

ABSTRACT

Azizah, Nur (2026) EFL Students' Perspectives on Podcasts as Authentic Materials in Extensive Listening: Perceptions and Listening Challenges across Most- and Least-Preferred Platforms

Listening is a fundamental yet challenging skill for learners of English as a Foreign Language (EFL), and podcasts have become widely used as authentic materials for extensive listening. This study explored EFL students' perspectives on podcasts as authentic materials for extensive listening and identified the aspects they found challenging when engaging with podcasts on their most- and least-preferred platforms.

A qualitative descriptive design was employed in this study. Data were collected from the fourth-semester students in the English Education Department at a state Islamic university in Bandung through a four-point Likert-scale questionnaire (N = 59) comprising 24 validated items and semi-structured interviews with 6 students selected through maximum variation sampling to represent contrasting listening experiences.

The findings showed that the students held generally positive perspectives, which were strongest in the cognitive dimension, in which they recognized podcast speech as genuine communication rather than teaching material, but noticeably weaker in the affective and behavioral dimensions, in which enjoyment, spoken confidence, and regular independent listening all fell well behind belief and motivation. This gap revealed a distance between what the students believed about podcasts and what they actually experienced and did while listening to them: the cognitive aspect drew the strongest agreement, while the affective and behavioral aspects trailed at a comparably more modest level (cognitive M = 3.39; affective M = 2.97; behavioral M = 2.86). Regarding listening challenges, the students reported both linguistic and non-linguistic difficulties, with unfamiliar topics, idiomatic and informal expressions, and poor audio quality the most prominent, while the features that made podcast speech authentic were also the ones that made it difficult.

The study concluded that platform preference reflects the fit between a platform's affordances and a learner's listening history, mode of engagement, and strategic repertoire, rather than any inherent difficulty of the platform itself. These findings offer insights for integrating podcasts into extensive listening instruction. Accordingly, EFL teachers are encouraged to scaffold podcast-based extensive listening by pairing authentic podcasts with explicit listening-strategy training and level-appropriate, high-quality audio, so that students' positive beliefs about podcasts can lead to greater enjoyment, spoken confidence, and more regular independent listening.

Keywords: *authentic materials; extensive listening; podcasts; EFL students' perspectives; listening challenge*