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PERSPECTIVES OF CHINESE EFL UNIVERSITY STUDENTS ON USING REDNOTE FOR AUTONOMOUS ENGLISH LISTENING LEARNING

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Abstract: This study investigates how Chinese university students perceive the use of Rednote as a tool for autonomous English listening learning. Although English listening development relies on sustained exposure to meaningful input, classroom-based practice in Chinese universities is often constrained by limited hours and exam-oriented instruction. Social media platforms have therefore become an important supplementary channel for self-directed listening. Rednote, with its short videos, creator-led explanations, and personalised recommendation system, offers easily accessible listening materials, yet its entertainment orientation and uneven content quality may also pose challenges. A mixed-methods questionnaire was administered to 120 university students who had prior experience using Rednote for listening practice. Quantitative results consistently show positive attitudes, with students reporting increased motivation, greater confidence, reduced anxiety, and a stronger willingness to engage in listening beyond the classroom. Participants also recognise practical benefits such as flexible access, diverse resources, and improved autonomy. However, they note several limitations, including distractions from entertainment content, the fragmentation of short-video input, and the need to evaluate the reliability of user-generated posts. Qualitative responses further illustrate these tensions, highlighting how learners balance Rednote's convenience with the effort required for self-regulation. Overall, the findings provide a focused account of Chinese EFL university students' perspectives on using Rednote to support autonomous English listening learning.

Keywords: Rednote; Autonomous English listening; EFL learners; Social media learning; Learner perceptions

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

English listening is a demanding skill for many learners of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) because improvement depends on frequent exposure to meaningful and comprehensible spoken input [1]. In Chinese university classrooms, however, listening practice is often limited by restricted contact hours, exam-oriented pacing, and teacher-selected materials, which frequently position students as passive receivers rather than active listeners [2]. As a result, EFL learners commonly seek extra input beyond class to strengthen comprehension, notice spoken vocabulary and expressions in context, and gradually adapt to natural speech rates and accent variation. This need makes autonomous listening practice an important complement to formal instruction.

Against this background, social media has become a common space for autonomous listening within Computer-Assisted Language Learning (CALL) and Mobile-Assisted Language Learning (MALL), and Rednote is a particularly relevant example for Chinese EFL university students [3]. Its short videos, creator-led explanations, and recommendation system can supply bite-sized listening input, study tips, and peer-shared resources that feel approachable and motivating. Students also value the sense of community, where commenting and saving posts help build a routine. At the same time, learners hold mixed attitudes because the platform brings constraints such as entertainment distractions, uneven content quality, limited sustained listening for academic purposes, and algorithm-driven information bubbles. These tensions make Rednote a valuable case for examining how students balance perceived benefits with perceived limitations in English listening practice.

1.2 Problem Statement

Existing studies on English learning supported by social media usually show that internet sites can increase access to input, interaction, and shared resources outside of lesson time and location [4]. However, when this work is considered in relation to perspectives of Chinese EFL university students on using Rednote for autonomous English listening learning, several apparent gaps remain. First, much of the literature still centres on earlier or more widely studied platforms such as blogs, Facebook, WeChat, or QQ, with limited attention to Rednote as a listening-learning environment [5]. Rednote's short-video design, creator-led explanations, and algorithmic feed may influence what learners hear, how long they stay engaged, and how they sequence listening practice, but these platform-specific features are rarely examined in listening research. Second, existing studies often emphasise advantages such as convenience, motivation, and flexible access, while giving less detailed treatment to constraints that shape real-world use [6]. For autonomous listening in particular, issues such as distraction, uneven content reliability, fragmented

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exposure, and limited depth for sustained academic listening need closer investigation. This study, therefore, aims to examine how Chinese university students perceive Rednote for autonomous English listening, focusing on their attitudes toward the platform, how they interpret its advantages, navigate its constraints, and manage their own learning.

1.3 Research Objectives

This study investigates the attitudes of Chinese EFL university students towards using Rednote as a social media platform for autonomous English listening learning. It also explores their perceived benefits and limitations when using Rednote to support listening development.

1.4 Research Questions

RQ1: What attitudes do Chinese EFL university students hold towards using Rednote for autonomous English listening learning?

RQ2: What benefits and limitations do Chinese EFL university students perceive when using Rednote to support autonomous English listening learning?

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Theoretical Foundations

According to constructivist learning theory, which is associated with Jean Piaget, learning is an active process whereby individuals construct knowledge by connecting new information to existing cognitive schemas [7]. From this perspective, autonomous English listening on Rednote is not merely exposure to audio input, but rather an activity that involves creating meaning. Students select videos that match their interests and level, interpreting spoken messages through their prior knowledge and understanding. They gradually refine their listening skills through repetition, observation, and reflection. Over time, their understanding of pronunciation, vocabulary in context, and discourse patterns adjusts as they integrate new input and reorganise their existing knowledge. This aligns with the constructivist emphasis on learner agency and self-directed learning.

This study is further supported by an interaction-based view, drawing on Michael Long's Interaction Hypothesis and Lev Vygotsky's sociocultural theory, including the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) [8-9]. These perspectives emphasise that listening skills are developed when learners engage with others and with tools that provide support, feedback, and manageable challenges. On Rednote, captions, short explainer videos, and creator demonstrations can provide scaffolding, while comments, replies, and sharing offer light-touch opportunities for clarification, confirmation, and exposure to alternative interpretations. Together, these theories justify the examination of how Rednote enables self-managed listening routines, and of how learners evaluate its benefits and limitations in practice.

2.2 Social Media in Autonomous English Listening Learning

Work on CALL can be traced back to drill-based programs in the 1960s and 1970s, and later expanded alongside the emergence of microcomputers in the 1980s and the development of networked, web-based learning in the 1990s. As mobile devices became widespread in the mid-2000s onward, MALL strengthened the shift toward learner-centred practice by enabling flexible access, personalised pacing, and lightweight interaction beyond scheduled class time. Within this broader move, social media has increasingly been discussed as an extension of CALL and MALL, not as a formal course space but as a convenient channel for exposure, sharing, and peer-supported learning routines [1]. For autonomous English listening learning, these developments are significant because improvement typically depends on sustained exposure to comprehensible spoken input.

Recent studies highlight that social media platforms can provide learners with authentic audio-visual materials, diverse accents, and informal communicative contexts that are less accessible in traditional classrooms [10]. Short-video applications, in particular, offer easily digestible listening segments that allow students to engage in frequent, low-pressure practice. Algorithms, tagging systems, and comment functions can further help users curate content, follow topics of interest, and observe peer explanations. At the same time, studies note concerns about distraction, uneven content quality, and the fragmented nature of brief clips, all of which may limit deeper comprehension. These mixed observations underline the need to understand how learners themselves navigate social media when managing autonomous English listening tasks.

2.3 Chinese University Students' Use of Rednote for English Listening

Rednote has become an increasingly common social media platform through which Chinese university students access English-related content [6]. Its blend of image-text posts and short videos allows learners to engage with vocabulary explanations, everyday expressions, exam tips, and situational language in a quick and accessible manner. English content creators on the platform include bilingual Chinese bloggers, language-training instructors, overseas students, and some native speakers, who often present materials through scene-based demonstrations, etymological breakdowns,

or contextualised examples. These features make Rednote a convenient space for fragmented and self-directed listening practice, offering exposure to varied accents, communicative styles, and authentic language use.

At the same time, the learning environment on Rednote reflects several platform-specific constraints [11]. Because content creation is largely unregulated, learners must navigate posts of varying quality and exercise caution when encountering inaccurate explanations or oversimplified teaching. The entertainment-driven recommendation system may also distract users or interrupt the continuity of listening practice, limiting deeper engagement with extended spoken input. Additionally, some creators promote commercial products or paid courses, requiring learners to assess the credibility and relevance of the content. Overall, Rednote offers Chinese university students flexible and appealing listening resources; however, its informal nature raises concerns about content reliability, sustained learning, and self-regulation that warrant further investigation.

2.4 Students Attitudes toward Rednote for EFL Listening Learning

Studies on learner attitudes in CALL and mobile language learning consistently show that positive perceptions strongly influence whether students adopt digital tools for listening practice. Studies have reported that social platforms offering authentic input, multimodal explanations, and flexible access often lead to greater motivation, confidence, and willingness to engage with listening tasks [12]. Within social media–supported environments, learners tend to value resources that reduce anxiety, provide relatable content, and allow for repeated exposure without the pressure of a classroom setting. These patterns help explain university students' favourable attitudes toward Rednote as an autonomous listening tool. Existing literature notes that short-form videos and creator-guided explanations can make listening activities feel more approachable, which aligns with students' reports of finding Rednote engaging and enjoyable. Research also indicates that learning spaces perceived as informal or student-centred can enhance confidence in handling challenging skills. This echoes learners' views that Rednote boosts confidence and sustains motivation for listening practice. Studies further highlight that platforms enabling quick, low-stakes practice often reduce avoidance behaviours. This supports students' responses that Rednote lessens reluctance toward listening tasks and promotes a more positive general attitude. Although entertainment-oriented platforms may not always be regarded primarily as educational tools, past work shows that learners frequently continue using them when they believe the benefits outweigh such limitations, consistent with students' intention to keep practising listening on Rednote.

Overall, the literature suggests that students' positive attitudes toward Rednote reflect broader trends in how social platforms shape engagement, affective responses, and autonomous listening behaviours.

2.5 Perceived Benefits and Limitations of Using Rednote for EFL Listening Learning

Social media has become an important channel for enriching EFL listening because it provides flexible access to diverse linguistic input and creates informal opportunities for practice [13]. Its multimodal features, such as images, captions, and short videos, make listening activities more engaging and comprehensible. At the same time, the constant flow of updated content exposes learners to everyday expressions and culturally situated communication. These characteristics help learners expand vocabulary, sustain motivation, and develop more autonomous listening habits. As a social media platform, Rednote shares these advantages. Its visually appealing posts, scenario-based explanations, and creatorgenerated short videos offer accessible listening materials that are closer to real-life language use. Interaction in the comment sections also fosters light peer support, enabling learners to clarify their doubts or observe others' learning strategies [6].

However, Rednote also presents notable limitations [11]. The quality of user-generated content varies, and some creators lack professional training, which raises concerns about the accuracy of their language input. The platform's strong entertainment orientation can distract learners and reduce their sustained engagement with listening tasks. Moreover, fragmented and unsystematic posts may not align with curriculum goals, requiring learners to invest additional effort in selecting reliable content and organising what they learn. These factors suggest that although Rednote offers valuable listening resources, its effectiveness depends on learners' digital literacy, self-regulation, and ability to identify trustworthy creators.

2.6 Research Gaps

Although social media has increasingly been recognised as a space for EFL listening practice, little is known about how learners engage with Rednote as a platform for autonomous listening [14]. Existing studies broadly examine more established applications such as WeChat, QQ, or Facebook, leaving Rednote's short-video structure and creator-driven explanations insufficiently explored. Moreover, prior research tends to emphasise general benefits of social-media learning without detailing how students handle distractions, evaluate the reliability of user-generated content, or cope with fragmented listening input [15]. Crucially, few studies investigate how Chinese university students self-regulate their listening on Rednote or how they weigh its perceived advantages against its limitations. This gap highlights the need for research that captures learners' specific practices and perspectives within Rednote's unique social media environment.

3 METHODOLOGY

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3.1 Participants

A total of 120 Chinese university students were recruited through a public call for participation posted on Rednote. The group consisted of 56 males and 64 females, all between 18 and 25 years of age. Each participant had previous experience using Rednote to support autonomous English listening practice and regularly engaged in English learning at the tertiary level. The final sample, therefore, represented active EFL learners who had already incorporated Rednote into their personal listening routines, making them suitable for examining perceptions of this platform in self-managed listening development.

3.2 Instruments and Methods

The study employed a questionnaire containing both closed-ended and open-ended items to investigate students' perceptions of using Rednote for autonomous English listening. The instrument consisted of three sections. The first section gathered basic demographic information. The second section included a series of closed-ended statements designed to measure students' attitudes toward Rednote as well as their perceived benefits and limitations when using the platform for English listening practice. The third section invited participants to respond to open-ended questions, allowing them to elaborate on their experiences and provide additional insights beyond the structured items.

A five-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree) was used in the closed-ended section to collect quantitative data. Several items were adapted from the attitude scale used in the present study, which is adapted from established instruments in CALL research to enhance construct validity for the attitude component [12]. Reliability analysis using Cronbach's Alpha produced a coefficient of 0.79, indicating strong internal consistency across the scale. To obtain qualitative data, two open-ended prompts asked students to describe the advantages and challenges they encountered while using Rednote for English listening. Prior to full administration, a pilot test involving five students was conducted to refine item clarity and ensure the overall suitability and reliability of the questionnaire.

3.3 Data Collection

Data were collected through an online questionnaire administered after participants confirmed that they had used Rednote for autonomous English listening. The questionnaire link was distributed through Rednote, allowing students to complete it at their convenience. To ensure full comprehension of all items, the survey was provided in both Chinese and English. Participants first read a brief introduction outlining the purpose of the study and the voluntary nature of their participation. They then completed the demographic section, attitude scale, and items concerning perceived benefits and limitations of using Rednote for English listening. Responses were submitted anonymously to encourage honest reporting. The data were automatically recorded in a secure online database and later exported for quantitative and qualitative analysis.

3.4 Data Analysis

Quantitative responses were analysed using SPSS. Descriptive statistics, including means (M) and standard deviations (SD), were calculated to summarise students' attitudes toward using Rednote for autonomous English listening. These results were used to address the study's research objectives and research questions. For qualitative data, a content analysis approach was employed. Students' written comments on the perceived benefits and limitations of Rednote were examined through systematic coding and categorisation to identify recurring ideas and patterns. The combination of numerical trends and thematic patterns allowed for a more comprehensive interpretation of participants' perceptions.

4 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Chinese University Students' Attitudes toward Using Rednote for Autonomous English Listening Learning

To understand Chinese university students' attitudes toward using Rednote for autonomous English listening, participants rated eight statements on a five-point Likert scale. As shown in Table 1, all mean scores fall between 3.78 and 3.88, indicating generally positive perceptions of Rednote as a listening support tool. The overall mean of 3.83 (SD = 0.76) suggests that students consistently view the platform as a helpful complement to their listening practice. Students express the strongest agreement with Rednote's ability to enhance listening motivation (M = 3.88, SD = 0.74) and strengthen confidence in handling English listening tasks (M = 3.87, SD = 0.73). These two aspects appear central to learners' positive engagement, reflecting the motivational benefits frequently associated with social media–based learning environments. Listening through Rednote is also regarded as enjoyable and engaging (M = 3.85, SD = 0.86), which supports the idea that multimodal and creator-driven content can reduce the perceived difficulty of listening activities. Reduced anxiety is another notable perception (M = 3.83, SD = 0.75). Learners experience less pressure when practising listening in informal, familiar online spaces. Similarly, many believe that Rednote helps them maintain a more positive attitude toward English listening overall (M = 3.80, SD = 0.72). A parallel trend emerges in responses, suggesting that Rednote reduces reluctance to study and participate in listening tasks (M = 3.79, SD = 0.77), indicating that the platform may help students overcome avoidance tendencies commonly observed in challenging skill areas, such as listening. Students also report an intention to continue using Rednote for future listening practice (M = 3.84, SD = 0.84).

0.71), implying sustained acceptance of the platform. The comparatively lower, though still positive, agreement with using Rednote specifically for educational purposes (M = 3.78, SD = 0.81) may relate to its entertainment-oriented design, which can blur the boundary between leisure and learning. Overall, these patterns echo previous findings that social media environments can enhance motivation, confidence, and engagement in EFL learning [12]. The results indicate that Rednote, despite its informal nature, provides a supportive space where students feel more confident, motivated, and willing to engage in autonomous English listening. Incorporating such platforms into listening-learning routines may therefore enrich learners' exposure and promote more sustained participation.

Table 1 Means and Standard Deviations of Chinese University Students' Attitudes Toward Using Rednote for Autonomous English Listening

Items	N	M	SD
You prefer to use Rednote for educational purposes.	120	3.78	0.81
Listening through Rednote is enjoyable and engaging.	120	3.85	0.86
Using Rednote boosts your confidence in English listening.	120	3.87	0.73
Rednote increases your motivation for English listening learning.	120	3.88	0.74
Rednote reduces your anxiety about English listening activities.	120	3.83	0.75
Rednote reduces your reluctance to study and participate in English listening learning.	120	3.79	0.77
Rednote helps improve your positive attitude toward English listening.	120	3.80	0.72
You intend to continue using Rednote for English listening in the future.	120	3.84	0.71
Average	120	3.83	0.76

Note: 1 = Strongly disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly agree.

4.2 Perceived Benefits and Limitations of Using Rednote for Autonomous English Listening

4.2.1 Analysis of the Quantitative Data

The responses in Table 2 indicate that students perceive clear advantages in using Rednote for autonomous English listening, with a high overall mean score (M = 3.85, SD = 0.76). The strongest agreement is evident in the view that regular use of Rednote improves listening skills (M = 3.88, SD = 0.74) and that the platform stimulates more active listening engagement than traditional classroom methods (M = 3.87, SD = 0.73). Students also report convenient access to listening materials at any time and place (M = 3.86, SD = 0.79), highlighting Rednote's flexibility. Access to a broad range of listening resources receives similarly positive evaluations (M = 3.84, SD = 0.75), suggesting that the platform effectively expands exposure beyond textbook input. In addition, students recognise that Rednote strengthens their ability to manage autonomous listening routines (M = 3.82, SD = 0.78), reflecting growing confidence in self-directed learning. Overall, the results suggest that Rednote promotes motivation, skill development, and learner independence, aligning with the view that social platforms can enhance language learning through accessible and varied input [6].

Table 2 Means and Standard Deviations for Benefits

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N	M	SD			
120	3.84	0.75			
120	3.87	0.73			
120	3.88	0.74			
120	3.82	0.78			
120	3.86	0.79			
120	3.85	0.76			
	120 120 120 120 120	120 3.84 120 3.87 120 3.88 120 3.82 120 3.82 120 3.86			

Note: 1 = Strongly disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly agree.

The questionnaire also examined challenges students face when relying on Rednote for autonomous English listening. As shown in Table 3, the highest mean score indicates that students are concerned that entertainment-focused posts can easily divert attention from listening practice (M = 3.81, SD = 0.76). This is followed closely by the belief that the fragmented nature of short videos makes sustained listening difficult (M = 3.80, SD = 0.87), highlighting how platform design may hinder the deeper processing of spoken input. Learners also report that evaluating the trustworthiness of content creators requires considerable effort (M = 3.77, SD = 0.74), suggesting that inconsistent content quality remains

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a significant barrier. Additionally, several students encounter inaccurate or unreliable listening materials (M = 3.73, SD = 0.75), which may erode confidence in using the platform for systematic listening development. Overall, these findings suggest that while Rednote offers accessible input, its informal and entertainment-driven environment presents challenges that students must navigate carefully to maintain effective learning [11].

Table 3 Means and Standard Deviations for Limitations

Items	N	M	SD
You sometimes encounter English listening content on Rednote that is inaccurate or unreliable.	120	3.73	0.75
You find that entertainment-oriented posts on Rednote can distract you from focused listening practice.	120	3.81	0.76
You feel that fragmented short videos on Rednote make it difficult to engage in sustained English listening.	120	3.80	0.87
You need extra effort to judge which Rednote creators provide trustworthy English listening materials.	120	3.77	0.74
Average	120	3.78	0.78

Note: 1 = Strongly disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly agree.

4.2.2 Analysis of the Qualitative Data

The two open-ended questions invited participants to elaborate on the benefits and barriers they experience when using Rednote for autonomous English listening. Their responses supplement the quantitative findings and reflect patterns highlighted in previous literature. In terms of benefits, many students noted that Rednote provides convenient access to varied listening input that goes beyond classroom materials. They emphasised that short videos, bilingual explanations, and scenario-based demonstrations help them understand spoken English more easily and make listening practice feel less rigid. Several participants also mentioned that the interactive comment sections allow them to observe peer questions or interpretations, which echoes sociocultural views that light forms of online interaction can support comprehension and confidence building. Students further appreciated that Rednote enables flexible learning schedules, allowing them to fit listening practice into daily routines. Regarding barriers, students reported concerns consistent with earlier research on social media learning environments. A recurring challenge was the uneven reliability of usergenerated posts, particularly when creators lacked professional training. Some respondents explained that promotional or entertainment-driven content often appeared in their feed, disrupting concentration and reducing the continuity needed for deeper listening. Others expressed that fragmented short clips, although engaging, sometimes hindered their ability to follow longer or more academic listening tasks. A smaller number also mentioned the effort required to evaluate trustworthy creators and manage distractions. Overall, the qualitative data indicate that Rednote provides accessible and motivating listening opportunities; however, its value depends on learners' ability to select credible content and regulate their attention during autonomous study [15].

5 ETHICAL STATEMENT

All participants were recruited voluntarily through a Rednote announcement and provided informed consent prior to participating in the study. Participation was anonymous, and responses were used solely for research purposes in accordance with standard ethical guidelines.

6 CONCLUSION

The findings indicate that Chinese university students generally maintain a favourable view of using Rednote to support autonomous English listening learning. Regular engagement with the platform fosters greater confidence, stronger motivation, and a more positive attitude toward listening practice outside formal instruction. Rednote's accessible short videos, scenario-based explanations, and creator-generated content offer varied listening opportunities that make learning feel more approachable and relevant to everyday communication. These features appear to encourage students to practise more frequently and take greater initiative in managing their own listening routines. At the same time, the study highlights several practical concerns. Participants note that the mixed quality of user-generated posts, frequent entertainment-focused recommendations, and fragmented content structure may interfere with focused listening or deeper comprehension. Learners also recognise the need to evaluate the credibility of creators and manage potential distractions. Overall, Rednote serves as a useful supplementary tool for autonomous listening, provided that students employ careful selection and effective self-regulation.

6.1 Significance

This study provides a clear understanding of how Chinese university students perceive the use of Rednote for autonomous English listening. It expands the existing literature on social media-supported EFL learning by focusing on a platform that has received limited academic attention. The findings also provide practical insights for teachers and

content developers, showing how learners experience the advantages and challenges of Rednote and how such platforms may be incorporated into independent listening practices.

6.2 Limitations and Recommendations for Future Research

Although this study offers valuable insights into Chinese university students' perceptions of using Rednote for autonomous English listening, several limitations remain. The sample is limited to users already active on Rednote, which may not represent learners with different levels of digital access or varied social media habits. The study also focuses only on listening, leaving other language skills unexplored. Future research may broaden participant groups, compare different social platforms, or investigate how Rednote supports skills such as speaking, reading, and writing. Longitudinal studies could also examine how learners' perceptions and listening behaviours evolve.

COMPETING INTERESTS

The authors have no relevant financial or non-financial interests to disclose.

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