



THE USE OF GOOGLE TRENDS TO IMPROVE STUDENTS' LISTENING AND SPEAKING SKILLS

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Abstract

Using authentic materials, such as books, videos, news, and podcasts has received increasing attention in English classes in the last two decades. Among others, Google Trends serves as a platform to choose authentic materials based on their popularity on a global scale. It has been displaying huge data about the most popular news, people, events, books, movies, and songs since 2004. To this aim, 40 Foundation English students who studied at a private university in Erbil, Iraq, were chosen through a simple random sampling method for the 2022-2023 Academic Year. Control group students kept their education according to the principles of the pre-defined curriculum, while experimental group students made a presentation about a trending topic on Google, prepared a listening quiz, and ran a speaking session. The data, collected by exams and surveys, were analyzed by SPSS 26 and NVivo application, revealing that Google Trends enriched teaching mode, increased students' listening scores and enhanced speaking performance significantly in the experimental group, whereas no noticeable progress was observed in the control group. Likewise, students' motivation towards learning English increased significantly in the experimental group, while it was less than noticeable in the control group. The findings of this study can have some implications for educators who consider integrating Google Trends into the curriculum to present authentic materials.

Keywords: *authentic materials, Google Trends, listening scores, enhanced speaking performance*

Introduction

Language learning and teaching process has transformed substantially in the 21st century. It cannot be envisioned that English will be exempted from this transformation with its 1.5 billion speakers either natively or second language as the most widely spoken language in the world. Its reign has been noticed starkly in the education, real, and professional life of the people. Meanwhile, globalization and technological advancements have considerably changed the nature of the language learning and teaching process (Kara, 2023). Staying in touch with foreigners through video calls or online gaming initiatives, watching online lessons from dynamic tutors, and learning English through online games, movies, or podcasts have raised the awareness of the learners, so they have demanded to learn English in an engaging atmosphere as well as reducing the time of mastery compared to previous generations' long and challenging journey. In this respect, English learning and teaching instruction has been updated accordingly to meet the needs of the learners. The first shift has been noticed in terms of teaching methods or approaches. To illustrate, Grammar Translation and Direct Methods have been replaced with the Communicative Language Teaching Approach, Task-Based Language Learning Method, or Inquiry-Based Learning Method. While the former emphasizes the importance of grammatical mastery and repetitive drill in a teacher-centered mode, the latter ones highlight endless communication between the students and the teachers via authentic materials, meaningful tasks, or discovery. Authentic materials are materials not produced primarily to teach English

in classes. Rather, they are created to offer real-life situations, so the gap between theory and real life will be eliminated gradually. The rationale for integrating authentic materials into English classes is that they are engaging, imaginative, and motivating (Celik et al., 2022; Softa, 2011; Ulker & Yildiz, 2021). Several examples of authentic materials include newspapers, magazines, TV programs, movies, songs, podcasts, brochures, advertisements, story books, articles, interviews, etc. Similarly, Task-Based Language Learning Method supports learners in improving their English via well-established tasks. Similarly, inquiry-based learning urges learners to research out of curiosity and satisfy their unquenchable thirst for new information (Pedaste et al., 2015). It can be argued that authentic materials provide ample opportunity to foster communication, finalize tasks, and dive into a thorough search out of curiosity.

Google Trends (GT hereafter) has unleashed internet search patterns by analyzing web queries on the Google Search website since 2006. It has a lot of user-friendly features such as being subscribed to get updates via email, downloading queries, or sharing data via social media platforms (Gummer & Oehrlein, 2022). It allows visitors to figure out the most frequently searched items previously or currently. It also illustrates a specific topic's popularity over time by an easily conceivable graph. Furthermore, frequently searched items can be observed either as worldwide or country-based (Borup & Schutte, 2022). Apart from specific topics, there are 25 categories to search ranging from arts to travel. Thus, it helps marketers to understand consumer trends and make sensible investments. Additionally, it can be useful for inspectors or police officers to predict criminal acts in advance and take precautionary measures. Subsequently, it warns people about an imminent pandemic to take some steps beforehand. Moreover, the inclinations of different societies can be pinpointed with ease. After that, users can be privileged to be informed about the latest movies, books, and car models, so they can decide correspondingly. It also revolutionizes the way people develop their skills in English. In other words, the intriguing point of Google Trends for language learning and teaching purposes is that it paves the way for reaching authentic materials and improving English in an unorthodox format (Nielsen & Ganter, 2022). To name a few, users can notice that a pop singer is trending now, so they can be directed to her released albums. In addition, visitors can realize that a tanker is blocking the Suez Canal due to a technical failure, so they channel all their energy into following news on it. Additionally, viewers can observe that an author's new book has received harsh criticism, so they are urged to watch some TV programs covering it. Furthermore, fans can see that the World Cup is receiving a lot of attention, so they start listening to some podcasts about upcoming matches. Similarly, users can be alert that an advertisement has a lot of supporters, so they want to watch it as well (Chaffey & Chadwick, 2019). As it is clear, Google Trends appeals to all people, regardless of being a marketer or a student with different reflections in their lives.

Listening is one of the most important macro-skills on the way to being a proficient speaker of English. It lays the background through input as a receptive skill, so the speaking performance of learners is enhanced correspondingly (Kara, 2023). Listening is considerably different from hearing, as it requires the learners to grasp, digest, and understand, so they can respond to the prompts more accurately. However, it is one of the most challenging skills to be improved. Some common barriers to effective listening arise frequently if learners miss keywords, lose concentration after a while, skip taking notes or rush to respond earlier (Lengkoan et al., 2022). Some techniques can help the learners to eliminate such barriers to a large extent. For example, learning new words with their pronunciation, listening to audio tracks in a graded way regularly, taking abbreviated notes, and balancing time to respond and double-check answers can help test-takers to increase their listening scores. Apart from making an effort to improve listening skills in traditional classroom settings, some web-enhanced tools such as e-books, podcasts, movies, and songs can also be used extensively to master listening in a short time (Putra & Dianti, 2022). Considering the importance of listening skills,

nearly all textbooks encompass certain activities to practice and develop them. Additionally, an internationally accepted standardized test such as TOEFL, IELTS, PTE, or SAT cannot be imagined without listening to questions. It can be stated that listening skill is at the center of communication, so it should not be underestimated to reap the benefits of it at school or in real life.

Speaking is also one of the most important macro-skills in the language learning and teaching process as a representative of productive skills. Mastering speaking has some prerequisites such as knowing how to pronounce words, ordering the words accurately, choosing the right vocabulary, overcoming speaking anxiety, and commanding necessary grammar rules (Shareef, 2023). In other words, there is a direct relationship between speaking and other skills. Speaking skills have another role in increasing students' engagement to learn further. For example, learners who can express their ideas regularly with well-established activities can progress faster because they practice and enjoy the pleasure of speaking in real life. However, learners who prioritize other skills and ignore speaking skills may lose their enthusiasm after a while. Thanks to technological advancements, many opportunities are available to develop speaking skills (Rao, 2019). For example, learners can find a speaking partner through chat applications. Additionally, schools can take the initiative to find a speaking partner who studies in a foreign country. In addition, online tutoring alternatives have increased dramatically in the post-Covid-19 era. Subsequently, learners can play interactive games. Moreover, they can watch a movie and dub the scenes with their own voices. After that, they can record their voices to be evaluated by a robot, working by the principles of AI. As it is unambiguous, there are numerous ways to boost speaking performance and take advantage of it whenever needed.

Research Significance

Technology-enhanced language learning and teaching has received increasing attention at educational institutions. Correspondingly, using authentic materials such as videos, news, podcasts, and e-books has intrigued education stakeholders to improve the level of learners in English classes. However, there has yet to be a consensus on prioritizing one authentic material over others in English classes. Additionally, a gap in the literature has been observed in implementing Google Trends in ELL classes. Google Trends has the potential to encourage learners with real-life situations, so they progress their English as they read, watch, and listen to materials that are relevant to their daily lives. In addition, they are directed to satisfy their curiosity by researching further because a wide variety of information can be reached about the same topic with the help of various websites. Thus, Google Trends can be used as an essential tool to enrich English lessons with authentic materials in the Iraq context, which is not a common practice, as noticed after examining published files thoroughly.

Literature Review

The popularity of Google Trends has risen exponentially since its advent in 2006, as it has been run by the top search engine, Google Inc., with a 95 % share in mobile traffic globally (Eichenauer et al., 2022). It is a unique tool to know the tendencies of people who live in different countries. Additionally, hotly debated topics, breaking news, and newly released products can also be observed in Google Trends (Kansal et al., 2021). Thus, it helps nearly everyone worldwide to make some interpretations accordingly. In this respect, relevant authorities have widely used Google Trends in many sectors (Kohns & Bhattacharjee, 2023). To name a few, it has been used as a marketing tool to realize the potential of some products and manufacture them. Additionally, some defects of some products can be a trending topic, so the company takes it as a warning to remove the defects and produce trouble-free products to

increase their influence in the global market. Subsequently, a school principal follows the latest trends in traditional, hybrid, or distance education through Google Trends to update the features of the school correspondingly. Moreover, a supervisor of a logistics company can predict some inclinations about e-trucks, thereby purchasing some of them to reduce the cost and protect the environment respectively. Afterwards, the CEO of a music and entertainment company keeps an eye on the latest trends and urges authorized bodies to release movies and albums according to the needs of the industry. Next, a board of trustees can replace unpopular departments with futuristic ones based on the trends on Google.

An increasing number of studies have been conducted on the effects of Google Trends in various fields with varying implications. To illustrate, Choi and Varian's (2009) study unearthed that Google Trends can predict unemployment, automobile demand, and holiday destinations. They hinted that a correlation could be found between the countries suffering from the economic crisis and a dramatic increase in meeting search queries related to unemployment. They also reiterated that a correlation can be pinpointed between income levels and the automotive demands of the countries. In the same vein, they attest that a connection can be forged between search queries of holiday spots and citizens' reserved money in a certain country. Another notable study was carried out by Ortiz-Martinez et al. (2020) to predict an upcoming pandemic such as COVID-19 through Google queries. They state that Google records can be used to predict some diseases, raise people's awareness to take some measures, and seek health treatments to recover as early as possible. Similarly, Rech (2007) found that Google Trends can easily determine the acceptance rate of new technological items. He contends that if a new device has been searched more than others, it shows that they attracted more attention than others. Thus, consumers' attitudes towards new gadgets can be measured easily via Google Trends.

A wealth of research has also been carried out on the effects of Google Trends in education. For example, Kansal et al.'s (2021) study revealed that a substantial increase in queries on online learning tools has transformed teaching from a traditional to an online or hybrid format in the current and upcoming years. In addition, Rao's (2019) study uncovered that choosing news according to the popularity in Google Trends increased students' proficiency in English. Similarly, Sakkir et al.'s (2020) study revealed that teaching English through popular videos of the week based on Google Trends can tremendously enhance students' speaking performance. Likewise, Barno's (2021) study showed that choosing popular TV programs, news, articles, or books can increase students' macro-skills substantially. He also hints that choosing lowly-rated teaching materials can adversely affect language learning and the teaching process. Additionally, Asyifah and Indriani's (2021) study revealed that choosing podcasts that are trending globally can increase students' enthusiasm as they are familiar with them through news, videos, or TV programs. They also assert that popular podcasts can gradually help people improve their listening skills. In addition to previous ones, Turley's (2023) study also showed that summarizing daily newsletters sent by Google can unlock students' potential in writing because they can be interesting, engaging, and inspiring.

Research Aim and Research Questions

The effects of Google Trends enriched teaching on speaking enhancement and listening development in the Iraq context at the tertiary level were explored meticulously in this study. Thus, this study may increase awareness about integrating Google Trends to embed real-life situations into ELL classes. Accordingly, the research questions (RQ) were formulated as follows:

- RQ1. Does Google Trends enriched teaching pave the way for improving students' listening skills?
- RQ2. Do Google Trends integrated lessons develop students' speaking skills?
- RQ3. Does Google Trends affect students' attitudes toward learning English in general?

Research Methodology

General Background

The type of research design employed in this study was a mixed method that guided the researcher to integrate qualitative and quantitative instruments into the study harmoniously. Bryne and Humble (2007) attested that a mixed method research design offers several advantages, such as gaining more accurate data by taking strong points of qualitative and quantitative methods, so it has been used extensively in social science studies. In this respect, surveys included the interview and the questionnaire, whereas pre-tests and post-tests were composed based on listening and speaking tasks. Meanwhile, surveys encompassed Likert scale-based questionnaire items and open-ended questions which were exposed to face validity and pilot study. The committee, including testing experts and linguists, examined the items critically and offered precious feedback to direct coherent questions to the participants. Likewise, a pilot study was also carried out on 40 students, who were studying the Foundation English course in a year like primary participants, to provide the groundwork and increase the success rate of the main study. Some irrelevant or ambiguous questions were replaced with easily understandable ones after the pilot study, so the data collection process could be completed more efficiently. Hassan et al. (2006) stated that a pilot study is crucial to test research protocols and data collection instruments in preparation for a larger study. In the final phase, Cronbach Alpha was run to check the questionnaire's internal consistency, which was .87. Tavakol and Dennick (2011) pointed out that .80 or greater Cronbach Alpha levels are good indicators of reliable items in the questionnaire, so the reliability level in this test was higher which hinted that internal consistency was set successfully.

Sample Selection

The setting of the current study was a private university in Iraq, where around 5,000 students have been taking English Medium Instruction in 29 majors as of the 2022-2023 Academic Year. The university has diverse communities to offer education, so students from various countries have chosen it to find a common ground which is taking all lessons in English. Additionally, the population of the study was 200 students who took the Foundation English course as a non-elective technical course to lay a solid background in English, thereby adapting to all departmental lessons in a short time. Simple random sampling was used as a method to form the sample. It was realized by assigning a certain number for each Foundation English student and choosing them randomly via a software called Number Picker Wheel. 22 of them were female, 18 of them were male students, and their ages were between 18 and 21. Additionally, they were studying in 8 different departments ranging from petroleum engineering to nursing.

Instrument and Procedures

The data collection process spanned 12 weeks during the spring semester of the 2022-2023 academic year. The rationale for conducting the study in the spring semester was to train them thoroughly in the fall semester, so they would have enough self-confidence to express their ideas in a spoken and written format while exploiting the power of Google Trends data with various activities. To realize this goal, they took all lessons to master English in terms of macro-skills and micro-skills with the guidance of qualified and dedicated English instructors, who have the sole responsibility of managing Foundation English courses at the university. Prior to the data collection process, all participants took comprehensive workshops to be informed about the nature of the study, sign consent forms to join the study voluntarily and ask

any questions to be clarified. The conduct of the lessons was common until this point; however, it was totally different in the subsequent phase. To illustrate, control group students received the education in an orthodox way as highlighted in the curriculum previously, while experimental group students were in charge of choosing a worldwide trending topic in the last 12 months based on the information illustrated on the official website of Google Trends and addressing a presentation related to it. Filtering 12 months was done to give students more alternatives to choose from the recent past and restore other students' memories. While an assigned student was making a presentation, s/he was free to show a video, display a relevant article, and direct any question to the students, so the principles of the communicative language teaching approach were followed adamantly. The activities included using authentic materials and exchanging ideas via question-and-answer sessions. In the final phase, students watched the related video one more time and answered 5 multiple choice-based comprehension questions, designed by the responsible student and proofread by the researcher, to check their comprehension rate in listening. This cycle continued for each student according to the predefined plan. Considering data collection instruments, a pre-test was conducted the day before the study commenced, while a post-test and surveys were conducted at the end of the period to have a clearer image of the effects of Google Trends teaching mode.

The members of the exam committee developed questions in the pre-test and post-test exams based on the listening and speaking activities of the course book, covered officially in all Foundation English classes. Scope 2 was used as a reference book to create pre-test and post-test exams. Each listening exam included 20 questions based on the book's audio tracks. They listened to the track twice and answered multiple-choice questions via Zip Grade. Zip Grade application was chosen on purpose because it offers standardized tests conveniently and shows the scores immediately which increases the accountability of the exams significantly. When it was time to measure their speaking skills, students answered the questions, chosen from Scope 2, and earned their marks based on the rubric. Students' topics to make a presentation included the 2023 UEFA Champions League Final, 5G, Ali Express, Amazon.com, Black Friday, Mode of Transport, ChatGPT, EA Sports FIFA 23, Google Docs, Harry Potter Novel Series, iPhone 14 Pro, Kylian Mbappe, Lionel Messi, Meta Technology Company, Morocco, Saudi Arabia, Tesla, TripAdvisor, World Cup 2022, and Argentina.

Data Analysis

(SPSS, 26) and NVivo applications were employed to fetch and analyze the data accordingly. The former was activated to analyze quantitative data, while the latter was activated to analyze qualitative data, thereby allowing the researcher to classify common themes in content analysis. Independent samples *t*-test was used to determine whether there was a significant difference between control and experimental group students in terms of mean scores in listening and speaking exams. In addition, descriptive analysis was used to analyze the items in the questionnaire in terms of mean and standard deviation. Subsequently, recordings of the interview were transcribed, and the advantages and drawbacks of Google Trends enriched teaching were categorized through content analysis.

Research Results

Perceptions towards Google Trends

Students' genuine opinions about the effects of Google Trends enriched teaching are explored in terms of developing listening skills, boosting speaking performance, increasing motivation with real-life situations, and changing overall attitude towards learning English. The details are visualized as shown in Table 1.

Table 1
Participants Opinions on the Effects of Google Trends Enriched Teaching

Item no.	Item	Min	Max	M	SD
1	I developed my listening skills via Google Trends enriched teaching	2	5	4.05	1.35
2	I improved my speaking skills via Google Trends enriched teaching	1	5	4.50	1.14
3	Google Trends helped me change my attitude towards learning English	2	5	4.25	1.29
4	Google Trends helped me succeed in my departmental courses	1	5	3.85	1.56
5	It was appealing for me to integrate real life events in English classes via Google Trends	2	5	4.00	1.29

Table 1 reveals participants' opinions on the effects of Google-enriched teaching. Once they were examined meticulously, significant points emerged. To name a few, the analysis of the first item showed that the majority of the participants noticed positive impacts of Google Trends on their listening comprehension rate ($M = 4.05$, $SD = 1.35$). Similarly, focusing on the second item revealed that there was a positive correlation between Google Trends and students' speaking performance ($M = 4.50$, $SD = 1.14$). Subsequently, the analysis of item 3 unearthed that Google Trends enriched teaching encouraged them to study English more ambitiously and seek opportunities to master earlier ($M=4.25$, $SD=1.29$). Conversely, item 4 analysis uncovered that Google Trends enriched teaching did not pave the way for increasing their success in other classes albeit run completely in English ($M=3.85$, $SD= 1.56$). The last item in the questionnaire was about participants' opinions on the integration of real-life events in English classes via Google Trends. The findings indicated that the majority of the students found the treatment period appealing to capture their attention ($M=4.00$, $SD=1.29$). Once all items are analyzed in detail, it can be concluded that Google Trends enriched teaching yields better results in various aspects with varying degrees.

The Results of the Interview

Participants outlined the advantages and disadvantages of Google Trends enriched teaching in the interview. In addition, they summarized significant gains that they earned throughout the study. Correspondingly, the advantages and disadvantages of Google Trends enriched teaching mode are depicted in Tables 2 and 3.

Table 2*Participants' Choices on Benefits of Google Trends Enriched Teaching*

Benefits	Frequency	Percentage %
Exposure to real language	20	100
Expanding Word Power	16	80
Engaging	15	75
Raise Cultural Awareness	11	55
Up to Date	20	100
Variety	19	95
Spark Curiosity	18	90

Table 2 indicates participants' responses to highlight some benefits of Google Trends enriched teaching mode. When Table 2 was analyzed closely, it was observed that participants appreciated the exposure to real language, up-to-date information, variety, learning further out of curiosity, expanding word power, and having engaging classes with varying degrees. However, raising cultural awareness was not praised like other items, which hints that Google Trends does not necessarily mean increasing readers' knowledge of cultural elements.

Table 3*Participants' Preferences on Drawbacks of Google Trends Enriched Teaching*

Drawbacks	Frequency	Percentage%
Too Difficult to Grasp	3	15
Uninteresting	4	20
Overwhelming	2	10
Time-consuming	1	5

Table 3 shows participants' responses to highlight some drawbacks of Google Trends enriched teaching mode. It illustrated that Google Trends enriched teaching posed some problems to be reconsidered to increase its positive effects on readers. For example, a few students asserted that they were uninteresting, challenging to figure out, overwhelming, and time-consuming. Balancing the number of topics, dividing topics into manageable and understandable chunks, and choosing topics according to the interests of the learners can eliminate such problems to a great extent. The findings of the interview with participants also indicated some themes to be emphasized.

Forging Connections between Visually Stimulating Materials and Google Trends

Reading articles, being familiar with statistics, and monitoring images have emerged as the sub-theme of learning out of curiosity. Students have emphasized that it has far-reaching effects on their learning because they have made connections between visually stimulating items and topics on Google Trends. Some statements regarding this theme are as follows:

“This study has changed my attitudes towards learning English via trending topics. I have seen that learning English is fun when we watch videos or read articles about familiar topics. In addition, it is easy to keep the words in mind when we have some images and videos about certain topics. Another point to consider about this study is that we are encouraged to search more out of curiosity. For example, one of my friends introduced World Cup 2022 with interesting videos, statistics, and newspaper headlines. Later, I researched more about World Cup 2022.” (St 2)

Sharpening English through Real-life Events

Exploring real-life events based on Google trends has emerged as another noteworthy sub-theme. Participants have highlighted that they have become more ambitious when real-life events are covered in the lesson. Additionally, they have reiterated that learning English has become a joyful activity rather than a monotonous task that demotivates learners. Sincere opinions about this theme are as follows:

“It was so memorable to join this study. I realized that learning English is more interesting when real-life events are embedded into classes. I have learned English through textbooks so far. However, some of the topics were out of date which reduced my motivation. This cycle was broken in this study. I watched some videos and read some articles about trending topics throughout the world. I am interested in artificial intelligence, so Chat GPT presentation was captivating for me. I learned further information about it, advantages and disadvantages through the lens of experts. I also increased my knowledge about it on the web when I had some question marks in my mind. All in all, this mind-blowing study helped me to use English for daily conversations.” (St 3)

Boosting Self-confidence

Having the freedom to summarize trending topics on Google has encouraged learners to develop their spoken English. In addition, prior research has been activated to speak more persuasively which has fostered communication in the class. The perspectives of the participants are illustrated as follows:

“My daily routine is to follow breaking news and trending topics on Twitter, so I found the conduct of lessons interesting in this study. I refreshed my memory when my friends introduced a trending topic. I also expanded my knowledge about these topics. In addition, we improved our listening by watching a lot of videos. Likewise, we commented on videos which boosted our self-confidence to express our ideas freely. I am grateful that I have joined this study.” (St8)

Being Exposed to Interesting Topics Based on Hobbies

Encountering a lot of topics based on popular hobbies has captured participants' attention. They have become more inclined to expand their knowledge as the topics are as close to their interests. The genuine ideas of some participants are depicted as follows:

“I am into sports, so I had a lot of opportunities to be more knowledgeable about sports and learn English simultaneously. For example, we watched highlights of some matches in the 2022 World Cup, held in Qatar, learned some enhancements in EA Sports FIFA 23, read the magnificent success story of Manchester City as the winner of the 2023 Champions League, followed Lionel Messi's transfer to Inter Miami, followed the rumors on Kylian Mbappe's possible move to other European clubs. Each activity captured my attention, so I watched each video and read each shown article several times, so I improved my English a lot during this study. It was a great privilege to combine my interest with English classes.” (St 11)

Paving the Way for Unlocking the Potential

Seizing the opportunity to explore possibilities in realizing lifelong dreams is another significant sub-theme, emerging in this study. Participants have found a lot of common grounds to seek precious knowledge and be respectable entrepreneurs in the future. Some novel ideas are given as follows:

“I want to be an entrepreneur in the future. Accordingly, I see great potential to unlock in the online shopping sector. Throughout the study, we embarked on different journeys, but the stories of Amazon and Ali Express were more appealing than others. I have learned a lot of precious lessons to increase the profit and sustainability in online shopping. I am also interested in electric cars whose forefront representative is Tesla. Tesla's rising popularity was depicted clearly in the videos and articles, so I got so much pleasure while watching and reading them. At the end of the study, I noticed that I learned a lot of essential words and developed my listening and speaking skills by indulging in numerous activities.” (St 12)

Facilitating Challenges in Social Life

Following Google Trends based on the necessities of social life is another crucial theme which deserves special attention. Participants have focused their concentration on their current plans, so they have followed trending topics correspondingly. Some statements which are uncovered are illustrated as follows:

“I am crazy about travelling, so I travel more frequently than typical people to explore and release my stress. Getting a detailed description of Trip Advisor was the most intriguing part of the study for me. I learned nearly all the features of Trip Advisor. Hence, I will use it more frequently to get valuable suggestions of visitors for a certain place and filter hotels and restaurants based on my needs. In addition, the presentation on 5G helped me to weigh the pros and cons of them with unambiguous examples. To cut the long story short, this study was beneficial for me in many aspects.” (St 14)

Being a Citizen to Have Global Awareness

Indulging in some thorough research on controversial topics has intrigued the participants. They have become more alert as they are more knowledgeable on global issues that may affect the whole world regardless of the territory. Some expressions are given as follows:

“My department is computer engineering, so the theme of 5G was captivating for me. I learned the principles of 5G, promises, and some possible drawbacks from different sources. Additionally, I dived into some documentaries about 5G in the subsequent phase. My friend who made a presentation compared 5G with previous versions, so it was very informative. Once we were exposed to various reading and listening materials to comment, our proficiency in English increased considerably.” (St 17)

Grabbing the Opportunity for Professional Development

Having ample opportunity to be equipped with certain skills which will lay the background for a professional career has attracted considerable attention as it is an indispensable part of people's lives. The perspectives of some participants are depicted as follows:

“My department is accounting, so I want to sharpen my computer literacy skills gradually. This study inspired me to learn the basics of Google Docs and be informed about cost-free courses to

expand my knowledge of Google Docs. Now, I am more knowledgeable in editing, creating, and saving files with the help of Google Docs. In addition, I would like to buy an iPhone 14, so the video unboxing iPhone 14 was so useful in learning the differences between iPhone 14 and older models. All activities fostered my communication indirectly, so I enhanced my listening skills and progressed in speaking at the end of the study.” (St 19)

Descriptive Results

Participants' listening and speaking pre-test and post-test scores were compared to determine whether the difference was significant. The details are examined below in Tables 4 and 5.

Table 4
Pre-test and Post-test Results of the Experimental and Control Groups in Listening

Variables	Measurement	N	M	SD	t	df	p
Pre-test	Control	20	56	10.079			
Pre-test	Experimental	20	56.75	11.502	.219	38	.828
Post-test	Control	20	56.50	12.680			
Post-test	Experimental	20	72.75	19.089	3.171	38	.003

Table 4 reveals participants' listening performance considering pre-test and post-test scores. Through the calculated t-statistic, at a level of significance of .003, a statistically significant difference was found between the results in the post-test of the experimental and control groups of participants. In the output measurement, the experimental group improved more significantly than the control group. Similarly, the average of control group students increased by less than 1 point, whereas the difference was 16 points in the experimental group. Those figures reveal that Google Trends enriched teaching affects participants' listening performance positively.

Table 5
Pre-test and Post-test Results of the Experimental and Control Groups in Speaking

Variables	Measurement	N	M	SD	t	df	p
Pre-test	Control	20	57.25	12.822			
Pre-test	Experimental	20	59.50	11.227	.590	38	.558
Post-test	Control	20	59.25	8.926			
Post-test	Experimental	20	71	14.473	3.090	38	.004

Table 5 shows participants' speaking performance through pre-test and post-test scores. Based on the computed t-statistic, with a significance level of .004, a statistically significant difference was seen between the outcomes of the post-test for the experimental and control group students. In terms of output measurement, it was observed that the experimental group exhibited a more substantial progress compared to the control group. In a similar vein, it was

observed that the mean score of students in the control group exhibited a 2-point gain, whereas the experimental group demonstrated a much larger difference of 11.5 points. The data presented indicates that the utilization of Google Trends in educational settings has a positive impact on the listening skills of the participants.

Discussion

The results, which were gathered through questionnaire, interview, listening and speaking exams, showed that the participants credited the role of Google Trends enriched teaching in allowing them to increase their self-confidence in speaking, develop their listening comprehension skills, change their attitudes towards learning English with the help of real-life related excerpts.

Participants' preferences in the questionnaire uncover essential points to be emphasized. To illustrate, they stated that Google Trends enriched teaching mode helped them develop their listening skills. They also contended that the provided learning materials via Google Trends pushed them to be an active speaker in class thanks to being familiar with them in their social lives because Google Trends affects the content of the news bulletins and many other websites for a while. They also asserted that Google Trends urged them to research more and expand their knowledge in English, so they could apply this practical knowledge to their conversations in their departmental courses. Likewise, they elucidated that they became a more enthusiastic learner of English after being exposed to English with real-life events. Their motivation increased as they grasped details and discovered more via Google Trends.

The findings of the interview revealed that there were several benefits of Google Trends enriched teaching. For instance, participants held the opinion that being exposed to teaching, taken from real-life situations, was engaging because the topics were up to date to capture their attention. They also pointed out that Google Trends offered ample opportunity to raise cultural awareness because the trending topics may cover cultural elements of various countries. Subsequently, participants reiterated that they were encouraged to get further information about the given topic, so they had the chance to extend their learning with numerous web-enhanced materials. This finding was consistent with Boyko et al.'s (2023) study which revealed that web-based videos, news, and articles can close the gap between theoretical instruction and real-life situations. Subsequently, participants praised examining up-to-date materials through Google Trends which was in line with Kansal et al.'s (2021) study. In addition, participants found the instruction engaging because the topics were interesting, up-to-date, and varied. Barno (2021) attested that interesting topics in various formats increased students' motivation and willingness if designed in a well-balanced way. After that, participants pointed out that they expanded their vocabulary knowledge dramatically which was consistent with Marpaung and Situmenag's (2020) study. Kara (2023) and Kucuk (2023) stated that breaking the monotony with engaging topics could urge the learners to spark curiosity, so they were inclined to seek novel information in their free time.

On the other hand, citing a lot of positive sides of Google Trends enriched instruction does not necessarily mean that it has no drawbacks. Participants expressed their doubts about the effectiveness of it with some compelling reasons. To name a few, they emphasized that there were some challenging topics which were beyond their understanding. They highlighted that the degree of difficulty should have been balanced while integrating it into English classes. Likewise, they stated that some topics were not so appealing to them because they did not have any prior information or interest in some topics. Another drawback mentioned by the participants is that some tasks were overwhelming, which demotivated them. Their comments hint that the duration should be considered meticulously to keep them concentrated during the activity. In the same vein, participants attested that they spent much time reading, comprehending,

and taking the relevant quizzes which was another issue to lose their ambition towards going further. Belaid and Murray (2015) stated that authentic materials should be embedded into the curriculum professionally. Otherwise, some issues arise, thereby reducing the satisfaction rate of the learners gradually.

The last data collection instruments were listening and speaking exams which highlighted significant points via independent samples t-test. When pre-test exams were compared with post-test exams, it was revealed that the listening and speaking marks of the experimental group increased more significantly than control group students. This finding revealed that Google Trends enriched teaching mode ensured far better results, whereas the progress was not noticeable in the control group students, who followed their curriculum in an orthodox format. It can be concluded that quantitative data and qualitative data complemented each other harmoniously in this study albeit some minor drawbacks of Google Trends enriched teaching mode. Morales and Beltran (2006) contended that web-enhanced authentic materials not only enhance speaking but also develop listening skills.

Conclusions, Implications and Recommendations

The effects of Google Trends enriched teaching were sought meticulously in this study. The results revealed that the adopted teaching helped students to break the monotony, research further for interesting topics, expand their vocabulary knowledge, increase overall comprehension, and boost speaking performance in a confident way. In other words, varied materials such as videos, news, and articles sparked their curiosity to learn in and out of class. In addition, assessment tools to measure their listening and speaking skills kept them alert to join activities more consciously. Moreover, putting theory into practice with real-life examples increased their motivation to master English in a short time and get pleasure while expressing their ideas through authentic materials.

The results of this study may have certain implications for enriching English classes with authentic materials, primarily Google Trends. Although there are various authentic materials, Google Trends stands out with its distinctive features. To name a few, it allows users to filter trends based on topics or countries. In addition, it shows visually stimulating graphs to grasp details without having much difficulty. After that, users can connect images and words in the mentioned articles. Educators can consider integrating Google Trends into their English classes to reap the benefits of it so that monotony can be broken with popular topics. Subsequently, Google Trends paves the way for learning out of curiosity with further links. They can be navigated to any articles, news, videos, or podcasts conveniently. Those advantages can be grabbed at educational institutions to spark curiosity and incidentally enhance students' learning rates. Afterwards, several positive effects of making a presentation were uncovered in the findings, which may trigger stakeholders in education to increase the volume of presentations in English classes. Well-organized presentations can help learners express their ideas more confidently so they can gradually improve their public speaking skills. Another important finding of this study was the power of combining reading activities with listening tracks. It was noticed that supporting reading activities with relevant listening excerpts could considerably develop students' overall skills. Authorized bodies to develop students' English levels at educational institutions can implement a plan to enrich reading activities with audio-enhanced tools. Moreover, pre-service teachers can be trained to seize the opportunities of Google Trends in English classes with noteworthy reflections. Likewise, internal seminars can be conducted to raise awareness about the value of Google Trends-enriched teaching at educational institutions on a global scale.

Some recommendations can be made for future studies. Only two macro-skills were included in this study, which can be expanded with other macro-skills or micro-skills to pinpoint

the effects of Google Trends enriched instruction. In addition, the filter was activated within 12 months, which can be filtered within 90 days, so students can restore their memories more easily. Likewise, the study lasted 12 weeks, which can be prolonged to get a clearer image on the effects of Google Trends enriched teaching. Finally, the effects of Google Trends enriched teaching on sophomore, junior, and senior students at the tertiary level can be studied in future studies.

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