

On Constructing a CSE Based Multi-Assessment Framework for College English Listening Comprehension

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Abstract: The enhancement of English listening comprehension is one of the crucial components of language proficiency, particularly in the context of Chinese higher education where English serves as an essential medium for worldwide knowledge acquisition and international communication. This study aims to construct a framework to employ multiple assessing approaches with the guidance of China's Standards of English Language Ability (simplified as CSE hereafter). By integrating the assessing methods and the CSE descriptors, this research will identify multiple and effective assessing methods and areas for improvement for teachers in their teaching of English listening comprehension.

Keywords: College English listening comprehension; Multi-assessment framework; CSE

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Introduction:

Effectively assessing college students' English listening comprehension is crucial for their academic success and professional growth. The CSE, developed by the National Education Examinations Authority (NEEA) under the Ministry of Education and was officially launched in 2018, which has been proved stable and reliable (Min et.al., 2018, Gu et.al., 2022, Yang,2022) in terms of its descriptive validity in some listening assessment. The CSE assists Chinese educators a standardized framework for English language education, assessment, and proficiency levels. It also serves as a reference for curriculum design, teaching methodologies, and evaluation processes. This paper attempts to construct a multi-assessment framework to assist college English teachers to choose practical and suitable assessments for their students' listening comprehension. The rationale behind adopting the CSE as the foundation for this framework lies in its alignment with international standards, its tailored applicability to the Chinese educational context and its clear proficiency levels and descriptors that can facilitate the development of scalable assessments for Chinese English teaching and learning.

1. Literature Review

The CSE is a comprehensive framework designed to assess and guide English language education in China. It is aligned with the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR), which is widely used around the world in many international language proficiency tests, such as IELTS, and TOEFL, to describe language ability. The CSE (2018) provides a detailed set of standards for assessing and grading the English ability of learners and users of English, ranging from primary school students to adult learners. The framework describes what learners should be able to do with the language in terms of listening, speaking, reading, and writing across nine proficiency levels (Levels 1 to 9), which are further divided into elementary, intermediate, and advanced stages.

Huang and Kong (Huang et. al., 2023) did a systematic review on 114 studies of CSE conducted between 2007 and 2022, and found that more empirical investigations are now carried on the application of CSE and practical case studies are needed to verify the effectiveness of CSE application in various aspects of English education in China. Zhang (2019) and Wang (2020) explored the listening in college English education in regards to CSE and found it helpful and constructive. The CSE has closely related

to English education in China in the following aspects: it can be used as standardized benchmarks for assessing English language ability; it is an excellent assistance for institutions and researchers to well develop curriculums; it can also be used as teaching guidance for choosing methods of teaching; assessment and examinations, it can provide international recognition when it comes to the equivalence of CEFR, and it is a comprehensive reference for Chinese education administration in terms of policy making. As Zuo (2022) mentioned one of the most important enlightenments of the CSE is that it can provide standardized criteria for Chinese higher education institutions to develop scientific multi-assessment system involving objectives, contents, question types, scoring mechanism. Therefore, the framework this paper is trying to form can provide researchers an idea on how to apply their assessment in a scientific and effective sense under the guidance of CSE.

However, the limitations of the CSE itself also should be addressed when adapting it to any assessment for college students whose major is not English language in terms of testing result, grades does not necessarily equal to the real language proficiency (Cai, 2018).

2. The Framework

The overall of CES details how it describes English learners' listening comprehension. From the description, it can be seen that non-English major college students are usually aligned their English listening comprehension at CSE level 4,5,6 while English majors will reach higher levels according to their pre-college English learning foundation. How can their development and progress thereafter be comprehensively assessed? Other than this overall scale description form, CSE has also provided detailed sub-scales, learning strategies, listening comprehension descriptors and listening comprehension strategies to specifically help educators to fulfil their evaluation work.

As what is shown in the table below, the framework encompasses various assessment methods, each serving a unique purpose and collectively contributing to a holistic evaluation of listening comprehension. While international standards such as CEFR are a useful reference, the CSE is tailored to the specific needs and context of Chinese English learners. It provides detailed descriptors of what learners can do at different levels of proficiency, thus helping teachers and students set clear learning objectives. With specifically clear objectives, assessment can also be designed to measure the task authenticity, scoring reliability, and feedback mechanisms. Grounded on the CSE descriptors, tasks and tests in teaching and learning, all objectives involving curricula construction, the choosing text books, the designing tests criteria and many other relevant aspects can be assessed scientifically.

The CSE Based Multi-Assessment Framework					
Pre-assessment	Methods for Assess Listening			CSE for Listening	
<p>Set clear and explicit teaching and learning objectives;</p> <p>Relate the above objectives to assessing criteria;</p> <p>Assessing criteria will be integrated with specific descriptors from CSE.</p>	Listening test types	Standardized Listening Comprehension Tests		<p>1. Overall listening comprehension (6 descriptors of understandings)</p> <p>2. Subscales</p> <p>3. Learning strategies</p> <p>4. Listening comprehension (54 descriptors)</p> <p>5. Listening comprehension strategies (5 Levels)</p>	
		Informal Listening Assessments			
	Question and task types in the tests	Dictation/ Filling blanks			<p>Summative Assessments;</p> <p>Formative Assessments;</p> <p>Diagnostic Assessments;</p> <p>Dynamic Assessments;</p>
		Cloze Tests			
		Summarization			
		Question and Answer			
		True or False			
		Matching Tasks			
		Multiple Choice Questions			
		Performance-Based Tasks			
		Interactive Listening Tasks			
	Assessing methods	Self-Assessment			
		Peer Assessment			
		Teacher Observation/feed back and Checklists			
		Portfolio Assessment			
Computer-Based Assessments					

3. The CSE Based Multi-Assessment Framework

Teachers who are supposed to use the framework to guide their teaching should firstly be familiar with each of the descriptors in CSE, and then they will need to decide which type(s), question(s), and method(s) they are going to use in their teaching of listening to their specific students. What's more, the contents of the text book they choose might not include every form they planned to test their students, so they can design their own test type and test questions according to their teaching objectives to support their formative or summative evaluation of the achievement their students have made.

Conclusion:

The CSE-based multi assessing framework for college English listening is designed to assist English teachers to effectively assess their students' listening comprehension. By providing a multifaceted guidance to assess listening, the framework promises to elevate the standard of English listening comprehension and equip students with the necessary skills for their academic and professional endeavors. Limited by the number of words, this paper did not include any case study. This framework is not a perfectly mature tool for real practice yet, which means there still needs empirical studies to prove its effectiveness. However, it will guide English teacher as its users to monitor their students' listening progress. English teachers may apply it into their curricula and teaching plans to help assessing their students' progress in listening comprehension by many different kinds of assessments methods and they may make adaptations according to their own teaching and learning context. Researchers can do empirical studies in the future to verify how the framework will serve it's best to college English listening assessment and be amended towards its perfection.

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