the level of accuracy in the aural text;
  - judgement of the currency of the information heard;
  - evaluation of the speaker's purpose and any potential bias or inconsistencies;
  - clarification of the speaker's level of authority in relation to the topic;
  - evaluation of information reliability.

- **Remediation and integration**:

- summary of key points from speaker's line of argument;

- paraphrase the essence of speaker's ideas in own words;

- synthesis of ideas from an aural text with those from another or other media in a different medium.

The results outlined here are the culminative outcome of idea building and refinement underpinned by expert consensus consolidation in the last stage of the research study. Going forward these are also to be known as The Critical Listening Competency Assessment Checklist (CLCAC).

6.2. Concluding Remarks

The results of this exploratory study take a step towards addressing the critical listening assessment incongruencies, ambiguities and gaps in both the extant literature and praxis. The grounding of the dissertation in a doctoral PSE course at a UK university is an evident practical setting in which the results are applicable, although their potential applicability to other cognate pedagogical contexts is also apparent. In support of this, the 100% expert panellist consensus on all aspects of the CLCAC offers important empirical credibility to findings.

In turn, theoretical credibility for the results is found in the comparison with extant literature and the correlation between results and the Field (2013), Khalifa and Weir (2009), and Aryadoust et al. (2012) comprehension processing cognitive conceptual models. In accordance with Ashwin (2012), the empirical findings may also contribute to the development of the present scholarly theoretical understanding of critical listening having explicitly collated and expanded on the formerly dispersed and ambiguous critical listening

subskills for assessment. A further theoretical contribution is the confirmatory theoretical aggregation of the three theoretical frameworks used here and, together with results, the present scholarly theoretical understanding of critical listening and the wider conceptualisation of academic listening competency may be broadened. A further case in point which supports this, is the elaboration of the novel practice-informed applied doctoral critical listening definition.

The breadth of the impact is poignant considering the novel use of the exploratory international modified Delphi method. This paves the way for further application in the field of EAP and in other research contexts in this and other fields, such as Assessment and Evaluation, which may benefit from the validity and reliability afforded to results due to the generalisability of expertise and the wisdom-of-expert-crowds.

6.3. Final Reflection

From the outset, I had the ambitious goal of exploring the gaps, disparities, and general scarcity of discussion on critical listening competency assessment. Nevertheless, despite the magnitude of the lack of consensus in the extant literature and in praxis, walking along this path of discovery has been most gratifying. Along the way, I have taken steps to forge my own identity as a research practitioner by interacting with the wider scholarly community in prose and in person. In a small way, I have reciprocated by penning these lines and hope to offer a albeit a minor contribution to the research problem and spark much-needed discussion in theory and in practice.

Writing may be an inherently solitary pursuit, but in scholarship it seems that we are never truly alone. I look forward to hopefully walking alongside others on the trail in search of other missing pieces of the puzzle and, as has been demonstrated here and in the writings of Rolfe (2013), coming together albeit 'in the ruins of HE' to solve the critical listening assessment conundrum.

7. References

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8. Appendices

Appendix A- Ethics Application Form

University Teaching and Research Ethics Committee (UTREC)
Standard/Proportionate Review Filter

University of St Andrews

Filter questions	Yes	No
Will your research involve participants from any of the following groups: • Children under 16 years of age (18 in England) • Protected adults • NHS patients or staff • Individuals engaged in criminal activity • Individuals in custody, care homes, or other residential institutions • Individuals impacted by a traumatic event such as war, displacement, acts of terrorism, abuse, discrimination, crime, disasters, life-changing illness or injury, bereavement • Individuals where there is any doubt over their capacity for freely given consent such as through cognitive impairment, language barriers, legal status, terminal illness. • Any other individuals where the researcher or SEC identifies a vulnerability that cannot be satisfactorily mitigated.	☐	☒
Will your research involve sensitive topics such as: • Criminal activity • Traumatic experiences like those detailed above • Self-identity i.e. gender, national, ethnic or racial identity • Body image • Mood or mental health conditions	☐	☒
Will your research involve collection, creation or inference of special category data. Special category data is identifiable data that is also: • personal data revealing racial or ethnic origin • personal data revealing political opinions • personal data revealing religious or philosophical beliefs • personal data revealing trade union membership • data concerning health • data concerning a person's sex life or sexual orientation • genetic data • biometric data (where this is used for identification)	☐	☒
Will your research involve collection, creation or inference of any other personal, confidential or sensitive data where you feel this might cause distress or that could cause harm should this data be intercepted?	☐	☒
Is there a risk that the research may result in participants becoming distressed? (For remote research, consider that this may be harder to monitor and whether participants will be able to access support)	☐	☒
Will your research involve the use of deception, the withholding of any information about the aims of the research or anything other than total transparency over your role as a researcher?	☐	☒
If you answered **YES** to **ANY** of the above, your application will undergo standard review by your SEC.		
If you answered **NO** to **ALL** of the above, your application will undergo proportionate review by your SEC.		

This form requires use of Microsoft Word desktop version (available via IT Services)

University Teaching and Research Ethics Committee (UTREC)

Application Form – Cover Sheet

Existing approval – renewal / extension ⓘ	☐	Approval Code		Date last approved	dd/mm/yyyy

Application Type (check applicable)

Undergraduate	☐	Staff	☐
Postgraduate Research	☐	Postgraduate Taught	☒
Module Co-ordinator, taught module ⓘ	☐	If yes, Module Code:	
Child Panel review ⓘ	☐	PVG ⓘ	☐
Clinical research (definition) ⓘ	☐	Security Sensitive ⓘ	☐

Applicant Name	Peter Bannister		
Email	pb98@st-andrews.ac.uk	**Date Submitted**	13/05/2022
School/Unit:	International Education Institute	**Supervisor (if student):**	Dr Mark Carver

Project Title
(If your title is not immediately understandable to a lay audience, be sure it is clearly explained in the project description)

Exploring the Critical Listening Assessment Conundrum on Pre-Sessional EAP Programmes in Higher Education

Project description: Give a concise narrative description without technical terminology of what you are proposing to do; who your participants are (e.g. age, organisation) and how they will be approached/ recruited; where the research will take place (e.g. site, country); what methods you will use, (e.g. survey, interview).*) (see exemplars). (900 characters for database reasons – using a font size of 11 or larger will help ensure you do not go over this limit)*

This Masters dissertation research project aims to ascertain English for Academic Purposes Assessment expert opinion and consensus on the criteria and interrelating analytical descriptors of critical listening proficiency of international PG students on a PSE course to develop an assessment checklist. To that end, a three-round online synchronous qualitative DELPHI study is proposed with professional adult participants, who will be recruited from the BALEAP, TAF SIG Assessment Piloting Network, EALTA and LTest-L mailing lists. Participants will be asked to complete a total of three questionnaires across three rounds and respondents will be invited to offer feedback on the responses gleaned from the previous round, which will be used to refine the questions of the subsequent questionnaires until a final consensus can hopefully be reached by the end of the final round.

Ethical Considerations: Give an overview of both **the ethical issues raised** by your research and **how you will address** them (see exemplars). This could include: the risks and benefits, how you will ensure consent is voluntary and informed; confidentiality and how your data will be managed to protect this; potential risks to participants such as distress or reputational harm. NOTE: this should not substantially duplicate the response given in 'Project description' above.
(900 characters for database reasons – using a font size of 11 or larger will help ensure you do not go over this limit)

The most saliant ethical issues are obtaining voluntary participant consent, ensuring confidentiality and data protection. Participant will be given a brief description of the project together with a Participant Information Sheet (PIS) with details of what the voluntary nature and what their participation would entail, and it will be made clear that consent may be withdrawn until August 2022. All participants will be asked to sign a consent form and will be provided with my contact details to communicate any changes in consent. All the data that is collected through their participation will be pseudonymised. Data will be stored on an encrypted and password protected University drive to which only my supervisor and I will have access. The pseudonymisation key will also be password protected and encrypted and stored separately on my Home drive.

Has ethical approval for this research already been obtained from an external ethics committee? If YES, do not complete the rest of this form. Instead submit a copy of the external application paperwork and approval, and a copy of this page, to your School Ethics Committee.

	In this form there are icons, links and guidance to assist you, hover over them for tips or ctrl+click to follow links:
📄	This icon indicates that a supporting document may be required - see Appendix 1. DOCUMENT CHECKLIST
✏️	This icon indicates that you may need to provide an explanation or more information in Q31
ℹ️	This icon indicates there is guidance on how to answer (hover the pointer over the icon)
⏭️	This icon follows 'skip to question X' statements - Ctrl+Click the icon to skip to that part of the document
Link	This formatting indicates a link to relevant documents or webpages

RESEARCH INFORMATION

1.	a. Estimated start date of research activities ℹ️	15th June 2022	
	b. Will the research involve any of the following (tick all that apply)	In-person face-to-face contact with participants	☐
		Remote or online contact with participants	☒
		No direct participants (i.e. secondary or archival data)	☐
		Engagement of fieldworkers, or similar, to collect data	☐
		Travel	☐

LOCATION AND EXTERNAL APPROVALS		
2. Location of the research ℹ️	Online	
📄 ✏️ **3.** If applicable, have you obtained permission to access the site of research? ℹ️ If YES please state agency/authority etc. and provide documentation: If NO please indicate why in Q31		**NOT APPLICABLE**

FUNDING	
4. Is this research funded by any external sponsor or agency? ℹ️	**NO**
If **YES**, please provide the name of the funder:	
📄 **5.** Does the funder appear on the automatically approved list of ethical funders? If NO, you must complete an ethical funder application and attach the approval to your application	**NOT APPLICABLE**

COLLABORATION & ROLES ℹ️		
6. **a**. Does this research entail collaboration with researchers from other institutions and/or across other University Schools/Units? If YES state name and affiliations below:		**NO**

Name	Affiliation

b. If the research is collaborative, has a framework been devised to ensure that all collaborators, are given appropriate recognition in any outputs?	**NOT APPLICABLE**
7. Where projects raise ethical considerations to do with roles in research, intellectual property, publication strategies/authorship, responsibilities to funders, research with policy or other implications etc., have you taken appropriate steps to address these issues?	**NOT APPLICABLE**

Research participants		

✏️	**8.** Are you using **only** library or archival sources; media publications; secondary data (with appropriate licenses and permissions) or data in the public domain? ⓘ
	
	If **YES**, skip questions 9-28 and complete:
	  • Q29-30 if there are any data management considerations ⏭
	  • Q31 if there are any ethical considerations ⏭
	  • If there are no other ethical or data management consideration, skip to 'Declarations' ⏭
	
	If **NO**, continue with the rest of the form
		NO

	9. Who are your participants? ⓘ	
	Due to the nature of the DELPHI study technique used in the study, experts in the field are required to reach a consensus on the matter of critical listening assessment criteria and interrelating analytical descriptors for the development of a protype assessment checklist. To that end, it is anticipated that the adult participants will have a wealth of experience in the field of English for Academic Purposes and particularly pertaining to EAP assessment.	
	10. Describe below how you will identify, approach and recruit participants ⓘ	
	Many potential participants with the required the level of experience, qualifications and expertise have been identified as members of different professional bodies and associations in the field which have a specific focus on EAP assessment praxis. Such organisations offer mailing lists for members, for instance, BALEAP, TAF SIG Assessment Piloting Network, EALTA and LTest-L mailing lists, and these will be used to approach potential participants by means of sharing a participant advert detailing the aims and scope of the project. The BCC email function will always be used at all times. In addition to this, participants will be recruited from amongst those members who express interest from the lists and then a Participation Information Sheet (PIS) and Consent Form will be shared with the relevant parties, which they must complete electronically and send back to the researcher to participate.	
	11. Estimated duration of participant involvement ⓘ	
	Participation is estimated to take place between June 2022 and July 2022.	
	12. Do participants fall into any of the following groups (which may require additional documents or approvals)? ⓘ	Check all that apply
📄	Children (under 16 years of age in Scotland or 18 in England and Wales)	☐
📄	Protected adult, receiving care or welfare services	☐
📄	People with learning or communication difficulties	☐
📄	Residents/Carers in a specific location e.g. Care Home	☐
📄	NHS patients or staff ⓘ	☐
📄	People in custody ⓘ	☐
	People engaged in illegal activities (e.g. drug taking) ⓘ	☐

ETHICal risk CHECKLIST

If you answer 'NO' to any of the following please provide a full explanation in Q31

13. Will you tell participants that their participation is voluntary and that they can decline to participate with no disbenefit? ⓘ		**YES**
14. Will you describe the main project/experimental procedures to participants in advance so that they can make an informed decision about whether or not to participate? ⓘ		**YES**
15. Will you tell participants that they may withdraw from the research within the time specified in the PIS and for any reason, without having to give an explanation, and with no disbenefit? ⓘ		**YES**
16. Will you obtain appropriate consent from participants? ⓘ		**YES**
17. If the research is photographed, videoed or audio-recorded, or observational, will you ask participants for their consent to being photographed, videoed, recorded or observed? ⓘ		**NOT APPLICABLE**
18. Will participants be free to continue in the study if they reject the use of research methods such as audio-visual recorders and photography?		**NOT APPLICABLE**
19. Will you tell participants that their data will be treated with full confidentiality and that if published or shared, it will not be identifiable as theirs? (see DATA MANAGEMENT Q30) ⓘ		**YES**
20. Will participants be clearly informed of how the data will be stored, who will have access to it, and when the data will be destroyed? (see DATA MANAGEMENT Q30) ⓘ		**YES**
21. Will you give participants a debrief explanation in writing of the study after participant involvement explaining where participants can find out about the results of the project and access sources of support, if appropriate? ⓘ		**YES**
22. With questionnaires and/or interviews, will you give participants the option of omitting questions they do not want to answer?		**YES**

If you answer YES to any of the following please provide a full explanation in Q31

23. Is there any significant risk (inc. physical/psychological harm or distress) to the researcher and / or any participants, field assistants, students, collaborators involved in the project? ⓘ		**NO**
24. Will your project involve deliberately misleading participants in any way? ⓘ		**NO**
25. Will any financial inducement, other than expenses, be offered to participants? ⓘ		**NO**
26. Are any of the participants in a dependent relationship with the investigator? i.e. family members, patients, students ⓘ		**NO**

RISK ASSESSMENTS & INSURANCE

27. Does your research require a <u>risk assessment as per University policy</u> ? ⓘ (if YES, and already in hand, include this with your application) *If you are unsure, seek advice from your School Health and Safety contact or the <u>travel and fieldwork</u> page.* ⓘ		**NO**
28. For fieldwork and travel - have you checked that you are covered by <u>University insurance</u> ?		**NOT APPLICABLE**

DATA MANAGEMENT

Collection, storage and destruction of data should be undertaken in accordance with University guidance and policies plus data protection law. For queries on data protection, contact dataprot@st-andrews.ac.uk ; on research data management, contact research-data@st-andrews.ac.uk. Additional training is available.

In this section, the following definitions are used:
- **Personal data -** information relating to natural persons who: can be identified directly from the information in question; or who can be indirectly identified from that information in combination with other information.   NOTE: consent forms are not considered personal data (copies must be securely retained for the lifetime of the research)
- **Special category data** - personal data relating to race, ethnic origin, politics, religion, trade union membership, genetics, biometrics (where used for ID purposes), health, sex life, or sexual orientation
- **Fully identifiable data** - personal data that can be directly linked to an individual
- **Pseudonymised data** - personal data that can be indirectly linked to an individual using a 'key'
- **Anonymised data -** data that cannot be linked to an individual using any reasonable means, is NOT personal data.

29. Given the definitions above - at the point of collection, will data collected by your research include:	
a. personal data?	**NO**
b. special category data?	**NO**

30. Data Lifecycle

Describe how you will ensure the confidentiality of personal data over the full lifecycle (see exemplars).

You should include in each of these sections:
- What form the data will take, particularly if and how it will be anonymised or pseudonymised or if it will remain identifiable
- Who will have access to the data, e.g. John Doe and Professor X or me and my supervisor/co-researcher(s)
- Secure locations where data is stored, e.g. encrypted file on secure University Server, locked filing cabinet
- Consideration of the requirements of data protection law and Open Access requirements of funders

The information you provide in these sections should reflect the contents of your participant documents

a. Collection and Transfer ⓘ

Describe what data you will be collecting (ensuring it is the minimum amount necessary for your purposes), including how/when you will collect it, and how you will ensure its safe transfer into storage

I will be collecting data from EAP Assessment experts on assessment and reporting critical listening competency criteria and interrelating analytical descriptors for the specific context of a PSE course, which will be obtained using three questionnaires during three rounds in accordance with the DELPHI technique. The feedback given by participants to the answers from each previous round will inform the design of the subsequent questionnaire in the next round until a general expert consensus can be reached. The aspiration is for the data to be collected online and remotely during a single session on Microsoft Teams, to be determined per participant availability. The data will be recorded electronically in real time, on the one hand, participants will be asked to complete the questionnaires using Microsoft Forms and the ensuing joint feedback session will be recorded, pending all participant consent, and the dialogue will be transcribed posteriorly. It will be made clear to participants that they may know, or be known to, other participants in the group session. The data obtained from each participant will be pseudonymised afterwards. The settings for the online reception of participant questionnaire answers and the recording of the joint oral feedback sessions will be as such that the data collected is stored automatically on a secure University server to which only the researcher and supervisor have access. Checks will be taken on the day by the researcher to ensure that this transfer process has occurred safely. In the event that these procedures were not successful, the data would be password protected and encrypted on my own device and then transferred securely onto the server and subsequently deleted from my device.

b. Storage, Backup and Access ⓘ

Describe how the data will be securely stored, backed up and accessed

The data will be stored in a pseudonymised form, which means that the data will be edited so that participants are referred to by a unique reference such as a code number or different name, and their original data will be deleted. The pseudonymised data will be stored on a password protected and encrypted University drive, and only the researcher and his supervisor will be able to access it. There will be a 'key' document, which will link participants' unique reference to their real identity. The key will be kept on my Home drive and will also be encrypted and password protected, and only the researcher will have access to it and be able to reconnect participants' data to them at a later date

c. Sharing and Publication ⓘ

Describe if, where and in what form the data will be shared. Researchers should consider institutional, funder and publisher policies before deciding on their approach to sharing data arising from their study. It is crucial that researchers anticipate their potential future data sharing and/or publication requirements.

Some examples of sharing data include:
- depositing the data (raw or edited) in a research data repository
- including data files with a publication, dissertation or other research output
- including excerpts of data like tables, figures or quotes in a publication, dissertation or other research output

✏️ If your data will be shared or published in an IDENTIFIABLE form, provide a rationale and further explanation in Q31

Participants' data will be shared in a pseudonymised form, which means that participants' data will be edited so that they are referred to by a unique reference such as a code number or different name. There will be a 'key' document, which will link participants' unique reference to their real identity. There will be a 'key' document, which will link participants' unique reference to their real identity. The key will be kept on my Home drive and will also be encrypted and password protected, and only the researcher will have access to it and be able to reconnect participants' data to them at a later date
If any of the participants are directly quoted, the researcher will redact any potentially identifying information in their quotation.

d. Retention and Destruction ⓘ

Describe how long the data will be retained for and if or when the data will be destroyed (see University guidance).
This may be a fixed date, relative to an event such as study completion, or could be indefinite.
Include here if and how the data will change form (i.e. pseudonymised data becoming anonymised for long term retention).

Participants' data will be shared as described above, and then the data held by the researcher will be kept indefinitely in accordance with the safeguards detailed by law. The data will be retained by the researcher pseudonymous and its deletion will be subject to periodic review 10 years from the point of last access.

ETHICAL ISSUES

31. a. Please provide a clear, concise description of the anticipated benefits of the research to the participant, the participant's community, the academic community, or wider society. Considering any residual risks indicate why you believe there is a favourable risk-benefit balance.
Use sub-headings for structure where appropriate. If necessary, continue on a separate sheet.

The anticipated benefits for participants are as follows, engaging in self-reflection on the nature of critical listening in EAP; determining how critical listening compentency may be evidenced; and, working together with a range of cross-institutional colleagues to shape how critical listening competency may be assessed across the wider academic community.

Although there are some potential risks involved by participating in the study, the overwhelming contribution which can be made by participant contributions to addressing to the quality of EAP PSE listening assessment in the wider academic field and the washback the criteria and descriptors arguably outweigh any potential risks.

b. Please provide a clear, concise description of your research design and methodology, the ethical issues raised and how you will address them (see exemplars). You should also include:
- Consideration of the enhanced ethical issues of conducting research during the coronavirus pandemic
- Details of how you will obtain consent
- Description and rationale for adjustments made to the template participant documents
- Detailed responses for questions marked ✎, if required

Use sub-headings for structure where appropriate. If necessary, continue on a separate sheet.

Research Design: A qualitative DELPHI study will be carried out, in which expert members from the BALEAP TAF SIG Assessment Piloting Network and the EALTA mailing lists will be asked to voluntarily participate in an online and asynchronous focus group and will be afforded anonymity throughout the process. The DELPHI technique will be used to ascertain expert opinion and consensus on the criteria and interrelating analytical descriptors of critical listening proficiency of international PG students on a PSE course to develop an assessment checklist over three rounds by means of a series of short questionnaires crafted in accordance with the recommendations of the Dörnyei (2003) checklist. Three rounds are contemplated in the data collection process, adhering to established conventions initially the expert participants will be asked to provide answers to a short questionnaire, followed by a second round in which the respondents will have the opportunity to offer feedback on the responses gleaned from the first round. Data collection will conclude with a third and final round developed from the answers from the previous two rounds to establish a final consensus. The resulting qualitative data from each round will be triangulated using thematic analysis to create concepts, categories and themes, or general consensus of opinion.

Fair Recruitment and Informed Consent: Informed consent is an ethical pillar of the present research study and great care will be taken in order to ensure that all participants are provided with a Participation Information Sheet (PIS) with details of the aims and scope of the project and benefits of participating together with other particulars pertaining to what data will be collected, how and when this data will be collected and how it will be represented. Furthermore, in this document participants will be given information on how data will be collected and transferred, stored, backed up and accessed, and as to its retention and destruction.Participants will be asked to sign a digital consent form prior to participating. They may withdraw their consent at any stage of their participation before 1st August 2022. This date has been selected given the dissertation submission deadline two weeks hence. The researcher will share both his and his supervisor's contact details and is commited to responding to any concerns, queries or petitions from participants at any given time.

Both the process of fair recruitment and the obtention of informed consent is being conducted online and the documents which participants will be provided with and have to fill in will be in a digital format. This is not only in line with the University's current guidance, regarding reducing the risk of COVID-19 propagation, but also allows the researcher to include a more diverse range of participants from different backgrounds and geographical areas who may have otherwise not been able to participate if the study were to take place face-to-face. The sole limiting criteria for participants is that they have the necessary level of experience, qualifications and expertise in the field due to the nature of the research design which aims to achieve expert consensus. Other than that, participants from all backgrounds, heritages and cultures will be invited to participate and every effort will be made to ensure that a fair recruitment process takes place.

Respecting Participant Confidentiality: All participant data will be pseudonymised throughout the research process and the pseudonymisation 'key' will be stored separately from the data in a different sever. In both instances the data will be encrypted and password protected and only the researcher and his supervisor will have access to this information at any given time.

DECLARATIONS		
o I am aware of, understand and will enact my responsibilities as a researcher as detailed in:		
o The University's Principles of Good Research Conduct policy and ethical guidelines		☒
o Any relevant professional guidelines (e.g. BPS, MRC, ASA)		☒
o The University's Policy and guidance on Data Management and Protection		☒
o I am aware of the conditions of any funding associated with my work and will ensure that information given to my research participants is in line with those conditions.		☒
o I understand that I must store the final completed copy of this form as part of my research project paperwork.		☒
Researcher signature		**Date** 12/05/2022

ADDITIONAL SECTION FOR STUDENT RESEARCHERS

Student researchers must not submit an ethical amendment application without first discussing it with their Supervisor, and the Supervisor reading and signing this form. Applications submitted without the below section completed by the Supervisor will be returned to the applicant.

Supervisor Comment	**Peter has shown keen awareness of ethical issues and rightly sees ethical conduct as essential to the DELPHI data generation process. While he is perhaps generating and retaining more data than is typical for an MSc study, there is potential for future study to develop this work further.**
I confirm that I have discussed the ethical implications of this project with the student applicant, that I have read this application, and that I approve its submission to the ethics committee for consideration	
Supervisor signature	**Date** 12/05/2022

Submission guidance:

To submit your application, it must be sent to your School Ethics contact:

- Electronic form (.doc, .docx, .pdf) is the preferred submission format for Ethics Applications, as it allows for easy transferral of text to the database
- If you submit a scanned copy of a handwritten or typed form, or a hardcopy, please email your School Ethics contact an electronic form version of the Cover Sheet (first page).

Signing the form:

- Creating an electronic signature is straightforward – sign a piece of blank paper, take a photo i.e. with a smartphone, copy and paste the image into the signature box and resize it as necessary
- If you or your supervisor wish to physically sign a hardcopy, please follow the guidance above on submission requirements
- If you/your supervisor choose to type a signature:
  - staff: email the form to your School Ethics administrator from your @st-andrews.ac.uk email address to confirm your identity.
  - students - email the form to your supervisor from your @st-andrews.ac.uk email address.
    - supervisor: add your name/ signature to the form and then forward it to the School Ethics administrator from your @st-andrews.ac.uk email address

Under **no circumstances** should this form, or supplementary documents, contain identifiable information about your participants i.e. completed consent forms.

Appendix 1. DOCUMENT CHECKLIST

Please ensure **all relevant documents** are attached to your application.

You should indicate in Q31 if your research will require any additional documents/approvals. If you have approvals in hand when submitting this form, you should append these to the application and indicate this below. Some School Ethics Committees may require all documents/approvals to be fully obtained before you seek ethical approval.

For online research, such as surveys, you may include relevant screenshots or excerpts of text instead of forms.

Templates are available for some documents, follow the links. Preferably, template participant documents should be used as given. You may adjust the content to suit your project, but you MUST document a rationale for the changes in Q31 of the application form ✎

Application document(s)	Attached?	When to include this	
Participant Information Sheet	YES	Research involves human participants.	
Participant Consent Form	YES	Research involves human participants.	ⓘ
Participant Debrief	YES	Research involves human participants.	ⓘ
All advertisements	YES	Participants will be recruited using adverts.	ⓘ
Questionnaire / Online Survey Screenshots	YES	Research includes questionnaires or surveys.	ⓘ
Interview questions/Focus Group guide	YES	Research includes interviews or focus groups.	
Copies of letters to parents/ guardians/children	NOT APPLICABLE	Research involves children or educational establishments.	ⓘ
External approvals/documents	**Attached?**	**When to include this**	
Approved risk assessment	NOT APPLICABLE	If you have already obtained this - for research with fieldwork risk, such as travel abroad, lone working and in-person face-to-face research. This may be a University risk assessment, for the site(s) of your research if this is external to the University, or both.	ⓘ
Insurance documents	NOT APPLICABLE	If you have already obtained this - likely required for fieldwork or travel abroad.	ⓘ
Data Management Plan (DMP)	NOT APPLICABLE	ONLY if you already have a DMP (e.g. due to funder requirements). If YES, also email a copy to research-data@st-andrews.ac.uk.	ⓘ
Ethical funder approval letter	NOT APPLICABLE	The research is funded by an organisation not on the approved funders list.	ⓘ
DBS / PVG documents	NOT APPLICABLE	Research involves vulnerable participants: • Children (under 16 in Scotland/18 in England) • Vulnerable adults	ⓘ
External permission forms / emails	NOT APPLICABLE	Research requires permission for access to sites, data, participants or other aspects.	ⓘ
Security sensitive research declaration	NOT APPLICABLE	Research involves contact with individuals, data or material linked to terrorist or extremist activity.	ⓘ
External ethical application/approval documents	**Attached?**	**When to include this**	
NHS ethical approval documents - in full	NOT APPLICABLE	Research involves: • NHS data, patients, sites or staff • Participants who are in custody • Participants who are in health or social care	ⓘ
Ethical approval documents (in full) from an external review body	NOT APPLICABLE	Your research has already been reviewed and approved by another institution or organisation.	ⓘ

Please list below any other documents that are included in your application:

Exploring the Critical Listening Assessment Conundrum on Pre-Sessional EAP Programmes in Higher Education
Peter Bannister

University of
St Andrews

What is the study about?

We invite you to participate in a research project about ascertaining English for Academic Purposes Assessment expert opinion and consensus on the criteria and interrelating analytical descriptors of critical listening proficiency of international PG students on a PSE course to develop a prototype assessment checklist.

Why have I been invited to take part?

You have been invited to take part in the study given your experience, qualifications and expertise in the field of EAP. For this study, participants will be required to draw on both their practice and theoretical knowledge of the discipline and apply this through the lens of critical listening competency.

Do I have to take part?

This information sheet has been written to help you decide if you would like to take part. It is up to you and you alone whether you wish to take part. If you do decide to take part you will be free to withdraw at any time without providing a reason, and with no negative consequences.

What would I be required to do?

Participants will be asked to engage in a DELPHI study in which they will be asked to complete a total of three questionnaires across three rounds and respondents will be invited to offer feedback on the responses gleaned from the previous round, which will be used to refine the questions of the subsequent questionnaires until a final consensus can hopefully be reached by the end of the final round.

Are there any risks associated with taking part?

Given that participants will be asked to take part in an optional focus group as part of the study, there is a risk to confidentiality as they may know or be known to other participants in the group from the known EAP community.

Are there any benefits associated with taking part?

The anticipated benefits for participants are as follows, engaging in self-reflection on the nature of critical listening in EAP; determining how critical listening compentency may be evidenced; and, working together with a range of cross-institutional colleagues to shape how critical listening competency may be assessed across the wider academic community.

There will be no direct compensation offered to participants as part of the study.

Informed consent

It is important that you are able to give your informed consent before taking part in this study and you will have the opportunity to ask any questions in relation to the research before you provide your consent.

What information about me or recordings of me ('my data') will you be collecting?

I will be collecting data from EAP Assessment experts on assessment and reporting critical listening competency criteria and interrelating analytical descriptors for the specific context of a PSE course, which will be obtained using three questionnaires during three rounds in accordance with the DELPHI technique. The feedback given by participants to the answers from each previous round will inform the design of the subsequent questionnaire in the next round until a general expert consensus can be reached. The aspiration is for the data to be collected online and remotely during a single session on

Microsoft Teams, to be determined per participant availability. The data will be recorded electronically in real time, on the one hand, participants will be asked to complete the questionnaires using Microsoft Forms and the ensuing joint feedback session will be recorded, pending all participant consent, and the dialogue will be transcribed posteriorly. The data obtained from each participant will be pseudonymised afterwards.

How will my data be securely stored, who will have access to it?

Your data will be stored in a pseudonymised form, which means that the data will be edited so that you are referred to by a unique reference such as a code number or different name, and their original data will be deleted. The pseudonymised data will be stored on a password protected and encrypted University drive, and only the researcher and his supervisor will be able to access it. There will be a 'key' document, which will link your unique reference to your real identity. The key will be kept on my Home drive and will also be encrypted, and password protected, and only the researcher will have access to it and be able to reconnect your data to you at a later date

Audio recordings will be taken on an encrypted device and transcribed at the earliest opportunity before being destroyed OR archived for future use.

When will my data be destroyed?

Participants' data will be shared as described above, and then the data held by the researcher will be kept indefinitely in accordance with the safeguards detailed by law.

International data transfers – Personal data

Your data may/will be stored and processed in Spain. No matter their physical location, researchers are required to store and make use of personal data as if they were in the UK; University requirements and the provisions of the data protection law apply at all times.

Will my participation be confidential?

Yes, your participation will only be known to the researcher and his supervisor.

Use of your personal data for research and data protection rights

The University of St Andrews (the 'Data Controller') is bound by the UK 2018 Data Protection Act and the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), which require a lawful basis for all processing of personal data (in this case it is the 'performance of a task carried out in the public interest' – namely, for research purposes) and an additional lawful basis for processing personal data containing special characteristics (in this case it is 'public interest research'). You have a range of rights under data protection legislation. For more information on data protection legislation and your rights visit https://www.st-andrews.ac.uk/terms/data-protection/rights/. For any queries, email dataprot@st-andrews.ac.uk.

You will be able to withdraw your data before 1st August 2022. If your data is anonymised, we will not be able to withdraw it, because we will not know which data is yours.

Ethical Approvals

This research proposal has been scrutinised and subsequently granted ethical approval by the University of St Andrews Teaching and Research Ethics Committee.

What should I do if I have concerns about this study?

In the first instance, you are encouraged to raise your concerns with the researcher. However, if you do not feel comfortable doing so, then you should contact my Supervisor or School Ethics Contact (contact details below). A full outline of the procedures governed by the University Teaching and Research Ethics Committee is available at https://www.st-andrews.ac.uk/research/integrity-ethics/humans/ethical-guidance/complaints/.

Contact details

Researcher	Peter Bannister	**Supervisor**	Dr Mark Carver
	pb98@st-andrews.ac.uk		mac32@st-andrews.ac.uk

Consent Form

Exploring the Critical Listening Assessment Conundrum on Pre-Sessional EAP Programmes in Higher Education
Peter Bannister

The University of St Andrews attaches high priority to the ethical conduct of research. We therefore ask you to consider the following points before signing this form. Your signature confirms that you are willing to participate in this study, however, signing this form does not commit you to anything you do not wish to do and you are free to withdraw your participation at any time.

Please initial box

- o I understand the contents of the Participant Information Sheet (marked ☐ 'PIS_11.05.22_v1_CLAC')

- o I have been given the opportunity to ask questions about the study and have had them ☐ answered satisfactorily.

- o I understand that my participation is entirely voluntary and that I can withdraw from the ☐ study at any time without giving an explanation and with no disbenefit.

- o I understand who will have access to my data, how it will be stored, in what form it will be ☐ shared, and what will happen to it at the end of the study.

- o I understand that I will be able to withdraw my data before 1st August 2022, and I understand ☐ that if my data has been anonymised, it cannot be withdrawn.

- o I agree to take part in the above study ☐

- o I consent to being part of an optional focus group with people I know or who know me as ☐ part of the study. By not consenting to this, I am still able to complete the questionnaires involved in the study.

Audio recordings / video images

I understand that part of this research involves recording images/audio/video data. These will be kept securely and stored separately to any identifiable information, i.e. consent forms and questionnaires.
Audio and visual data can be a valuable resource for future studies and therefore we ask for your additional consent to maintain this data for this purpose.

- o I agree to have my to being audio recorded ☐

- o I agree to my audio and video material to be published as part of this research. ☐

Exploring the Critical Listening Assessment Conundrum on Pre-Sessional EAP Programmes in Higher Education
Peter Bannister

Thank you for taking part in my research project; your contribution is very valuable and appreciated.

Nature of study

In the study, English for Academic Purposes Assessment expert opinion and consensus on the criteria and interrelating analytical descriptors of critical listening proficiency of international PG students on a PSE course to develop a prototype assessment checklist was ascertained. You were invited to take part in the study given your experience, qualifications, and expertise in the field of EAP. You drew on both your practice and theoretical knowledge of the discipline and applied this through the lens of critical listening competency.

Data

As outlined in the Participant Information Sheet (marked 'PIS_11.05.22_v1_CLAC');

o The information (data) you have provided will be stored in a pseudonymised form.
o Your information (data) will be stored in a secure University drive and only the researcher and his supervisor will be able to access it.
o Your data will be shared published in a pseudonymised form.
o Your data will be kept indefinitely in accordance with the law and its deletion will be subject periodic review every ten years.
o Your data may be used for related research projects in the future without further consultation.
o If you no longer wish to participate in the research, you are free to withdraw your data before 1st August 2022. If your information (data) is anonymous at the point of collection or subsequently anonymised, we will not be able to withdraw it after that point because we will no longer know which information (data) is yours.

Sources of support
If you have been affected by participating in this study and you wish to seek support, you can contact Dr Mark Carver, the researcher's dissertation supervisor, whose contact details are provided below.
Contact
If you have concerns or if you would like to view a summary of the results of my research, please email the researcher or the supervisor detailed below.

Researcher(s)   Peter Bannister
                    pb98@st-andrews.ac.uk

Supervisor(s)   Dr Mark Carver
                    mac32@st-andrews.ac.uk

PARTICIPANTS WANTED

Project Title
Exploring the Critical Listening Assessment Conundrum on Pre-Sessional EAP Programmes in Higher Education

This study is being conducted as part of my, Peter Bannister, MSc TESOL- Assessment and Evaluation dissertation in the International Education Institute at the University of St Andrews.

We invite you to participate in a research project that aims to ascertain English for Academic Purposes Assessment expert opinion and consensus on the criteria and interrelating analytical descriptors of critical listening proficiency of international PG students on a PSE course to develop an assessment checklist. Participants will be asked to engage in a DELPHI study in which they will be asked to complete a total of three questionnaires across three rounds and respondents will be invited to offer feedback on the responses gleaned from the previous round, which will be used to refine the questions of the subsequent questionnaires until a final consensus can hopefully be reached by the end of the final round.

If you are interested, please get in contact using the details below. You will then be given a Participant Information Sheet that further details my research and have the opportunity to ask questions, before being asked whether you consent to participate.

Contact Details

Researcher: Peter Bannister; Mark Carver (Supervisor)

Contact Details: pb98@st-andrews.ac.uk

Draft Questionnaire Screenshots

Note: The brief questionnaire will be completed on Microsoft Forms, only participants who have given their informed consent will be provided the link to access this. Participants will be given access to all answers as part of the focus group which takes place after rounds one and two of the DELPHI study.

<u>Draft Focus Group Guide</u>

Three rounds are contemplated in the data collection process, adhering to established conventions initially the expert participants will be asked to provide answers to a short questionnaire, followed by a second round in which the respondents will have the opportunity to offer feedback on the responses gleaned from the first round. Their responses will inform the formulation of the questions of the third and final round in which it is hoped that expert consensus can be achieved.

The subject matter revolves around the definition of critical listening competency assessment criteria and interrelating analytical descriptors to be used as part of a notional assessment checklist.

The schedule for the focus group is dependent on participant availability, but will be conducted entirely online. It is estimated that the focus group part of the research collection should last for around 45-60 minutes, but given the nature of the research methodology this may vary, always allowing for maximum participant interaction and expert consensus.

The researcher will follow the guidance given in the following article, as recommended by the University of St Andrews as part of the Ethical Guidance site,:

Kite, J., & Phongsavan, P. (2017). Insights for conducting real-time focus groups online using a web conferencing service. *F1000Research*, *6*, 122.

Appendix B- Discreet-item Listening Tests

Table 6

Overview of discreet-item listening tests from a cross-section of EL proficiency exams used for

university entrance (adapted from BALEAP, 2021; Kang et al., 2016)

Exam Name	Sub-skills Tested	Test Components	Task Types
IELTS Academic	-understand main ideas and specific factual information. -recognises the opinions, attitudes, and purpose of a speaker. -follow the development of an argument.	-a conversation between two people set in an everyday social context. - a monologue set in an everyday social context, e.g. a speech about local facilities - a conversation between up to four people set in an educational or training context, e.g. a university tutor and a student discussing an assignment. - a monologue on an academic subject, e.g. a university lecture	A variety of question types are used, chosen from the following: multiple choice, matching, plan/map/diagram labelling, form/note/table/flow-chart/summary completion, sentence completion.
TOEFL	-basic comprehension -pragmatic understanding (speaker's attitude and degree of certainty) and connecting and synthesizing information	4- 6 excerpts from lectures, some with classroom discussion, 3-5 minutes long with six questions. 2-3 conversations from an informal academic context - each 3 minutes long	Five questions per excerpt. Answers are in the form of chart completion and multiple choice.
Pearson Academic	-Understand vocabulary -Comprehend pronunciation -Comprehend information -Identify words and phrases appropriate to context	There are a variety of audio prompts, in academic contexts and/or styles lasting from 3-5 seconds for the dictation to 90 seconds for the mini lectures. Each is heard only once.	Writing a 50–70-word summary after listening to a recording (10 minutes), multiple-choice question on the content or tone of the recording by selecting one or more

	-Identify errors in a transcript -Classify information Identify and summarise structures (Wei & Jeng, 2017)		responses, select the missing word from a list of options, selecting the paragraph that best summarizes the recording, highlighting incorrect words in the transcript of a recording, typing a sentence that has been heard
LanguageCert	-understand clearly articulated standard speech delivered relatively slowly -follow short conversations both formal and informal in a range of familiar situations understanding gist, context, feelings, opinions, and relationships -understand straightforward narratives, sequences, instructions, directions, and explanations -identify the function of short utterances (see Grammar and Functions sections) -follow the main points, speakers, purposes, and attitudes in an extended discussion -extract and reproduce key information from announcements and media broadcasts on a range of familiar topics.	Listen twice to 7 short sentences between 2 speakers, 1 being a formal Listen twice to 3 short conversations between 2 speakers to identify: topic, purpose, context, speakers, gist, relationship between speakers, roles, functions, attitudes, feeling and opinions Listen twice to the recording to identify specific information Listen twice to a discussion to identify gist, examples, fact, opinion, contrast, purpose, key ideas, attitude, cause, and effect	**Part 1: 7 multiple choice questions** (each with 3 options) **Part 2: 6 multiple choice questions** (each with 3 options) **Part 3: 7 questions** (write notes on the message pad based on the information in the recording) **Part 4: 6 multiple choice questions** (each with 3 options)

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Appendix C- Participant Debrief Form and Email

Dear X,

Many thanks once again for your kind participation in my research project. Please find the Participant Debrief document attached for reference.

Best wishes,
Peter Bannister

Debrief

Exploring the Critical Listening Assessment Conundrum on Pre-Sessional EAP Programmes in Higher Education
Peter Bannister

University of St Andrews

Thank you for
taking part in my research project; your contribution is very valuable and appreciated.

<u>Nature of study</u>

In the study, English for Academic Purposes Assessment expert opinion and consensus on the criteria and interrelating analytical descriptors of critical listening proficiency of international PG students on a PSE course to develop a prototype assessment checklist was ascertained. You were invited to take part in the study given your experience, qualifications, and expertise in the field of EAP. You drew on both your practice and theoretical knowledge of the discipline and applied this through the lens of critical listening competency.

<u>Data</u>

As outlined in the Participant Information Sheet (marked 'PIS_11.05.22_v1_CLAC');

o The information (data) you have provided will be stored in a pseudonymised form.
o Your information (data) will be stored in a secure University drive and only the researcher and his supervisor will be able to access it.
o Your data will be shared published in a pseudonymised form.
o Your data will be kept indefinitely in accordance with the law and its deletion will be subject periodic review every ten years.
o Your data may be used for related research projects in the future without further consultation.

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- o If you no longer wish to participate in the research, you are free to withdraw your data before 1st August 2022. If your information (data) is anonymous at the point of collection or subsequently anonymised, we will not be able to withdraw it after that point because we will no longer know which information (data) is yours.

Sources of support
If you have been affected by participating in this study and you wish to seek support, you can contact Dr Mark Carver, the researcher's dissertation supervisor, whose contact details are provided below.
Contact
If you have concerns or if you would like to view a summary of the results of my research, please email the researcher or *the supervisor detailed below.*

Researcher(s)	Peter Bannister	**Supervisor(s)**	Dr Mark Carver
	pb98@st-andrews.ac.uk		mac32@st-andrews.ac.uk

Appendix D- Participant Recruitment Email

Subject: **Critical Listening Assessment Research Study Participation Invitation**

Dear X,

My name is Peter Bannister, and I am an EAP practitioner who is currently completing his MSc TESOL- Assessment and Evaluation dissertation within the department under the supervision of Dr Mark Carver. The title of my project is Exploring the Critical Listening Assessment Conundrum on Pre-Sessional EAP Programmes in Higher Education. The aim of the project is to ascertain English for Academic Purposes Assessment expert opinion and consensus on the criteria and interrelating analytical descriptors of critical listening proficiency of international PG students on a PSE course to develop an assessment checklist.

I am writing to invite you to participate in the project due to your wealth of experience and expertise in the field.

Participants will be asked to engage in a DELPHI study in which will involve attending a one-off two hour online synchronous group session which will take place on 26th July at 14:00 BST. During the session, participants will be asked to complete an initial brief questionnaire and will be invited to offer feedback on the answers gleaned from the from all respondents. These discussions will then be used to refine the questions of the focus of the subsequent questionnaire in the following round until a final consensus can hopefully be reached by the end of the third and final round.

A participant information sheet and consent form with further particulars are available should they be of interest.

Would you kindly confirm if you would consider enrolling as a participant for the live session? If you aren't able to attend, I would be most grateful if you would also let me know if you would be willing to fill out the anonymous initial questionnaire in lieu of this.

Best wishes,
Peter Bannister

Participant Information

Exploring the Critical Listening Assessment Conundrum on Pre-Sessional EAP Programmes in Higher Education
Peter Bannister

What is the study about?

We invite you to participate in a research project about ascertaining English for Academic Purposes Assessment expert opinion and consensus on the criteria and interrelating analytical descriptors of critical listening proficiency of international PG students on a PSE course to develop a prototype assessment checklist.

Why have I been invited to take part?

You have been invited to take part in the study given your experience, qualifications, and expertise in the field of EAP. For this study, participants will be required to draw on both their practice and theoretical knowledge of the discipline and apply this through the lens of critical listening competency.

Do I have to take part?

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What would I be required to do?

Participants will be asked to engage in a DELPHI study in which they will be asked to complete a total of three questionnaires across three rounds and respondents will be invited to offer feedback on the responses gleaned from the previous round, which will be used to refine the questions of the subsequent questionnaires until a final consensus can hopefully be reached by the end of the final round.

Are there any risks associated with taking part?

Given that participants will be asked to take part in an optional focus group as part of the study, there is a risk to confidentiality as they may know or be known to other participants in the group from the known EAP community.

Are there any benefits associated with taking part?

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There will be no direct compensation offered to participants as part of the study.

Informed consent

It is important that you are able to give your informed consent before taking part in this study and you will have the opportunity to ask any questions in relation to the research before you provide your consent.

What information about me or recordings of me ('my data') will you be collecting?

I will be collecting data from EAP Assessment experts on assessment and reporting critical listening competency criteria and interrelating analytical descriptors for the specific context of a PSE course, which will be obtained using three questionnaires during three rounds in accordance with the DELPHI technique. The feedback given by participants to the answers from each previous round will inform the design of the subsequent questionnaire in the next round until a general expert consensus can be reached. The aspiration is for the data to be collected online and remotely during a single session on Microsoft Teams, to be determined per participant availability. The data will be recorded electronically in real time, on the one hand, participants will be asked to complete the questionnaires using Microsoft Forms and the ensuing joint feedback session will be recorded, pending all participant consent, and the dialogue will be transcribed posteriorly. The data obtained from each participant will be pseudonymised afterwards.

How will my data be securely stored, who will have access to it?

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Audio recordings will be taken on an encrypted device and transcribed at the earliest opportunity before being destroyed OR archived for future use.

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Your data may/will be stored and processed in Spain. No matter their physical location, researchers are required to store and make use of personal data as if they were in the UK; University requirements and the provisions of the data protection law apply at all times.

Will my participation be confidential?

Yes, your participation will only be known to the researcher and his supervisor.

Use of your personal data for research and data protection rights

The University of St Andrews (the 'Data Controller') is bound by the UK 2018 Data Protection Act and the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), which require a lawful basis for all processing of personal data (in this case it is the 'performance of a task carried out in the public interest' – namely, for research purposes) and an additional lawful basis for processing personal data containing special characteristics (in this case it is 'public interest research'). You have a range of rights under data protection legislation. For more information on data protection legislation and your rights visit https://www.st-andrews.ac.uk/terms/data-protection/rights/. For any queries, email dataprot@st-andrews.ac.uk.

You will be able to withdraw your data before 1st August 2022. If your data is anonymised, we will not be able to withdraw it, because we will not know which data is yours.

Ethical Approvals
This research proposal has been scrutinised and subsequently granted ethical approval by the University of St Andrews Teaching and Research Ethics Committee.

What should I do if I have concerns about this study?
In the first instance, you are encouraged to raise your concerns with the researcher. However, if you do not feel comfortable doing so, then you should contact my Supervisor or School Ethics Contact (contact details below). A full outline of the procedures governed by the University Teaching and Research Ethics Committee is available at https://www.st-andrews.ac.uk/research/integrity-ethics/humans/ethical-guidance/complaints/.
Contact details

| **Researcher** | Peter Bannister | **Supervisor** | Dr Mark Carver |
| | pb98@st-andrews.ac.uk | | mac32@st-andrews.ac.uk |

Appendix E- Delphi Round I Questionnaire

Exploring the Critical Listening Assessment Conundrum on Pre-Sessional EAP Programmes in HE

The survey will take approximately 45 minutes to complete.

Section 1- Consent Form

Exploring the Critical Listening Assessment Conundrum on Pre-Sessional EAP Programmes in Higher Education

The University of St Andrews attaches high priority to the ethical conduct of research. We therefore ask you to consider the following points before signing this form. Your signature confirms that you are willing to participate in this study, however, signing this form does not commit you to anything you do not wish to do and you are free to withdraw your participation at any time.

1. I understand the contents of the Participant Information Sheet (marked 'PIS_11.05.22_v1_CLAC').

   o   Agree

   o   Disagree

2. I have been given the opportunity to ask questions about the study and have had them answered satisfactorily.

   o   Agree

   o   Disagree

3. I understand that my participation is entirely voluntary and that I can withdraw from the study at any time without giving an explanation and with no disbenefit.

- o Agree
- o Disagree

4. I understand who will have access to my data, how it will be stored, in what form it will be shared, and what will happen to it at the end of the study.

- o Agree
- o Disagree

5. I understand that I will be able to withdraw my data before 1st August 2022, and I understand that if my data has been anonymised, it cannot be withdrawn.

- o Agree
- o Disagree

6. I agree to take part in the above study.

- o Agree
- o Disagree

7. I consent to being part of an optional focus group on 26th July 2022 with people I know or who know me as part of the study.

By not consenting to this, I am still able to complete the questionnaires involved in the study.

- o Agree
- o Disagree

8. I understand that part of this research involves recording images/audio/video data. These will be kept securely and stored separately to any identifiable information, i.e. consent forms and questionnaires.

Audio and visual data can be a valuable resource for future studies and therefore we ask for your additional consent to maintain this data for this purpose.

- o Agree

- o Disagree

9. I agree to have my being audio recorded.

- o Agree

- o Disagree

10. I agree to my audio and video material to be published as part of this research.

- o Agree

- o Disagree

Section 2- Delphi Round I Questionnaire

11. To what extent do you agree with the following definition of critical listening proficiency:

'Critical listening is a process for understanding what is said and evaluating, judging, and forming an opinion on what you hear. The listener assesses the strengths and weaknesses of the content, agrees, or disagrees with the information, and analyzes and synthesizes material... ' (Wuryaningrum et al. 2022, p. 6874)?

12. To what extent do you agree with the following definition of critical listening competency as:

'... the ability to (1) "recognize patterns," (2) "compare and contrast new information with prior knowledge" while comprehending, and (3) "re-evaluate prior knowledge in light of new information" (Thompson et al., 2004, p. 43) (Ferrari-Bridgers et al., 2015).'?

13. To what extent do you agree with the following definition of critical listening competency:

'What we are concerned with is the matter of making value judgements. A good listener certainly "considers source" when he evaluates the worth of what he is listening to. He wants to know whether the speaker brings a background of knowledge to his subject, whether the speaker has more motive in asking action from his audience, whether the speaker is presenting the views he does, not as an individual but as a representative of some group.' (Duker, 1962, p. 566)?

14. In your own words, write a definition of 'critical listening competency' in the context of a postgraduate pre-sessional course.

15. How might postgraduate pre-sessional students be expected to evidence critical listening competency in assessed environment? Please provide specific examples.

16. From your perspective, which key criteria ought to be included as part of a critical listening proficiency assessment checklist?

190030627

17. In your opinion, what analytical descriptors could be used to describe the standards students would be expected to achieve for each criterion suggested in the answer to the previous question?

Appendix F- Delphi Round I Questionnaire Raw Response Data

1. I understand the contents of the Participant Information Sheet (marked

'PIS_11.05.22_v1_CLAC').

1. I understand the contents of the Participant Information Sheet (marked 'PIS_11.05.22_v1_CLAC')

More Details
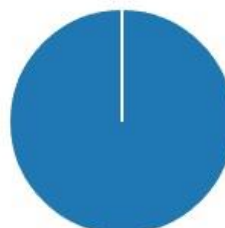
| ● Agree | 6 |
| ● Disagree | 0 |

2. I have been given the opportunity to ask questions about the study and have had them

answered satisfactorily.

2. I have been given the opportunity to ask questions about the study and have had them answered satisfactorily.

More Details

| ● Agree | 6 |
| ● Disagree | 0 |

3. I understand that my participation is entirely voluntary and that I can withdraw from the

study at any time without giving an explanation and with no disbenefit.

3. I understand that my participation is entirely voluntary and that I can withdraw from the study at any time without giving an explanation and with no disbenefit.

More Details

| ● Agree | 6 |
| ● Disagree | 0 |

4. I understand who will have access to my data, how it will be stored, in what form it will be

shared, and what will happen to it at the end of the study.

4. I understand who will have access to my data, how it will be stored, in what form it will be shared, and what
will happen to it at the end of the study.

More Details

● Agree   6
● Disagree   0

5. I understand that I will be able to withdraw my data before 1st August 2022, and I

understand that if my data has been anonymised, it cannot be withdrawn.

5. I understand that I will be able to withdraw my data before 1st August 2022, and I understand that if my
data has been anonymised, it cannot be withdrawn.

More Details

● Agree   6
● Disagree   0

6. I agree to take part in the above study.

6. I agree to take part in the above study.

More Details

● Agree   6
● Disagree   0

7. I consent to being part of an optional focus group on 26th July 2022 with people I know or

who know me as part of the study.

By not consenting to this, I am still able to complete the questionnaires involved in the study.

8. I understand that part of this research involves recording images/audio/video data. These will be kept securely and stored separately to any identifiable information, i.e. consent forms and questionnaires.

Audio and visual data can be a valuable resource for future studies and therefore we ask for your additional consent to maintain this data for this purpose.

9. I agree to have my being audio recorded.

9. I agree to have my to being audio recorded.

More Details

● Agree   6
● Disagree 0

10. I agree to my audio and video material to be published as part of this research.

10. I agree to my audio and video material to be published as part of this research.

More Details
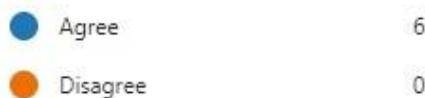
● Agree   6
● Disagree 0

Section 2- Delphi Round I Questionnaire

11. To what extent do you agree with the following definition of critical listening proficiency:

'Critical listening is a process for understanding what is said and evaluating, judging, and forming an opinion on what you hear. The listener assesses the strengths and weaknesses of the content, agrees, or disagrees with the information, and analyzes and synthesizes material... ' (Wuryaningrum et al. 2022, p. 6874)?

11. To what extent do you agree with the following definition of critical listening proficiency: 'Critical listening is a process for understanding what is said and evaluating, judging, an...

6 Responses

ID ↑	Name	Responses
1	anonymous	I agree with some of the key terms like evaluating, judging and form an opinion but "agreeing or disagreeing with the information" seems a little simplistic to me. Presumably, it involves evaluating the extent to which the information is useful to you.
2	anonymous	I agree in principal, although the focus here seems to be less on listening per se, but rather on what you do with the listening input afterwards. To me, the focus should be more strongly on understanding, which is almost taken for granted in this definition.
3	anonymous	I partially agree. This definition does not consider the source of information and the listener's prior knowledge.
4	anonymous	I agree
5	anonymous	I completely agree
6	anonymous	This definition shows a partial representation of what critical listening is for me, I think it is much more complex than what is stated here.

12. To what extent do you agree with the following definition of critical listening competency as:

'... the ability to (1) "recognize patterns," (2) "compare and contrast new information with prior knowledge" while comprehending, and (3) "re-evaluate prior knowledge in light of new information" (Thompson et al., 2004, p. 43) (Ferrari-Bridgers et al., 2015).'?

12. To what extent do you agree with the following definition of critical listening competency as: '… the ability to (1) "recognize patterns," (2) "compare and contrast new information…

6 Responses

ID ↑	Name	Responses
1	anonymous	This is stronger than the previous definition.
2	anonymous	This seems to be one part of critical listening and is also in line with common listening models, where drawing upon background knowledge is often defined as top-down processing. The definition seems to be missing bottom-up processes, though, i.e. it again does not focus enough on understanding what is being said.
3	anonymous	I partially agree. This definition does not consider the source of information.
4	anonymous	I agree
5	anonymous	I do not really agree with it because it is a confusing definition.
6	anonymous	This definition is better than the previous one, although again it does not provide a full account of this complex process.

13. To what extent do you agree with the following definition of critical listening competency:

'What we are concerned with is the matter of making value judgements. A good listener certainly "considers source" when he evaluates the worth of what he is listening to. He wants to know whether the speaker brings a background of knowledge to his subject, whether the speaker has more motive in asking action from his audience, whether the speaker is presenting the views he does, not as an individual but as a representative of some group.' (Duker, 1962, p. 566)?

13. To what extent do you agree with the following definition of critical listening competency: 'What we are concerned with is the matter of making value judgements. A...

6 Responses

ID ↑	Name	Responses
1	anonymous	I agree that this construct involves the ability to consider credibility. Considering motive falls under pragmatic competence and involves criticality as well as knowledge of socio-cultural norms. Belonging to a group is interesting here - I take this to mean that critical listening competency involves the ability to take the content and style of an individual's speech (presumably there would be other factors unrelated to listening - age, gender, appearance) to determine whether that speaker belongs to a certain discourse community based on the listener's knowledge of that community , which could likely be incomplete.
2	anonymous	This is not really a definition, but rather a subjective description. Are these claims based on any empirical evidence? How many "good listeners" want to know whether a "speaker brings a background of knowledge to his subject, whether the speaker has more motive in asking action from his audience, whether the speaker is presenting the views he does, not as an individual but as a representative of some group"? Again, these points seem to be parts of critical listening, but they are certainly not applicable to all situations. In many conversations, listeners would already know a speaker's background knowledge and their motives and group affiliations.
3	anonymous	I partially agree. I wonder if an individual always has to be considered a group representative.
4	anonymous	I agree
5	anonymous	I completely agree
6	anonymous	This has a different take on critical listening and brings to the forefront the stance of the speaker which I think is very important.

14. In your own words, write a definition of 'critical listening competency' in the context of a postgraduate pre-sessional course.

14. In your own words, write a definition of 'critical listening competency' in the context of a postgraduate pre-sessional course.

6 Responses

ID ↑	Name	Responses
1	anonymous	The ability to evaluate the credibility of the spoken messages prospective students are likely to encounter during postgraduate study.
2	anonymous	Writing a definition is very difficult and takes a long time. I think it would be an amalgamation of the above, but the focus should be first and foremost on understanding, and only afterwards on what listeners can do with the input. Listening itself should be more foregrounded.
3	anonymous	The ability to analyse, judge the linguistic and non-linguistic information provided and the reliability of the source and make an opinion, re-evaluating previous knowledge
4	anonymous	Critical listening competency focuses on being able to not just listen for content but also listen for points of view and being able to incorporate the listener's own opinion and previous knowledge on the topic.
5	anonymous	I would not be able to write a definition since I do not have enough information about it, but I would say it is a way of understanding the information you are listening to and providing your own judgemente about what has been said.
6	anonymous	This is quite difficult to do but I think it lies on three key parts: higher order thinking skills which come into play after decoding what is heard; the relation of the information to previous knowledge and other key texts; addressing the accuracy of the information heard.

15. How might postgraduate pre-sessional students be expected to evidence critical listening competency in assessed environment? Please provide specific examples.

15. How might postgraduate pre-sessional students be expected to evidence critical listening competency in assessed environment? Please provide specific examples.

6 Responses

ID	Name	Responses
1	anonymous	Evidence of critical listening might be gathered in interactive debate/seminar/chat room assessments in which students discuss a topic or background sources and the examiner assigns scores representing the level of criticality students' demonstrate when responding to classmates. There's no guarantee that students will demonstrate criticality in this kind of task (even if criteria are published) and a selected response task might be used to gather alternative evidence. Although these kinds of tasks are more common in high stakes standardized tests, useful data can be collected by asking students to identify motives, attitudes, and implications in a recording that can feedback into the design of pedagogical content.
2	anonymous	Integrated listen-speak or listen-write tasks would be a good way to assess this. For example, using an academic discussion on a relevant subject as listening input and asking test takers to provide their own viewpoints based on the discussion.
3	anonymous	Judging the accuracy of the information, justifying their position with reasoned and compelling arguments, evaluating the source
4	anonymous	Students should be expected to give answers based on their opinion and refer to what they have listened to. Open-ended questions should be used.
5	anonymous	I would not be able to give an appropriate answer to this because I do not have the knowledge to say anything about it.
6	anonymous	Students should be asked to do something with the information they hear to demonstrate critical listening. There should be a link between assessment and what they will be asked to do in future. Authenticity in EAP assessment is very important.

16. From your perspective, which key criteria ought to be included as part of a critical listening

proficiency assessment checklist?

16. From your perspective, which key criteria ought to be included as part of a critical listening proficiency assessment checklist?

6 Responses

ID ↑	Name	Responses
1	anonymous	Linguistic processing: lexis, syntax Semantic processing: local level - ideas, global level - overall Discourse competence: cohesion and coherence (e.g. can students recognize an absence of cohesion/coherence in speech) Pragmatic competence: the ability to recognize the relationship between social context and language use and make inferences
2	anonymous	Perhaps (1) understanding the input, (2) referring to the input in the discussion, (3) presenting coherent arguments based on the input (I would need more time to come up with good criteria). However, it seems important to mention that any definition or checklist of critical listening cannot solely be based on listening, but also has to rely speaking or writing (depending on the task type). In other words, critical listening can really only be measured in an integrated way.
3	anonymous	1. Relevant information 2. Accurate information 3. The source 4. Position
4	anonymous	Recalling to previous knowledge and introducing the speaker's opinion into the discourse given by the student.
5	anonymous	I would not be able to give an appropriate answer to this because I do not have the knowledge to say anything about it.
6	anonymous	Relating to previous knowledge; making a judgement; identifying speaker stance; accuracy evaluation.

17. In your opinion, what analytical descriptors could be used to describe the standards students would be expected to achieve for each criterion suggested in the answer to the previous question?

17. In your opinion, what analytical descriptors could be used to describe the standards students would be expected to achieve for each criterion suggested in the answer to th...

6 Responses

ID ↑	Name	Responses
1	anonymous	This is difficult because the terminology that is typically applied in these kinds of descriptors is notoriously subjective (e.g. mostly accurate vs generally accurate). The most useful approach would be to identify students with the various levels of competence you want to describe (e.g. clear pass/needs in service support/ needs to retake the pre-sessional course) as representative of the level. This could be achieved by having them complete your assessment tasks and describing their performance in detail to inform your descriptors.
2	anonymous	The CEFR descriptors might be a good starting point.
3	anonymous	1. The student is able to identify relevant information 2. The student is able to judge accurate information 3. The student is able tojudge the reliabilty of the source 4.The student is able to justify position with reasoned and compelling arguments
4	anonymous	- Inclusion of the student's previous knowledge to build their argument. - Inclusion of the speaker's opinion to build the student's argument. - Inclusion of markers that introduce student's opinions.
5	anonymous	I would not be able to give an appropriate answer to this because I do not have the knowledge to say anything about it.
6	anonymous	I'm not quite sure to be honest.

Appendix G- Thematic Analysis of Delphi Round I Questionnaire Response Data

Table 7

Results of Thematic Analysis of Delphi Round I Questionnaire Response Data

Survey Question	Themes	Theme frequency	Code	Code frequency
In your own words, write a definition of 'critical listening competency' in the context of a postgraduate pre-sessional course.	Source accuracy and credibility evaluation	4	Evaluate credibility of message	2
			Judge the accuracy of the source	2
	Development of individual stance	1	Make own judgement of information	1
	Identify speaker stance	1	Identify speak point of view based on linguistic and non-linguistic information	1
How might postgraduate pre-sessional students be expected to	Integration and remediation	2	Applying information heard in another context such as an essay or seminar discussion, using summarising, paraphrasing and techniques of synthesis.	2

evidence critical listening competency in assessed environment? Please provide specific examples.				1
	Source accuracy and credibility evaluation	2	By making a judgement as to the accuracy of the information heard.	2
	Development of individual stance	1	Formulate their own opinions from what they have heard.	1
	Prior knowledge and intertextuality	1	Compare and contrast the information with prior knowledge and other texts.	1
From your perspective, which key criteria ought to be included as part of a critical listening proficiency assessment checklist?	Integration and remediation	2	Evidencing comprehension through integrated tasks	2
	Prior knowledge and intertextuality	1	Comparison with other texts and previous knowledge	1
	Development of individual stance and stance identification	1	Develop own judgement on topic and linguistic features used by speaker to identify stance	1
				1

	Source accuracy and credibility evaluation	1	Evaluate the reliability and credibility of information.	
In your opinion, what analytical descriptors could be used to describe the standards students would be expected to achieve for each criterion suggested in the answer to the previous question?	Difficulty to define descriptors	3	Difficult to pinpoint- descriptors are subjective.	3
	CEFR descriptors	1	CEFR descriptors.	1
	Source accuracy and credibility evaluation	1	Judge relevant and reliable information	1
	Development of individual stance	2	Justify their own stance with reference to information from the speaker.	1
			Appropriate use of discourse markers to express own opinion.	1
	Integration and remediation	1	Inclusion of prior knowledge and reference to other text to build argument.	1

Appendix H- Focus Group I Transcript

The following transcript was made by the Microsoft Teams transcription service. Names have been pseudonymised and some personal information has been removed in order to protect participant anonymity. Minor errors in the transcription have been corrected by the researcher to reflect the veridical account of contributions in accordance with the recording after the session.

Focus Group Moderator
There we go. Thank you. So just to say thanks to you all once again for kindly accepting to be a part of the study and and my name is The Focus Group Moderator. I am a master's student at the University of St Andrews and I am an English for academic purposes practitioner and this is the agenda which we will be following today, for reference. So after this general welcome.

Let's have a quick note on some very quick points of housekeeping for the session today. Then we'll move over to you and open discussion. We can talk about critical listening, particularly focusing on that transition between definition to assessment criteria after this. So there'll be a second questionnaire to complete. It is shorter than the first, which I'm sure you'll be pleased to know, and we will then move on to becoming even more specific in our discussions and we will finalise with a third and final questionnaire and closing remarks and any other business. Questions, remarks, complaints and suggestions are more than welcome.

So in terms of housekeeping and as I've said, this is being recorded today and I'm genuinely, passionately and enthusiastically interested in your responses in your views, in your intuitions, your experience, I'm really looking forward to hearing from you and please feel free to speak and participate. This is what it's all about, OK? And just because we are online in this new normal and this is being recorded with the transcription service, I'm sure you would do this anyway. But I kindly ask you that if we speak one at a time so that it all contributions can be noted by the transcription service. Please be open and honest in your experience, your views, interpretations and opinions. This is an anonymous research study. The anonymity is afforded to each and every one of you, and in the results were reporting of course, and I would kindly ask that you yourselves as participants in my study, would also respect this anonymisation after the study has concluded.

So I thought just before we get into the main part of today and I am aware of time, but I thought we could just do some brief introductions if that would be possible just so we can get to know each other briefly before we start to talk about the the the topic of critical listening in more depth. Rembrandt, would you like to start us off please? Would that be OK?

Rembrandt
Not sure. Well, my name is Rembrandt. I work for University of [*information removed to protect participant anonymity]* and this is an online university. So we do everything online. Not because of the pandemic. So and well, I'm also the leader of a research group that looks

into personal and professional development through digital genres. And I know FIPS, interplay, linguistics and my main interest is in multimodal discourse analysis and multimodal listening and things like that. And I think that's it sort of more or less. Thank you.

Focus Group Moderator
Thank you. You're very welcome to be here. Thank you. And Van Gogh, you're next on my screen, so over to you please.

Van Gogh
Well, uh. My name is Van Gogh and I am Rembrandt's colleague at the same university.. I am have a PhD in translation and well, my research interests focus on translation and translation pedagogy, academic English assessment, gamification and the use of innovative methodologies in the language classroom. So that would be all.

Focus Group Moderator
Thank you so much.

Van Gogh
Thank you.

Focus Group Moderator
And then over to you please Monet.

Monet
Hello. Hello, everyone. Thank you, the Focus Group Moderator, for the invitation. It is a pleasure to participate and to contribute to your research. So I have a background in translation studies, but I've also been working for some time in the field of English as a foreign language and particularly on listening assessment. I work at the University of [*information removed to protect participant anonymity*] and well, that's basically it.

Focus Group Moderator
Thank you and then Botticelli, over to you.

Botticelli
Thanks, The Focus Group Moderator. So I'm Boticelli. I work at the University of [*information removed to protect participant anonymity*] in English for international students. I have research many aspects of English for Academic Purposes and have a keen interest in pre-sessional assessment enhancement. I'm doing my professional doctorate in education using or looking at legitimation code theory, which is something that I never heard of before, but I'm finding it a revelation. And it's it's really made me rethink all my previous understandings about language learning, language teaching, so I'm at that kind of very liminal stage of not really knowing anymore what I believe and what I don't cause. It all changes.

Focus Group Moderator
Thank you very much. And last but by no means least. Matisse over to you please.

190030627

Matisse

Yeah, hello everyone. So my name's Matisse and I'm an associate lecturer at the University of [*information removed to protect participant anonymity*] in TESOL. I received my PhD from Crella at the University of Bedfordshire in 2018, and my primary focus is language assessment and most recently, which I suspect, why The Focus Group Moderator's asked me to join this this group, most recently with a focus on listening assessment.

Focus Group Moderator

You're certainly not wrong. You're certainly not wrong on this. That amongst many of the other qualities that you have. Thank you. Thank you, everyone. And once again, welcome and thanks again. So you've obviously you have answered this question already, but I I think it's really important that we just get to grips with this. What is critical listening? What is it? I mean, we we we've got different definitions, but how would you personally define this?

Monet

Shall I start?

Focus Group Moderator

Please.

Monet

Or shall we follow the same order and like the way you want to do it? OK, well, to me, I would say it's going beyond what is what has usually been done being done in the in the language, in the language, learning well process like in the classroom where we usually played a recording and students were asked to. And choose one of the answers that they were they had different well, this multiple choice questions and they were usually asked to choose one of the answers. So to me it is going beyond what we ask from them when they're listening to a recording and also asking them to provide their own of their own answer, their own, based on on their on their opinion. But I don't know if I'm. I'm explaining this in the correct way. What I mean is that is like. Basically when we listen to the radio in our own country and then we tell them we call our family or our friend. Oh, you know what I listened to today, what they were saying in the radio. They were saying this or that. And then we also give our opinion to let's say your mom or dad when we do this in the morning after listening to the radio. We're having breakfast or listening to the news on TV, and then we also form our own opinion. That's my definition, I would say.

Focus Group Moderator

Thank you, Monet. Matisse we shall come to you next please.

Matisse

Yeah. Thanks, The Focus Group Moderator. Yeah, well, I mean, so the the way that I would understand it would be as as a cognitive process in a sort of a series of stages. I'm from the beginning sort of receiving. I'm. We'll see if a sound and then performing lexical search and then grammatical parsing sort of semantic parsing, and then critical listening. I would assume comes in at the sort of final stages where this sort of processing of the pragmatic aspects of the message that you're receiving. And so I I would say one of the sort of the final

stages in. In series of cognitive processes that sort of build up towards listening comprehension.

Focus Group Moderator
Thank you. Hope you. Botticelli, please.

Botticelli
Yeah, so this is, this is an area that I have been puzzling over because for me, for me, I've always believed in it. Listening is a cognitive process that, you know, the the, the sound hits the air and the brain processes it. But more and more, I've come to understand critical listening as having a very strong social element or cultural element. And so I think it's really important when we when we're coming up with a definition of critical listening is that how do we, how do we account for that cultural element which is going to be different according to different students. And then when when we're assessing the listening, are we making judgments on on a cultural process that we don't understand or that we don't have insight to. So that's just something that I've been sort of puzzling about. That, that, that critical element is. How do we assess it in a in an objective way, which is what assessment should be when it is so subjective?

Rembrandt
So thanks, yes. I think it's very interesting what you're saying and I completely agree with you. You talked about pragmatics. You talk about cognitive process and also these assessment issue that is central. I wonder how important is? Well, I think along the same lines as Botticelli, she would say there's a cultural company there. So I mean the background, I was students background is there. I was students experience is there and it helped them to understand or not to interpret. I think interpretation here is very important related to what Monet said. OK, how we they interpret OK according to the background knowledge and their previous experience that piece of audio video because I'm concerned about this source. I mean what is the source of this listen is it's only listening.

Only audio it is video because I mean we have to take into account that the input is quite different. If they are listening to it, which is not a common practice nowadays unless they are listening to the radio talking, I mean or just using the phone you want, you mean it's only audio there. And even though when they only listen, I mean from this perspective there is only, there is not only words but they are listening to OK they only, you know intonation post is etcetera.

And they also have to and they also interpret is. Now they have to. They do it. I mean unconsciously. And then when they input is video, I mean that is what they normally do in their L1 or, you know, the non-linguistic the same the same the semiotics mean the different resources they see and they help them to interpret. OK, the message I mean we should take them into account when assessing them too I think Botticelli. And when we design the the, the, the the activities and when we design the questions, OK to check if they understood and they you know that's listening in the video format.

Van Gogh
Well, Umm, I think everything has been already said, right? But I do believe that I agree with

the first thing I agree with Monet when she says that it's going one step further on the use of, well, the regular listenings that I when I was a student in English student and we had to go over very interesting listening CDs and tapes and we had to just select A, B or C and we were not assessed on the information that was being heard but rather.

On if we were being able to identify certain words, certain grammar issues, or like Matisse said, right, first detecting vocabulary and then going over to pragmatics, which would be the the last step that The Focus Group Moderator is probably trying to to to assess. So going one step further is what I do believe that critical listening is and also talking about paraphrasing, summarizing and evaluating what it's being heard.

I and also the aspect of multimodality. I think it's it's pretty interesting here. The source of the listening is it a video? Is it just audio? We were not giving the chance to do listening with video. It was only audio that we were listening to. And nowadays that part shouldn't be left aside. Also on this critical listening aspect. I don't know if that's what you were asking, I don't know if I answered the question.

Focus Group Moderator
Yes, thank you, your contribution has been very helpful. I see you have your hand up Matisse, go ahead. Thank you.

Matisse
So, sorry. Yeah. Can you hear me? Yeah. I I've just saying I I would. I would completely agree with that. And I wonder whether this term that we're using critical listening doesn't actually sort of encapsulate everything that is involved, if there is a visual element to it too. And I also just to bring in just also agree with what Botticelli said, is that, yeah, absolutely. It is certainly social, so socially situated cognition, I suppose it is the way to think about it. And because we are talking about a sort of a series of stages of comprehension leading from.

Matisse
That sort of for the logical processing to the lexical processing, to the grammatical processing. I think 11 important point is that this critical listening, this pragmatic processing isn't possible unless the previous steps are also successful. So there needs to be successful phonological processing that leads the successful lexical processing, and in the final steps would be the socially situated pragmatic processing that facilitates critical listening.

Van Gogh
Yep.

Van Gogh
I agree 100% about these social situated cognition and being this pragmatic processing. I think that would be that would summarize it I I think.

Focus Group Moderator
Thank you. Thank you for the this really insightful responses. I just just want to it to push this a little bit further. Let's put a little bit meat on on the bone. We've said this is a very complex issue. Van Gogh I'm going to pick up, if I may on some of the comments that you

said it. It's about being able to summarize the information, could you elaborate a little more?

Van Gogh
And I I probably say, summarizing, as you said, paraphrasing, and perhaps synthesizing the information in a different way, maybe in a writing activity or in a discussion. I'm not sure what other criteria might be. Botticelli you have your hand up?

Focus Group Moderator
Sorry you're on mute.

Botticelli
Sorry I don't have answers, I just have questions. When I was first starting to design assessments and I sent a I can't remember what paper it was to an external examiner and they came back to me and they said. Let's say it was a reading text and I'd sent it off and and there's response came back. How do I know in my questions that I'm assessing reading?

And that's always stuck with me. And so if we asking students to paraphrase or to summarize listening to texts, to what extent are we assessing more than their ability to listen because it involves other skills as well? And so how do how should we should we try to kind of put listening in a box that's sort of neatly packaged or should we think of it as a combination of other skills?

Matisse
Umm yeah, absolutely the UM this. Oh sorry.

Matisse
Am I on mute?

Focus Group Moderator
We can hear you now, yes.

Matisse
You can hear me now. OK. Sorry. Yeah, I've absolutely. So the, the the issue of sort of indirectly assessing.

If I've been writing or speaking. Whatever it is that's involved in the response, I think it's quite famously been referred to as muddied measurement by Cyril Weir and the Sociocognitive framework. And he says, yeah, absolutely. That is that you can't directly assess listening with sort of constructed response task that involves writing or speaking because you're indirectly also assessing speaking. And so you don't know whether an inability to, let's say paraphrase element of a lecture.

This due to failure to comprehend the lecture or but lack of vocabulary to be able to express your ideas properly. So yeah, absolutely. That's definitely an issue. On the other hand, the alternative of the selected response items which have very little basis in real life sort of multiple-choice questions and true false questions. Another thing I wanted to bring in just in

direct response to The Focus Group Moderator's question was the companion volume to the common European framework, most recent one.

And then you mediation scales that have been introduced there, which I think are quite relevant to this, especially this, this particular aspect of critical link listening.

Focus Group Moderator
Thank you. Thank you very much. And I I just wanted to add to this to to sort of perhaps provide us a bit more focus to my question in in one of the responses received in the first round. One of the participants referred to a student's prior knowledge and their ability to link that information to that in some way. Where would the group stand on that particular point?

Botticelli
So I think that's that's schema theory, isn't it? Like you know you you use what you already know to make sense of what is new. So if you have that advantage of knowledge of the topic then you are going to have an advantage when it comes to processing new information around that topic.

Rembrandt
Now I agree with you, Botticelli, but the point is, should we take into account and how can we measure previous knowledge, I mean?

If you want first has this critical listening, I think it's quite difficult. I guess that involves we have to know them very well and I I think it's not really, I don't know, I don't know, just thinking aloud, that's sorry. Exactly. Matisse?

Matisse
Yeah, it's a potential source of bias, I suppose, isn't it? If you're writing a test. Yeah. And it it taps sort of into background knowledge that might not with is very, very unlikely to be equivalent between your test takers. It's it's a potential source of bias. But one of very, very many. And it's very unlikely that you'll be able to eliminate all sources of bias in your test.

Rembrandt
Sure, sure, you're right.

Matisse
But whether whether you want to sort of explicitly include it in your construct, I think you could be. You could be asking for trouble if you did do that.

Focus Group Moderator
So just just to probe a little deeper on this. If in there were an accompanying explanation that that was given to clarify this as to a student's ability to demonstrate relationships with their prior knowledge. In the example that was given, this was done through for example comparing and contrasting.

Rembrandt

And situating it within that wider body of knowledge? That could be an interesting possibility that would make some sense.

Van Gogh
Yeah. Well, I I I do believe that comparing and well I think there should be some focus on the prior knowledge which I think it's very important when trying to assess critically.

In this case listening well, I, I do believe that should be part of of of the assessment grid like knowing or what type of information does the student have or the prior knowledge that it has around us about a certain topic trying to compare and contrast the new information with the prior knowledge and so that also being able to if the student is able to identify.

What is being said or what is? What are the main points that are being analyzed? I'm trying to well justify them or and how they are related to what they student knows and what it's been heard. I think that's one of the. I do believe that it prior knowledge is key to assessing critically the this, this this critical listening.

Focus Group Moderator
Thank you. Over to you, Botticelli.

Botticelli
So I suppose I'm. I'm just looking at the title of your research, looking at listening on pre sessional programs. I suppose one way that you could you could accommodate students having different amounts of knowledge around the topic is to align your assessment. The topic of your assessment with the topics that you deliver on the course. So for example our block 3 pre Sessional Course, which is the final block and the the topic the theme of the of the block is sustainable development goals, so all the materials are focused on sustainable development goals, so even if students don't know anything about them before they start by the end, by the end of the eight weeks we would hope that students would have enough of it familiarity and they would have been looking at the goals in relation to their own disciplines.

That they would have a working knowledge to be able to make sense of anything that was used in the assessment.

Focus Group Moderator
Thank you. Thank you very much and.

Focus Group Moderator
I'm just, just just give my eye on the time you saying I just want want to move this on to the next question and with regards to stance and the individual's stance. Monet, what do you think?

Monet
This is interesting. I would specifically refer in terms of the speaker's stance. I think being able to identify this and the linguistic elements which reflect this in in the discourse and on the other hand, the respondent mentioned developing and reflecting on.

The student's individual stance is different though. As a listener I am making a judgment evaluating that information and and taking a decision. I'm not sure what everyone else thinks?

Rembrandt
Uh, I think it it's, it's crucial. I mean, I mean, considering the stance, I mean, if they're able to identify speaker stance, I mean essential if we want to maybe like to, I mean strong in my statement. But I think it's central if we are evaluating critical critical listeners, right. And yes through for example, evaluative language judgments that they made and as important as checking if they are able to perceive, identify right speaker stance is they they have the chance to show OK their own position. OK to us what is been listened to now. I think this this is should be from my point of view central in assessment process from a critical perspective.

Focus Group Moderator
Thank you. And over to you. Matisse.

Matisse
Thank you very much. Yeah, no, I I definitely agree with you, Rembrandt. I think I think that this is part of authentic listening processing and so should also be reflected in, in any tests of listening. I do have a slight problem with this though in the way that we think about someone having a stance in academia because there's a sort of consensus that in in many disciplines at least.

We have sort of objectivity and things should be supported by sort of empirical evidence and fact, and I'm I'm not sure how well that aligns with the idea of having a stance on a on a particular topic. If you're lecturer is particularly opinionated about the topic and perhaps isn't basing.

The content of the of the of the lecture on this kind of evidence, then. That it will be clear that they have a stance and and you might as a listener, you might respond to that. But I I I don't know how common that is. I suppose I haven't really thought this through completely, but I do think there's a bit of a problem with that term stance in, in, in academia at least.

Botticelli
Yeah, I I agree, because I think often the strongest stances are often the least supported by evidence. And so therefore the essentially the least critical. And it's, you know, so criticality is is not only linked to listening it it's it's a. It's a it's a way of being, isn't it? It's a it's a way of of engaging with an environment, whether it's through reading, listening, speaking, writing.

And so.I think we need to be very careful when we try and put critical and listening together as if they just two sort of equal elements which we can just combine because criticality is so core and it it it runs through all engagement with learning.
And I think that in terms of how we assess it and how we measure it, we need to be really, really careful. That we're not turning it into a tick box activity where the student, you know, like with IELTS, the student can just throw in a few key phrases and they tick the boxes,

which is the opposite of the criticality that we're wanting students to exhibit. So again, it's just really difficult to to capture the complexity of that process. Stance is not really the best way to capture this.

Focus Group Moderator
And could we perhaps as a group, think of an alternative that, say, terminology for one of a better or term for stance that would be more encapsulating of the reality that we're trying to evaluate?

Monet
Position? Bias, of course. It's like more strong, but anyway to the group see to point to that.

Botticelli
So it would be sort of what evidence is is does the speaker use to support their position? Is there any evidence to support the position?

Rembrandt
But Botticelli, don't you think this is also related to the? The validity of the ability now. I mean, I'm in the credibility of the speaker. Maybe in one of the definitions we we had in the questionnaire and in in the sub was something related to that. I mean I mean the how these students may be perceive this speaker, I don't know maybe.

Van Gogh
But I do believe that that it's it's also complicated to to to either use the synonym that doesn't imply the same viewpoint, position, whatever we use, it's going to be exactly the same. And I think what Memphis is trying to say, it's talking about something like reliability, like trying to say what type of if the information is reliable, if it's not.

The the maybe the accuracy of the information that it's being heard and what it's the purpose of what it's being listened to. So probably one thing would be stance, viewpoint and another different thing would be judging or making or the level what is the authority of from the speaker. It's more more about evaluating the reliability you see.

Matisse
Umm, I agree.

Rembrandt
Hmm hmm that's a good point.

Van Gogh
I I think that there are two different things that shouldn't be included in this. I don't think that they should be included in the same. I think there are different, I don't know.

Rembrandt
Umm. Maybe considering the word stance. If I understood you right, it's about the topic Matisse. I mean if this for example the lecture of whatever they are listening to you watching is about a very specific topic or a topic that is really you know. How can they

questioned or how can they have a an opinion about that if they know less than the speaker. Do you mean that Matisse, do you refer to that?

Matisse
Well, I think I think that's definitely an element. I'm I think more directly though, what I was referring to was the idea of having a a sort of a stable stance on things. I mean, I I personally can't say that I've really got very many things that I've got sort of a stable, identifiable stance on when I think about things, maybe a few sort of political very sort of vaguely a few political ideals, possibly. And then maybe when I'm writing a a research paper, maybe I develop a stance after I presented my results.

And maybe I I do the same if I was presenting on on a topic and I was sort of bringing in different research projects, research findings. But the idea of a stance in academia.
Just doesn't sit very well with me. I am I I I do. I think you're on the right sort of track with the idea of credibility, though, and authority sort of having authority to speak and having credibility to speak and and and actually be believed.

But the the idea that that I would have a stance when I began a lecture. Aside from sort of very very general like, this is interesting. What I'm talking to. You know what I'm talking about is interesting, and therefore you should listen to it. Aside from that being my stance. So I'm not sure if I would have a stance in a lecture. If that makes sense. Position might be a more appropriate alternative.

Van Gogh
That would work for me.

Rembrandt
Umm. I agree there.

Focus Group Moderator
Botticelli, would you like to chime in?

Botticelli
So maybe what we should be doing and this is again not really talking about assessment, but talking about how we teach is to is to teach students like a set of criteria that they can use to apply to different situations. I'm so like you know, Matisse is saying, well, authority, accuracy.

Reliability, currency. All of those criteria. And then. Teach students to to work through those, but I think you still gonna have that cultural that social element to how students apply them. I was just thinking about. I was listening to the radio this morning.

And they were talking about political argument and how it's sort of evolved over the centuries. And they were talking about Donald Trump, you know, and there was saying, like, how can somebody who is so factually inaccurate, he inconsistent, unreliable, but yet so many people believe him. And and there's sort of this, you know, how is it and and that just got me thinking it's because people aren't trained to see through that, you know, they just

they they fall for that because they don't have the skills to be able to analyse in a in a sort of wider context.

Matisse
Umm.

Rembrandt
Yeah.

Monet
Yeah.

Van Gogh
Exactly.

Matisse
It does. It does require quite a good deal of background knowledge in order to sort of question someone that's so charismatic though as well, right? You need, you need to have sort of arsenal of of what? Data and figures in order to in order to say, you know this this is this is nonsense. What you're saying. And I suppose from a student's perspective it must be very, very difficult to sit at the back of a classroom and listen to a lecturer, you know, sort of talk and think without having that arsenal.

Botticelli
Umm.

Matisse
And be critical about about what it is that they're saying, you know, I mean, possibly that you might be able to identify problems with with the logic of what they're saying, but I think a lot of the time, at least in the social sciences, it it's more about sort of data and interpretation of data and sort of expertise and things like statistical analysis and things like that. Maybe it's different in the humanities and maybe.

Matisse
Maybe that's reflected. You know, in this sort of the way that you think about critical listening, maybe it's a different construct for different sort of academic disciplines.

Focus Group Moderator
Thank you. Thank you, Matisse and I just wanted to touch on on the student again, because we did mention this briefly, but we we sort of took a left turn and we're focusing on the lecture element. Monet, if I could possibly bring in you you on this please. So, so when it I'm gonna dare to use the word stance. Just just for arguments sake. Do bear with me when it comes to the student sort of making it a judgment, evaluating the information that they're given. Demonstrating criticality.

Rembrandt
Their use of pronouns in activities for example. I mean, first personal pronoun singular. Are

they showing their position or, you know, all these key? Linguistic elements that give some. You know, hints about the showing critical thinking too, because I I think that critical listening is quite related to critical thinking in some way, right. They are listening to or watching the video and listening and we it's kind of a stimulus for them to, you know think right. So I don't know. I think that's Jasmine can be evaluated. I mean we can evaluate.

Some statements or answers are show their judgment from different perspectives. OK, from a linguistic perspective, but also, of course about content, obviously. Sorry, Monet.

Monet
You're better than this is just that I was actually writing that down is, you know, you said exactly what I wanted to add because I was again processing all the information that has already been set. And I was like, OK, we're asking student to listen to something and then we're asking them to critical, think about what has been said and to give an opinion about it. But it's kind of part of the process, but it's different. What are we trying to evaluate well? If we're trying to evaluate if they understood correctly, that's one thing. But then if we're trying to make them provide an opinion on the topic, that's another thing. So.
Critical thinking, critical listening. Yeah. I mean, it's kind of like, well, I I believe it's listening and then. Critical critically, think thinking critically on the topic that has been. It's not easy to provide like just one opinion on a set list that it to say, yes, let's uh reach consensus here. This is what it is and we all agree on this. It's like, you know something that could be discussed for hours and hours. So interesting.

Focus Group Moderator
Thank you.

Matisse
But that's that's a good thing for The Focus Group Moderator, because he's writing his master's thesis on it, right?

Monet
Yeah, totally. Like now. You make me wanna know more about it, you know, like I wanna start researching on the topic. So interesting.

Focus Group Moderator
Thank you. Thank you so much. So I think this is just a wonderful moment for us to move on to the next stage, if that's possible. I know there is so much to say. As you all said and I'm so appreciative of your comments and so the next stage in accordance with the agenda would be filling in a second questionnaire. So I have been listening for, I don't know, to what extent critically, but certainly listening to it all the comments that you've said.

Focus Group Moderator
And and you'll see in the questions that there are some of the ideas that we've mentioned, which are based on your comments from now and also on the responses from the first survey. And so please take your time to fill this in. And the best thing we're going to say any idea is most welcome, of course. Thank you.

Botticelli
How long do we have The Focus Group Moderator?

Focus Group Moderator
And probably about 20-25 minutes. Something like this, if that's OK. Thank you.

Focus Group Moderator
If you've finished. Thank you very much. Please feel free to go and get yourself a refreshment. Also could comfort break. Thank you.

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Appendix I- Thematic Analysis of Focus Group I Data

Table 8

Results of Thematic Analysis of Focus Group I Data

Themes	Theme frequency	Code	Code frequency
Previous knowledge	17	Difficulty to define relevance for a test construct, if understood solely as declarative knowledge	8
		Relation of prior knowledge to schema theory	3
		Pragmatic competence	3
		Situate in relation to other key texts on a specific taught course	2
		Make connections with wider context	1
Credibility and accuracy evaluation	6	Determine the level of speaker credibility	2
		Identify the reliability of the information	2
		Clarify the accuracy of the speaker	2

Remediation and integration	6	Summarising	2
		Paraphrasing	2
		Synthesising	2
Speaker stance	5	Inadequacy of 'stance' as assessment criteria terminology in academia	3
		Identify speaker stance	1
		Evaluative language judgements	1
Student stance	1	Make a value judgement of what's heard	1

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Appendix J- Delphi Round II Questionnaire

R2- Exploring the Critical Listening Assessment Conundrum on Pre-Sessional Programmes in HE

This survey will take approximately 20 minutes to complete.

Section 1- Consent Form

1. I continue to give my consent to participate as per my answers provided in the previous questionnaire.

   o   Agree

   o   Disagree

Section 2- Delphi Round II Questionnaire

2. How could a student evidence or demonstrate their capability of evaluating the accuracy and credibility of an aural text?

3. What attributes might a student demonstrate proficiency in integrating or remediating information from a listening text into another medium?

4. If a student is asked to reflect on and formulate their own opinion on what they hear, what key elements might we look for as evidence of this?

5. In which specific ways, could a student satisfactorily demonstrate their competency in recognising and evaluating a speaker's stance on a given topic?

6. If you were required to evaluate a student's ability to compare and contrast information in a listening text by linking it to their previous knowledge, what key traits would you look out to validate this?

7. Are you in agreement with the criteria mentioned thus far? Are there any further criteria you think ought to be contemplated?

Appendix K- Delphi Round II Questionnaire Raw Response Data

Section 1- Consent Form

1. I continue to give my consent to participate as per my answers provided in the previous questionnaire.

Section 2- Delphi Round II Questionnaire

2. How could a student evidence or demonstrate their capability of evaluating the accuracy and credibility of an aural text?

2. How could a student evidence or demonstrate their capability of evaluating the accuracy and credibility of an aural text?

5 Responses

ID ↑	Name	Responses
1	anonymous	Make a judgement as to the currency of the information heard. Evaluate the reliability of the information given by the speaker. Determine the level of accuracy in the aural text. Clarify the level of authority of the speaker in relation to the topic. Evaluate the speaker's purpose and any potential bias.
2	anonymous	If the analyse what the speaker has said to justify their own answer and make a judgment about it.
3	anonymous	Making reference to some statements uttered by the speaker and justifying why they are considered accurate and credible
4	anonymous	Constructed response tasks such as an interview about a listening text. The interview would require questions written in advance designed to measure criticality.
5	anonymous	Make a judgement as to the currency of the information heard. Evaluate the reliability of the information given by the speaker. Determine the level of accuracy in the aural text. Clarify the level of authority of the speaker in relation to the topic. Evaluate the speaker's purpose and any potential bias.

3. What attributes might a student demonstrate proficiency in integrating or remediating information from a listening text into another medium?

3. What attributes might a student demonstrate proficiency in integrating or remediating information from a listening text into another medium?

5 Responses

ID ↑	Name	Responses
1	anonymous	Summarise the key points from the speaker's line of argument. Paraphrase the essence of the speaker's ideas in own words. Synthesise the ideas from an aural text with those from another or other media.
2	anonymous	If part of the information they heard is rephrased in what they express and they also add further information (it could be factual or subjective information).
3	anonymous	Don't understand the question
4	anonymous	Paraphrase and summary. Knowledge of synonyms. Lexical alignment. Working memory capacity as temporary store of information.
5	anonymous	Summarise the key points from the speaker's line of argument. Paraphrase the essence of the speaker's ideas in own words. Synthesise the ideas from an aural text with those from another or other media.

4. If a student is asked to reflect on and formulate their own opinion on what they hear, what key elements might we look for as evidence of this?

4. If a student is asked to reflect on and formulate their own opinion on what they hear, what key elements might we look for as evidence of this?

5 Responses

ID ↑	Name	Responses
1	anonymous	Analysing the language used by the speaker.
2	anonymous	If they identify the main points the speaker is talking about and synthesise the ideas to give their own opinion.
3	anonymous	The use of evaluative language and the jutification of their responses
4	anonymous	Aspects of the response that have not been discussed in the source text.
5	anonymous	paraphrase the speaker's ideas, and then agree or disagree by providing reasons/evidence

5. In which specific ways, could a student satisfactorily demonstrate their competency in recognising and evaluating a speaker's stance on a given topic?

5. In which specific ways, could a student satisfactorily demonstrate their competency in recognising and evaluating a speaker's stance on a given topic?

5 Responses

ID ↑	Name	Responses
1	anonymous	Identify and evaluate speaker's point of view. Analyse the language used by the speaker to justify evaluation of their stance. Reflect on and formulate own position.
2	anonymous	When they summarise what has been said, paraphrase it and then express their own opino.
3	anonymous	Referring to some phrases/ sentences said by the speaker that reveal his/her stance
4	anonymous	I think this would have to be in response to a direct question in an interview format or as part of a selected response task e.g. In her discussion of Hardy's work, the lecturer is being a) sarcastic b) genuine etc.
5	anonymous	Identify and evaluate speaker's point of view. Analyse the language used by the speaker to justify evaluation of their stance. Reflect on and formulate own position.

6. If you were required to evaluate a student's ability to compare and contrast information in a listening text by linking it to their previous knowledge, what key traits would you look out to validate this?

6. If you were required to evaluate a student's ability to compare and contrast information in a listening text by linking it to their previous knowledge, what key traits would you look...

5 Responses

ID ↑	Name	Responses
1	anonymous	Analyse how the information relates to previous knowledge. Identify speaker's points which justify previous knowledge. Compare and contrast new information with prior knowledge.
2	anonymous	Integration and judgement.
3	anonymous	Key words and connectors that reveal they are comparing and contrating, and references to their previous knowledge
4	anonymous	The ability to evidence comprehension of aspects of the speech that would likely draw upon previous knowledge; correct selected response to an "attitude" question or a question focusing on pragmatics "It is clear that the speakers are a. friends b. colleagues c. work mates". I would say that this is knowledge of social conventions, which falls under previous knowledge. But doesn't the term previous knowledge imply factual, declarative knowledge?
5	anonymous	Analyse how the information relates to previous knowledge. Identify speaker's points which justify previous knowledge. Compare and contrast new information with prior knowledge.

7. Are you in agreement with the criteria mentioned thus far? Are there any further criteria you think ought to be contemplated?

7. Are you in agreement with the assessment criteria mentioned thus far? Are there any further criteria you think ought to be contemplated?

5 Responses

ID ↑	Name	Responses
1	anonymous	I agree.
2	anonymous	Yes
3	anonymous	3 is not clear
4	anonymous	Perhaps it is important to clarify previous knowledge. It seems quite broad to me. Does it involve pragmatic competence?
5	anonymous	I think we need to be careful to define what is a cognitive process, and what is a social process, and how we assess the two

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Appendix L- Thematic Analysis of Delphi Round II Questionnaire Response Data

Table 9

Results of Thematic Analysis of Delphi Round II Questionnaire Response Data

Survey Question	Themes	Theme frequency	Code	Code frequency
How could student evidence or demonstrate their capability of evaluating the accuracy and credibility of an aural text?	Reliability Evaluation Descriptors	12	Identify any factual inconsistencies.	3
			Take into account the age of the information and potential changes.	3
			Reflect on any vested interests a speaker might have.	2
			Consider the background and qualifications of speaker.	2
			Do not take what is said solely at face value.	2

What attributes might a student demonstrate proficiency in integrating or remediating information from a listening text into another medium?	Remediation and Integration Descriptors	10	Explain the speaker's ideas using their own words.	4
			Being able to outline the key points from the speaker in own words.	4
			Integrate the views expressed by the speaker with other opposing or supporting views.	2
If a student is asked to reflect on and formulate their own opinion on what they hear, what key elements might we look for as evidence of this?	Position Descriptors	18	Refer to analysis of language and points made by speaker as rationale for opinion.	4
			Use of evaluative language to express own opinion.	3
			Address aspects which have not been discussed in the source text.	1
In which specific ways, could a student satisfactorily demonstrate their competency in			Specifically identify sections of the source text that demonstrate a speaker's stance.	5

recognising and evaluating a speaker's stance on a given topic?			Identify specific linguistic devices and features that indicate directly or indirectly a speaker's position.	4
			Identify the overall tone and nature of the discourse- sarcasm, humour, sincerity etc.	1
If you were required to evaluate a student's ability to compare and contrast information in a listening text by linking it to their previous knowledge, what key traits would you look out to validate this?	Prior Knowledge Descriptors	10	Paradigmatic competence, based on prior knowledge of social conventions rather than declarative knowledge, such as nuance and meaning in context.	3
			Identify other sources which support and/or contrast with the information heard.	3
			Explicitly acknowledge how the new information from the text fits in with what the student already knows.	2
			Make the link between other key texts studied in-depth on the course.	1

			Previous knowledge is an uncontrollable variable which may favour some students over others.	1

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Appendix M- Focus Group II Transcript

As with Focus Group I, the following transcript was made by the Microsoft Teams transcription service. Names have been pseudonymised and some personal information has been removed in order to protect participant anonymity. Minor errors in the transcription have been corrected by the researcher to reflect the veridical account of contributions in accordance with the recording after the session.

Focus Group Moderator
OK, everyone, thank you very much for that. And I very much appreciate it. So and all your responses have now been received. So in this next section, we'll be coming back to the discussion element that we engaged in previously, but now we're going to be a little bit, should we say it's a bit more structured and in the perhaps going question by question and let's say with regards to those assessment criteria and attempting at least to nail down this some specific descriptors which we may use as part of a notion assessment checklist in the classroom environment. We'll just go from the top of that's alright everyone. So and we spoke about the evaluation of accuracy and credibility.

I'm gonna throw that out there. Are there any descriptors in particular that any of you feel particularly strongly or enthusiastic about this? That ought to be included? Or disregarded perhaps?

Van Gogh, would you like to start us off?

Van Gogh
Yes. UM. UM, well, this has to do with what I said before about the reliability, right. Uh, there were the evaluation of the reliability of the of the text. So how could they evidence? Well, by whether if they're able to demonstrate or say the the level of authority of what it's being said or what the person is saying, what is the, the, the, the the purpose.

Of of the speaker if it's. If there is any potential bias on the on the on the discourse, and. I think what else? The accuracy of what is being said and I don't know, I don't know if I'm missing something else. Yeah, I don't know if anybody wants to add something.

Monet
I just want to say. That this criterion is very very important for students. As was said earlier, I think we were talking about politicians before that. If a person is very charismatic or if they're speaking a very confident way would be difficult to evaluate the accuracy or the credibility of the source so. But I mean, I agree with what Van Gogh has just said.

Van Gogh
You just speakers say if the student is able to to, I don't know, has this also is linked to the previous knowledge that Matisse about so everything is pretty much linked.

Monet
Exactly. Yeah, that's what I was gonna say. Yeah, because if you don't.

Van Gogh
If if you don't know a certain politician, probably the reliability for you will. But he would be very much very reliable or or just the opposite. So I don't know.

Monet
Yeah. Or it's happened to me in the past that I've listened to somebody and I believed everything they said. And then I went on another website or I talked to someone and they said, Oh no. But that's completely the opposite of what should be, they say, the add information about the topic that I didn't know before. And then I have a different point of view. But yeah, again, it's very interesting. I think it could be discussed for hours.

Van Gogh
I think they would. I guess Monet what you mean is that it's difficult to say because we have been assessing listening one way, there's right and wrong and when when we are critically, when we are talking about critical listening, I think there's not right or wrong. It's rather that's why when when we are doing this assessment checklist or whatever, it's complicated to say, oh, they are their opinion is correct or not no.

Monet
Yeah.

Van Gogh
We're just trying to assess if the student is basing their judgment on what is being said, taking into account by using our formulating their position, using certain words, so linking to what it's being said to, what they know, trying to evaluate the reliability of what is being said, summarizing the key ideas, paraphrasing, I think that that's what Monet is trying to to say.

Focus Group Moderator
Thank you. See both I I think Botticelli your hand was up first and then over to Matisse please.

Botticelli
So to me, the difficulty in assessing this is the fact that we're in a in a normal assessment, we give students one text and it it's it's impossible for students to make an accurate judgment on one text out of context there maybe if we're really talking about.

The development of critical skills we need to do it in a longitudinal way, so expose students to multiple texts and allow them to to cumulatively come to an evaluation of the accuracy of several texts rather than just one.

Matisse
So I'm just sort of in the envisioning some tasks that you might sort of use to assess this. And I suppose one would be to sort of present students with short listening to texts and just directly ask them in which text is the speaker inconsistent in which text is the speaker directly contradict themselves and it could be text ABC and perhaps it's, you know, one

minute per text. You can say quite a lot in a minute. You can say sort of around 120 stretching to 150 words. That might be one way. Another way might be sort of developing a task where they they recognize inconsistency in a single text.

With a sort of matching, imagine sort of two columns. So you have sort of along this column, you'd have to certain ideas that are mentioned and along this column sort of other ideas and then they could sort of match to show which ones are linked and which ones are inconsistent. So I think I think there is a way of developing sort of selective response tasks to measure this is this speaker being.
Inaccurate or inconsistent in what they say meaning that this speaker is not very credible

And and it it depends what you're assessment context is. If if you have 100 students, 150 a thousand students and you wanna get information on how well they can do that, you'd you'd select selective response task like like this. But I think equally you could probably do it as well in an interview, which is what I I wrote in the in the in the question. It would take some time to to think to think of questions in advance of the interview.

But but I think I think you could measure this. It's it's definitely not conventional, though. It's definitely kind of the kind of conventional question that we have on listening test.

Focus Group Moderator
Thanks, Matisse. Rembrandt.

Rembrandt
But I agree with you, with what you have mentioned about just to add. I also am in line with Botticelli's ideas too. Uh, that's all thanks.

Focus Group Moderator
Thank you. So are there any other comments to add on? Question one, else? Ok so let's now move on to question 2. So what attributes might student demonstrate proficiency in integrating or remediating? So taking into that concept of multimodality information from a listening text into another medium.

Van Gogh
I suppose that what you what you expect from students is that they're able to summarize what they what they heard the key ideas. Uh, and then trying to paraphrase what also that that could be another very interesting line to paraphrase, using their own words. Yes, the the the key points are the key topics of the of the of the text.

And maybe trying to UM cause this. Also I find it complicated. Botticelli, I I agree with Botticelli when she says that it's kind of it's rather well. Monet also said it and it's rather complicated to to, to, to come up with a a definite checklist. But that's what happens with all of rubrics and things like that, right? That there's very complicated to come up with the final and the ultimate tool that's not possible. So because they're very different texts, there will be very different speakers.

Yeah. So, like with Donald Trump is a very good example. So also maybe if the activity is to

listen from like critical listening is also critical like like what did they nest before critically thinking about what it's being said. So the student would be able to probably listen to the same person talking different or the same topic being dealt with in different scenarios, different media.

Trying to being able to, you know, listen to what it's being said about this certain topic and different maybe TV channels or radio stations and synthesise these different points. Saying all these ideas I'm trying to, you know, paraphrase them, summarize them. That would be one of that would be a good way to to see if the student. Can you know integrate all this information?

Matisse
That was, yeah, essentially, ability to summarize ability to paraphrase, I think one that we haven't mentioned is is the ability to produce synonyms from the from the source text. UM, but also I think essentially, though it sort of ability to store information in working memory, right and store it correctly in working memory, because if you haven't got that ability then you you're you won't be able to integrate or remediate. So that would either be sort of on help, you mean you'd be sort of independently storing information yourself or you'd have access to some kind of note taking device. So that might be brought in as well. So perhaps note taking, but definitely working memory capacity.

Focus Group Moderator
Thank you. Any further comments on this one? Botticelli? Botticelli, go ahead.

Botticelli
Yeah, I just find what Matisse was saying about no taking I find note taking very tricky because you know we in in EAP we talk about the importance of note taking. Students must take notes and they listening. But when you look in real life, nobody's taking notes anymore. I'm you know, they're either recording the classes or they have they just using the PowerPoints or or whatever. So it's a kind of a skill that I don't know to me I see the value in it. But I think that maybe we as teachers don't really articulate the value anymore. We just assume it's a good thing.

And maybe students are thinking like why my doing this old fashioned, like writing things down on paper when I actually I've got all the PowerPoint slides. So I I always struggle with note taking. I intrinsically understand the value of of putting words into text.

And it sometimes put into listening tests as a, you know, students take notes and then they do something with it. And I'm always a bit weary of what is the role of the notes in the listening is it, is it part of the assessment, it or is it just a means of enabling the assessment. So that's something as well that I think we're just we just do without being very clear about what the purpose is of using notes or taking notes.

Focus Group Moderator
Thank you. Any further comments on this? OK, if not, so let's move on to the next question. If a student is asked to reflect on and formulate their own opinion of what they hear, what are the key elements that we might look for is evidence of this.

Botticelli
Right. When I look at answers to questions like this, I quite like to see originality. I like to see. Umm. And something unexpected. Something that's not just paraphrasing what the speaker has said.

So it a genuine attempt to engage with the content and to formulate their own opinion rather than just sort of a lazy paraphrase, or I agree with the speaker.

Rembrandt
I'm sorry.

Focus Group Moderator
Rembrandt and then Matisse please.

Rembrandt
Yeah, yeah, yes, yes, absolutely. I mean the the same here. I mean the, I mean, the thing that they are not repeating things we said have been said in the video on the audio. And then I also look for this originality. I mean, what is new? What is the new ideas that they incorporate?

And and trying to see if they have, you know, created something new. OK, out of what they have listened to, I think that's one of the main my main object is when I measure this.

Monet
Or they can express the same idea, but in with their own words, in their own words, mean rephrasing. Again, as we have said before, what it was said in the recording. I mean, originality is definitely key, but I would say that also they can maybe repeat what has been said by expressing it in their own words and adding their own opinion.

Botticelli
So yeah, suppose if I mean, if somebody really agrees with the speaker, then they really agree with the speaker, but then maybe I would look for them to be saying why.

But but I think the original contribution to me would score higher marks even if it wasn't quite as polished as maybe just a paraphrase of the speaker.

Matisse
Yeah.

Van Gogh
But this is just like when we had this list. I mean, I don't know. As a student, I have. I've taken lots of English tests and we are always asked to when we have this in interaction with another person in an in an English test, we are asked to yeah, I agree. Or do you agree? And the teacher always said no, no, you you cannot say. Oh yes, I agree. You have to continue and extend your response.

And add your own contribution. And so we were asked to include an experience or something that we could. This originality that Botticelli mentioned. And yes, this is. This I mean this is key in any listening or in in any listening activity I think we have well I have we have done this millions of times, so yeah.

Matisse
Yeah, there's definitely an aspect of that sort of test wise strategies that coming into it. They're getting taught how to how to pass the test for, for for this particular question, I think I think a key element has to be you know the the the student is produced, something that they haven't heard. So something novel there.

Matisse
That they're not just repeating what they've heard. You know that this key element so evidence that they've got an opinion. OK. Need to hear something that I haven't from them that I haven't heard from the source text.

Rembrandt
But for me I would link this whole idea together with how the speaker positions themselves uh in the text in one assessment category because it's it's part of I mean two sides of the same coin. Right?

Monet
I agree. There is a link between the two.
Botticelli
Yeah

Focus Group Moderator
Thank you. And on this, to what extent is this all and dare I say it linked to prior knowledge which are just about to go on to is, is that a possible anyway to be explored?

Focus Group Moderator
In terms of expressing originality.

Matisse
But.

Botticelli
But.

Botticelli
Give them.

Matisse
Sorry, I've Botticelli. Please, please.

Botticelli

It's very difficult this. You can't control for that. You can't control for prior knowledge. Just that you can't control for the fact that some people you know have access to private education and other people don't, and access to language teaching from a young age and other people don't. So it's just one of those factors which advantage some people.

Matisse
It's a very, very broad category. Previous knowledge, isn't it? And it for me it sort of encompasses a lot.

So I I think if if you were to sort of ask sort of Joe public what they understood by previous knowledge, they talk about things like you know the the capital of of Spain or that that that kind of thing, right? But but but I think it also sort of includes things like knowledge of especially we're talking about critical thinking, critical listening. It also includes things like social conventions too.

And the ability to recognize that these two people are acting, I don't know, friendly or the language they're using is friendly and that sort of reflects, so it's more about pragmatic competence as opposed to the term prior knowledge for me.

Uh, sort of includes status differentials. And and their their relationship and so on. So it's it's a very, very broad category previous knowledge. I'm not sure how well we can operationalize it in a test.

Botticelli
Even the teenager versus the postgraduate students, you know? Their life experiences just so different.

Matisse
Yeah, yeah, absolutely.

Van Gogh
But the topics will be adapted to this I suppose, because I remember I I always tell this story, but it's true. When when I set for the for one of my my tests, my English tests C2 level. I remember that I was being asked what it meant, what silence meant to me and I had a 15 year old kid next to me. He didn't know what to say. That's what you were saying. You were talking about experience, so, but the topics in this case, uh, well, maybe they could be adapted, I don't know.

Matisse
Yeah. But my feeling is is that in that situation.

Van Gogh
Yeah.

Matisse
Your ability to speak to a 15 year old kid that doesn't know what to say would also be part of

previous knowledge. You know, your your pragmatic competence to sort of manage that potentially, you know, problematic interaction is part of your previous knowledge.

Focus Group Moderator
Absolutely. And would it help that instead of just talking about previous knowledge what other terminology might be used for this assessment criterion?

Rembrandt
Is it about the fact that you're making a connection between what you've heard and relating it to something else? Be that something you know, because you learned at school when you you went to grammar school at 15, or because you read?

Monet
That's interesting, and what about an article that contrasts with this during your this this information is in conflict with with with what you're running a pre sessional course perhaps? I don't know. Would that terminology be more appropriate? How would you all feel about that?

Botticelli
What would we be assessing here exactly? So I think off in the danger is that we would sort of have a category, we would have a criteria for that without really understanding what lay behind that and that we could be advantaging people.

Matisse
Can I just clarify what we're talking about? Thematic knowledge, then rather than social. Knowledge is is that is that right sort of academic thematic knowledge. So thematic knowledge outside the text, like. In other words, you can't assess thematic knowledge that exists outside of this sort of controlled UM environment test.

Rembrandt
The the ability to make a link between what they hear in light of something else. Make those connections and evaluate the information in relation to other things other texts. Acknowledge that there is a wider context and this doesn't just exist in isolation.

Matisse
Yeah. I think I think it's very difficult to to separate those two. I think if if you. If if you have a a lecture where. And the lecturer is sort of describing something like an effect size, and they say, you know, this is a huge effect size rather than a large effect size. Well, so the ability to think critically about that firstly draws upon your lexical knowledge. You need to know the sort of nuance distinction between large and huge, but then also on top of that, you need sort of knowledge about effect sizes. You'd need your knowledge of statistics and knowledge to interpret that. And then also you'd need a sort of pragmatic knowledge of of why? Why is this lecturer using the word huge rather than large? Well, it it it sort of. It serves a purpose. It makes the research seem more important than perhaps, than perhaps it is. It's the meaning in context.

So I I'd I'd say it's very, very difficult to separate the the language knowledge from the thematic knowledge in that in that case.

Focus Group Moderator
So I put it back to the group. What would be obviously, but we're seeing that this is very problematic and I think everyone seems to be in, in, in agreement there. So what would be a perhaps a more plausible alternative in terms of the criteria? Would it be pragmatic competence?

Van Gogh
And I I I like this type of like how interesting would that be then? Including not only it's not prior, it's not previous knowledge but it could be anything. It could be previous knowledge but it could be something else that that this, that the speaker could introduce or include in the when trying to to give their opinion. So I don't know if novelty could be something that.

It could be a good one, because that 15-year-old could say it's something about silence that doesn't have to do with their previous knowledge or anything like that, but rather oh, I don't like to be alone or in silent all the time where when? Whenever the teacher said I don't know, so that would be experience.

Botticelli
So I think this is where we run into the difficulty of where we draw the line between listening and critical listening because with listening we can control everything. You know we can, we can go straight back to the text and every single assessment cat question can come from the text. But as soon as we're starting to ask students to teach us, to extrapolate, to link what's in the text to what's outside of the text in some way, we lose that control.

And So what is it that we're assessing? So I don't. I'm not saying it's a bad thing because that's what we want students. We want students to to widen out, to take knowledge from the text and to use it in other contexts.

Focus Group Moderator
From this then, is the panel in agreement that making connections to other texts and to the wider contexts is a part of this criterion?

Rembrandt
Evaluating in light of other information is the panel an agreement that this is a component of critical listening competency? Comparing and contrasting this? I agree to this very much.

Matisse
Yeah. Yes.

Van Gogh
Yes.

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Boticelli
Yes, yes.

Monet
For me yes.

Focus Group Moderator
So, so so the question is. In terms of operationalizing this? What would be the name of this criteria? Matisse, please, what do you think?

Matisse
Yeah. Yeah. So it's it's it's outside of the text, but it's based on something that has been said inside the text. And so it does sort of the ability to infer is, is it inference really the that we're talking about?

Botticelli
I think that's part of it, yeah. And also the ability to recognize similarities in other contexts in other texts. Differences. There's a there's a huge range of processes that someone can go through using information from a single text. You know, even comparing and contrasting that experience to their own experience.
And in terms of academic practice, that's that's what we're asking students to do is we're asking them to look at texts as representations of wider ideas, and then we're asking students to work with those wider ideas.

So are we not? This is just completely upsetting the applecart, but are we not trying to take this? This notion of critical listening and force it into a box that it just. It doesn't fit into. Because normal, you know that sort of traditional listening test is everything as as I think as Van Gogh, who said it's either 100% correct or it's 100% incorrect. Whereas with any kind of criticality. There's such a range of UM degrees of correctness or incorrectness.

Monet
The term that comes to mind is UM intertextuality. What do you think?

Van Gogh
I I I think that if we were talking about, you know the relationship or the interrelationship between a given listening text and other texts, So what it's being listened to and other texts that we hear that could be part of, I understand that the the they could also be part of our own experience or.

Other text that we have listened to or or watched. I suppose that's what we are talking about. Yeah. I think the term might be correct.

REMBRANDT
I'm I'm not pretty sure about this because intertextuality. If I'm not wrong, best what what you say in Van Gogh, I mean. Umm when different texts translate to our one text as part of another text.

And here we're talking about something different from my perspective, but you can about the the student experience, student knowledge about the topic, student knowledgeable, the content that of course, this being this content can be found in a test, but it's not really a text. I don't know. Pretty sure I'm not really sure about this being the most suitable term intertextuality.

Focus Group Moderator
Botticelli, what are your thoughts?

Botticelli
Yes, I'm. You know, coming from from EAP. The the that's. That's what we want students to do is we want students to engage with ideas from a range of sources and and pull them together and put them back, you know, pull them apart, put them back together in new ways. Which is messy and it's it's hard to define and to delineate and to say, well, this belongs here and that belongs there.

And you know, I think if it wasn't for on on pre sessional courses, the need to make border government controls for what our test that outcomes of our tests have to be, I would, I would argue very strongly for much more integrated assessments, much more authentic longitudinal assessed developmental assessments. But we're we're forced to have this kind of artificial construct at the end of very integrated courses in order to satisfy government requirement for a visa.

So a lot of the assessments on pre sessionals are not as authentic as they should be. Because of this external requirement.

Rembrandt
Yes. Going back to this idea of correctness or incorrectness that we mentioned, I think maybe what we should look for. I don't know in this critical thinking from this critical thinking critical listening perspective is the level of development of the level of let's say. Yeah, yeah. Development of the justification of the responses, you know, elaboration of the responses more than ever, response is correct or incorrect. As Van Gogh and Botticelli mentioned. So maybe here.

We don't have this to, you know, you know we, we, we we are not looking for this level of correctness but maybe more about. Ah, the level of you know, argumentation, reasoning, you know of, of our students in those open questions that we use in when assessing, of course.

Focus Group Moderator
Thank you, Rembrandt. And any further comments? I know Van Gogh you have written here and sort the wider context, what you've written context here in the chat would you like to perhaps elaborate on that for us?

Van Gogh
Well, it's just because REMBRANDT said something about being intertextuality not the

correct term to refer to this, but she was also always mentioning the context, right? It's trying to, I don't know.

UM, referring to the context of the speaker, the listener, that's all that we were talking about. Also, Botticelli said something about that. It's very complicated to to assess something that cannot be maybe assessed or that's what I understood that it was complicated to fit in a box, something that it's it's very difficult to to to, to fit.

Yeah. So I I I agree that it's it's complicated to to come up with this checklist that it's like the ultimate checklist. I know that I've repeated myself and I already said that, but.

I think that if we want to assess what we are assessing is more than just the listening, if it's, if somebody understood what it's being said, but rather going one step further and and. I'm trying to include the content what my own experience my of the things that I've uh, that I can say about this topic or what I heard on the radio about this topic. I'm building an answer to to to the questions. So that's what you have to look for when a student uses or you want to assess, you want to do these critical listening, right. OK.

Not if he understood, or only if he understood or not the the the text, but rather if they are able to bring that novelty, that context, that to the discourse or to the answer.

Focus Group Moderator
Thank you. Matisse, would intertextuality be an acceptable term for this criterion from your perspective?

Matisse
Well, I'm I I would say that that that purely reflects to or thematic knowledge. And not pragmatic knowledge. And I think critical listening involves both and I think it's very hard to separate them which which was what I was trying to get out with the example that I that I gave about the lecturer talking about effect sizes.
I think so. You've got sort of three strands here. You've got linguistic competence. You've got thematic background schema, which is something that Botticelli mentioned previously. I I think that does the job as a as a.

A term for this schema, Umm. But then you've also got the pragmatic competence as well and and. And I don't think they can be separated and my feeling is that listening particularly draws upon all three, so knowledge of. Theme knowledge of language, knowledge of pragmatics. So it it doesn't quite do it for me. Sorry The Focus Group Moderator.

Focus Group Moderator
Please don't apologise. What term would then encapsulate all of this for the panel?

Matisse
Well, I think I, I think schema also relates to social conventions. I think I think your your schema involves all of the interactions you've had in your own culture and the foreign language culture. As well as knowledge of theme. And language competence? Or is that separate? But I think I think essentially this is schema. I I would say.

Monet
Yep. I would agree with that Matisse.

Botticelli
And another element of schema is assessment literacy. So in terms of you know how how you've been trained for for certain types of tests can have a huge influence on how you perform on other tests.

Matisse
Absolutely. It's your sort of experience of test taking. Yeah, that's part of your schema for sure. I I would say schema, but then specify that we're we're talking about theme and social aspects of the communicative setting.
REMBRANDT
Agree to that.

Focus Group Moderator
Any further comments? Thank you. Let's see, we've just got, I think one or two more to be discussed and then we'll move on to the final round.

Botticelli
So I I can start? I think that the first thing we would look for is that the student can describe. Describing the position of the speaker in the text before they can then evaluate it.

Matisse
Again, would be a sort of paraphrase or summary.

Van Gogh
Well, maybe we could Umm, we could also be talking about including or the the type of language that the student is using to justify if they like their opinion? Well, yes, trying to include the speaker's opinion and using the the student using certain language to justify the like their position to according to what it's being said and reflect on your their own position, probably, I don't know and then put it into words. Formulate it.

So mainly identifying, I would say that it's mainly identifying when it's being said, uh, what the the point of view and then maybe the type of language that the student is using could tell us how it they are justifying their their their stance and and their position probably.

Rembrandt
Well, I'm of the same opinion. I mean I totally agree with what's been said. So I mean, here we have to two things recognizing and evaluating so. Yeah. And I mean it's way of telling, you know, what's what's just because position. OK, maybe.

On identifying the evaluative language used by the speaker or you know, something like that, but also, as Van Gogh said, analyzing I mean how the the student evaluate all, show his or her own stance with the language, also used by them now.

Focus Group Moderator

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Thank you. OK. Any additional comments on this final point? No? Ok. So let's move on to the third and final questionnaire. Here again I have summarised the main points of consensus from the previous rounds and from the two focus group discussions.

OK, everyone. Thank you very much. Are there any other points anyone would like to mention? No?
Ok, so first of all, thank you from the bottom of my heart for your contributions today. Never in my wildest dreams did I envisage such an enthusiastic, interesting and stimulating discussion amongst participants. If you do have any questions with regards to withdrawing your and participation or whatever it may be. Please feel free to send me an e-mail and and I'm more than happy to to answer those. Thank you very much. Have a lovely evening. Take care.

Matisse
Thank you.

Botticelli
Thank you. Bye bye

Rembrandt
Thank you, The Focus Group Moderator. Goodbye. Bye.

Matisse
Good luck with your dissertation, The Focus Group Moderator.

Van Gogh
Thank you, The Focus Group Moderator. Good luck. Nice meeting you everyone. Bye bye.

Monet
Bye.

Appendix N- Thematic Analysis of Focus Group II Data

Table 10

Results of Thematic Analysis of Focus Group II Data

Themes	Theme frequency	Code	Code frequency
'Schema and Pragmatic Competence' replaces 'Prior Knowledge' as terminology for criterion	22	'Schema and pragmatic competence' better suits the thematic and social competencies required to demonstrate critical listening proficiency	13
		Inference of nuance and meaning in context as a new descriptor	4
		Student's ability to link information to the wider social context and other thematic texts	3
		Minor changes to the wording of other descriptors	2

Position Criterion and Descriptor Clarification	7	Suitability of criteria terminology as opposed to previous use of 'stance'	4
		Combined both speaker and listener positions in the criterion.	2
		Slight modification in wording of some descriptors to reflect full scope of criterion	1
Reliability Evaluation Criterion and Descriptor Clarification	5	Suitability of criteria and descriptors	4
		Minor modifications in wording used for descriptors	1
Remediation and Integration Criterion and Descriptor Clarification	4	Commitment to summary, paraphrasing and synthesis as descriptors for this criterion	4

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Appendix O- Delphi Round III Questionnaire

R3- Exploring the Critical Listening Assessment Conundrum on Pre-Sessional Programmes in HE

This survey will take approximately 15 minutes to complete.

Section 1- Consent Form

1. I continue to give my consent to participate as per my answers provided in the previous questionnaire.

- o Agree

- o Disagree

Section 2- Delphi Round III Questionnaire

2. Do you agree with the use of the following criteria and descriptors to be used to evaluate critical listening competency?

Position

- Identification of speaker's point of view, argumentation, and reasoning

-Analysis of speaker's language to justify evaluation of their stance.

-Reflection on and formulation of own justified position with certain degree of originality.

If no, please provide further information.

3. Do you agree with the use of the following criteria and descriptors to be used to evaluate critical listening competency?

Schema and pragmatic competence

-Analysis of relationship(s) between new information and other thematic texts and wider social context(s).

-Inference of nuance and meaning in context.

-Comparison and contrast new information with other thematic texts and wider social context(s).

If no, please provide further information.

4. Do you agree with the use of the following criteria and descriptors to be used to evaluate critical listening competency?

Reliability Evaluation

- Determination of the level of accuracy in the aural text.

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-Judgement of the currency of the information heard

-Evaluation of the speaker's purpose and any potential bias or inconsistencies.

-Clarification of the speaker's level of authority in relation to the topic

-Evaluation of information reliability

If no, please provide further information.

5. Do you agree with the use of the following criteria and descriptors to be used to evaluate critical listening competency?

Remediation and Integration

- Summary of key points from speaker's line of argument.

- Paraphrase the essence of speaker's ideas in own words.

- Synthesis of ideas from an aural text with those from another or other media in a different medium.

If no, please provide further information.

6. Are there any additional comments you would like to add? Do you think there are related

topics we should have covered, but didn't?

Appendix P- Delphi Round III Questionnaire Raw Response Data

Section 1- Consent Form

1. I continue to give my consent to participate as per my answers provided in the previous

questionnaire.

Section 2- Delphi Round III Questionnaire

2. Do you agree with the use of the following criteria and descriptors to be used to evaluate

critical listening competency?

Position

- Identification of speaker's point of view, argumentation, and reasoning

-Analysis of speaker's language to justify evaluation of their stance.

-Reflection on and formulation of own justified position with certain degree of originality.

If no, please provide further information.

2. Do you agree with the use of the following criteria and descriptors to be used to evaluate critical listening competency? Position -Identify and evaluate speaker's point of view,...

5 Responses

ID ↑	Name	Responses
1	anonymous	I agree
2	anonymous	Yes
3	anonymous	Agree
4	anonymous	Yes, I agree.
5	anonymous	Yes, I do

3. Do you agree with the use of the following criteria and descriptors to be used to evaluate critical listening competency?

Schema and pragmatic competence

-Analysis of relationship(s) between new information and other thematic texts and wider social context(s).

-Inference of nuance and meaning in context.

-Comparison and contrast new information with other thematic texts and wider social context(s).

If no, please provide further information.

3. Do you agree with the use of the following criteria and descriptors to be used to evaluate critical listening competency? Schema and pragmatic competence -Analyse how the...

5 Responses

ID ↑	Name	Responses
1	anonymous	I agree
2	anonymous	yes
3	anonymous	Agree
4	anonymous	Yes, I agree.
5	anonymous	Yes, I do

4. Do you agree with the use of the following criteria and descriptors to be used to evaluate critical listening competency?

Reliability Evaluation

- Determination of the level of accuracy in the aural text.

-Judgement of the currency of the information heard

-Evaluation of the speaker's purpose and any potential bias or inconsistencies.

-Clarification of the speaker's level of authority in relation to the topic

-Evaluation of information reliability

If no, please provide further information.

4. Do you agree with the use of the following criteria and descriptors to be used to evaluate critical listening competency? Reliability Evaluation -Make a judgement as to the currenc...

5 Responses

ID ↑	Name	Responses
1	anonymous	I agree
2	anonymous	Yes
3	anonymous	Agree
4	anonymous	Yes, I agree.
5	anonymous	Yes, I do

5. Do you agree with the use of the following criteria and descriptors to be used to evaluate

critical listening competency?

Remediation and Integration

- Summary of key points from speaker's line of argument.

- Paraphrase the essence of speaker's ideas in own words.

- Synthesis of ideas from an aural text with those from another or other media in a different

medium.

If no, please provide further information.

5. Do you agree with the use of the following criteria and descriptors to be used to evaluate critical listening competency? Remediation and Integration -Summarise the key points...

5 Responses

ID ↑	Name	Responses
1	anonymous	I agree
2	anonymous	Yes
3	anonymous	Agree
4	anonymous	Yes, I agree.
5	anonymous	Yes, I do

6. Are there any additional comments you would like to add? Do you think there are related

topics we should have covered, but didn't?

6. Are there any additional comments you would like to add? Do you think there are related topics we should have covered, but didn't?

5 Responses

ID ↑	Name	Responses
1	anonymous	Very insightful discussion
2	anonymous	No thank you
3	anonymous	No
4	anonymous	No, no more comments. I agree with all of them.
5	anonymous	Maybe, the criteria should have the same number of descriptors

Appendix Q- Thematic Analysis of Delphi Round III Questionnaire Response Data

Table 11

Results of Thematic Analysis of Delphi Round III Questionnaire Response Data

Survey Question	Themes	Theme frequency	Code	Code frequency
Are there any additional comments you would like to add? Do you think there are related topics we should have covered, but didn't?	Numerical homogenisation of analytical descriptors	1	*Maybe, the criteria should have the same number of descriptors*	1