

About Idiomology

Idiomology leverages multimedia for language learning. With a focus on idioms and language usage, it aims to support learners in entering communities of discourse. The tool presents interactive conversation scenarios, offering opportunities to practice responding to idiomatic phrases and observe its usage in various contexts. By employing a crowd-sourcing model, the platform invites individuals to submit their own multimedia creations and contribute to the meaning making process. The tool is a valuable resource for global audiences, advancing the ability of people to connect with one another from across the world through language.

Learning Problem

In the U.S., many international students and employees with limited English proficiency face the challenge of developing their language fluency in everyday conversation (Santos, 2003, p. 1; Szelenyi & Chang, 2002, p. 69). Often, many students face the challenge of navigating everyday situations while concurrently learning English communication skills. Language involves elements of culture that shape meaning, particularly with idioms. Given this, it is critical for students to learn the literal and figurative meanings of vocabulary and idiomatic expressions and to practice recognizing them in daily conversation, so they can participate and interact effectively with other individuals in social and workplace settings (Carnevale & Desrochers, 2001, p. 67; Santos, 2003; p. 2; Cies'licka, 2006; p. 116). In other words, it is important to highlight the nuances of the English language in conversational speaking as well as introduce the cultural meanings embedded in it.

Design Process

The design process involved learner interviews and observations, prototypes and iterations, and learner studies. After creating a storyboard and a paper prototype of the design, I designed a Powerpoint prototype and built the tool while leveraging multimedia. Integrating end user design, I evaluated reactions to the user-friendliness of the design and to measure whether the product boosts the users' confidence in speaking English. I assessed users' language development by administering pre- and post-tests that measure their understanding of vocabulary and idioms.



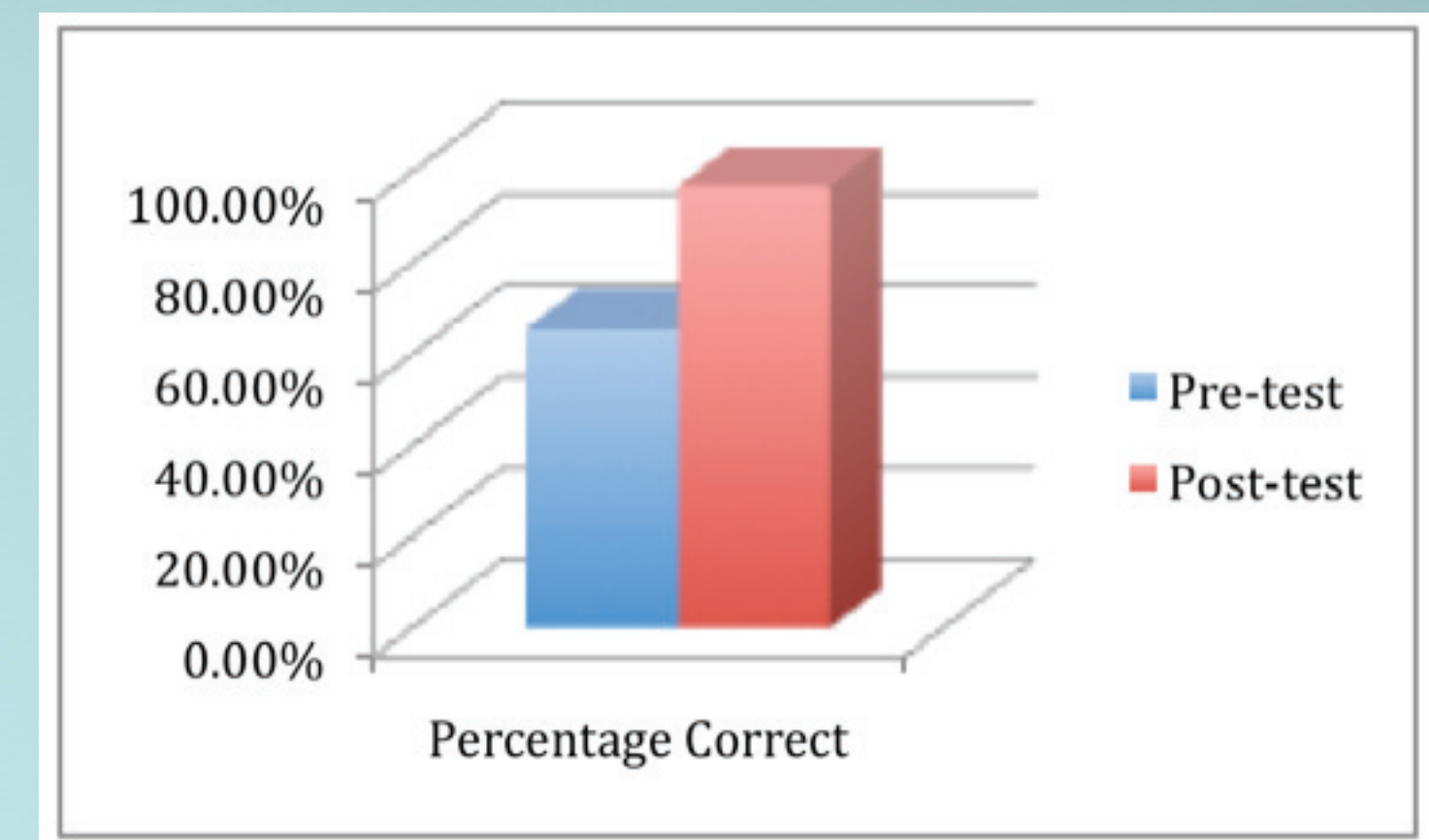
By **Christine Chow**
Project URL: christine.vinzter.com



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Learning Assessment

After the learners received the intervention, I conducted pre- and post-tests to assess learning. I conducted the studies with 8 learners. The design of the assessment involved four multiple-choice questions that asked learners to match the correct definition to an idiom. On the pre-test, they missed a few questions and answered them incorrectly first. When the intervention was completed, learners were able to get almost all the questions right.



Next Steps

Next steps include the exploration of voice-recognition technology that can parse speech and generate feedback on learners' conversational ability. In future redesigns, the project will provide learners with an immersive experience that will sustain their interest and engagement with the content. Additionally, the tool will advance in employing a model of crowd-sourcing, offering users the opportunity to submit multimedia content, suggest idioms, and offer definitions. A standard of quality will be established, and guidelines will be put in place for users to follow with regard to producing video content and submitting definitions for particular idioms. Quality can be further ensured by creating a voting and rating system.

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