

# Assessment of BAEL Freshmen's Proficiency in Formulaic Language: Basis for a Targeted Video-based Intervention

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**Abstract.** Mastering formulaic language, including idioms, collocations, and phrasal verbs is essential for English language learners to achieve native-like fluency and natural communication. However, learners frequently struggle with these expressions. This study addresses the research gap where these three categories are rarely assessed simultaneously and where multimedia tools are underutilized to bridge specific proficiency deficits. This study aims to assess the current proficiency level of first-year Bachelor of Arts in English Language (BAEL) students at a university in the Philippines and subsequently develop a targeted video-based instructional intervention to address their identified weaknesses. Using a quantitative, descriptive research design, the study utilized a 90-item proficiency test to evaluate the participants. The key findings reveal that while students reached a "Proficient" level in phrasal verbs (M=19.11) and collocations (M=19.06), they were only "Approaching Proficient" in idioms (M=16.51), which emerged as the most difficult category. These results indicate that students possess a foundational but unstable understanding of formulaic language. In response, a video-based intervention titled "Idiom Hub" was developed, grounded in the Cognitive Theory of Multimedia Learning and Dual Coding Theory. This intervention utilizes short, multimodal Facebook Reels to explicitly teach the most challenging idioms identified in the assessment. The study concludes that integrating explicit, context-rich, and multimodal teaching approaches is necessary to improve the figurative and semantic processing skills of second language learners.

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## INTRODUCTION

Vocabulary and grammar knowledge are deeply intertwined and jointly contribute to general language proficiency (Tong et al., 2022)(Qian & Lin, 2019). The multiple dimensions of vocabulary knowledge (form, meaning, use) highlight that fluency depends heavily on how well these are integrated in language use (Nation, 2019), while vocabulary fluency plays a moderating role in oral proficiency (Tong et al., 2022).

In addition to vocabulary and grammar, one important component of successful language learning is the ability to speak the language appropriately and effectively in social interactions (Robbins, 1995). This can be achieved through the mastery of idiomatic forms of expression, including idioms, collocations, and sentence frames (Wray, 2000). These are collectively called formulaic language, defined as pre-constructed, frequently used multiword expressions that enable natural, fluent, and contextually appropriate communication (Siyanova-Chanturia, 2015;

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Wray, 2000). Formulaic language also frequently appears at points of topic transition and in summarizing key ideas (Davis et al., 2024). According to literature, the most cited definition of formulaic language (Hammond & Gil, 2025; Siyanova-Chanturia, 2015) comes from a seminal monograph, defining it as a sequence, continuous or discontinuous, of words or other meaning elements, which is, or appears to be, prefabricated: that is, stored and retrieved whole from the memory at the time of use, rather than being subject to generation or analysis by the language grammar (Wray, 2000).

Formulaic language is significant for English language learners because it constitutes a large portion of authentic native-speaker discourse. Previous studies estimate that between 20% and 58% of English usage consists of formulaic expressions, depending on the mode, register, and method of analysis (Erman & Warren, 2000; Schmitt, 2012; Wei & Li, 2013; Wray & Perkins, 2000). For example, a study found that formulaic expressions accounted for 58.6% of spoken texts and 52.3% of written texts (Erman & Warren, 2000). Similarly, research using corpus-based methods reported that 2- to 6-word sequences covered 58.75% of academic texts, supporting earlier findings (Wei & Li, 2013).

Although estimates vary due to differences in definitions and methods, most studies agree that at least one-third to one-half of English consists of formulaic language (Conklin & Schmitt, 2012). This highlights the important role of formulaic language in both first and second language processing, as it supports fluent, natural, and contextually appropriate communication (Siyanova-Chanturia, 2015; Wray, 2000). Moreover, frequent exposure to and use of formulaic expressions enhance non-native speakers' fluency and communicative competence by supporting both receptive and productive language skills (McGuire & Larson-Hall, 2018; Yucedal & Kara, 2023).

Idioms, phrasal verbs, and collocations are among the most important forms of formulaic language due to their idiomatic or semi-fixed structures and their high frequency in everyday English use (Boers & Lindstromberg, 2008; Wood, 2010). Idioms are formulaic sequences whose meanings cannot be derived from the literal meanings of their individual components (Cacciari, 2014; Titone et al., 2015). These expressions are deeply embedded in culture and often reflect meanings that have evolved over time (Orfan, 2020; Sadiqzade, 2025). They serve as concise ways to express ideas and emotions and can address sensitive topics with subtlety. As such, understanding idioms requires learners to grasp cultural and contextual nuances rather than relying solely on literal interpretation (Sadiqzade, 2025).

Phrasal verbs are another essential element of the English lexicon and are crucial for learners' communicative competence (Chansongkhro & Sukying, 2023). They consist of a verb combined with one or more particles (Tadayonifar et al., 2025), such as prepositions or adverbs, which together create meanings different from the verb alone. Because their meanings are often figurative and non-transparent, phrasal verbs pose persistent challenges for EFL and ESL learners.

Collocations refer to words that naturally co-occur in spoken and written language (Kennedy, 1990). The relationship between words in a collocation is not always based on literal meaning, as many collocations form fixed or semi-fixed combinations that convey specific meanings when used together (Gablasova et al., 2017; Macis & Schmitt, 2017). As a major category of formulaic sequences, collocations contribute to semantic precision, figurative expression, and natural-sounding language (Shen et al., 2021; Yucedal & Kara, 2023).

Despite their importance, idioms, phrasal verbs, and collocations remain difficult for learners to acquire due to their semantic opacity, cultural specificity, and lack of direct equivalents

in many first languages (Liontas, 2015). In SLA contexts, learners often rely on literal interpretation, which frequently results in miscommunication or awkward language use (Sivanova-Chanturia, 2015).

Idioms are commonly found in conversations, textbooks, novels, films, and podcasts, yet they are often misunderstood or avoided because of their unpredictable meanings and usage constraints (Boers et al., 2006; Cucchiarini et al., 2022; Iskandar, 2016; Yusuf et al., 2018). A major difficulty lies in the gap between literal word meanings and the idiom's overall sense (Al-Houti & Aldaihani, 2020; Hajiyeva, 2024). Idioms cannot be understood through component analysis alone; instead, they require connotative knowledge and familiarity with figurative language, which often leads learners to rely on context or background knowledge and increases the risk of misinterpretation (Al-Houti & Aldaihani, 2020; Hajiyeva, 2024). Limited cultural exposure further intensifies this difficulty, as many learners have insufficient contact with idioms in both classroom instruction and media (Al-kadi, 2015).

Similarly, phrasal verbs are widely used in informal English but present serious challenges due to their semantic ambiguity and syntactic complexity (Omidian et al., 2019; Zhang & Wen, 2019; Zhou & Thomas, 2025). Their meanings often cannot be inferred from individual words, leading to frequent misinterpretation (Zhou & Thomas, 2025). Despite their frequent occurrence—approximately once every 150 words or about 2,000 times per million words—phrasal verbs receive limited attention in instructional materials (Abid Thyab, 2019; Garnier & Schmitt, 2015). Consequently, learners struggle to use them accurately and fluently, often facing pragma-linguistic difficulties linked to cultural gaps (Amret & Yousif, 2018). Exposure to phrasal verbs in meaningful contexts has been suggested to support deeper understanding and more fluent use (Omidian et al., 2019; Puimège & Peters, 2020).

Although collocations are generally more semantically transparent than idioms, they remain challenging due to subtle usage restrictions and limited explicit instruction (Paquot & Granger, 2012). Their importance is further emphasized by their inclusion in standardized tests such as IELTS, PTE, and TOEFL (Yucedal & Kara, 2023). Many learners struggle with collocations because of first language interference, confusion among synonyms, and limited exposure, which often results in frequent errors (Al Ghazali, 2015; Alsulayyi, 2015; Boonraksa & Naisena, 2021).

Despite their importance, collocations are often overlooked in language instruction. Research pointed out the lack of emphasis on collocation awareness in classrooms (Al Ghazali, 2015), even though learning them helps students sound more fluent, enrich vocabulary, and improve writing style (Al Ghazali, 2015). Studies from different contexts, such as Saudi, Thai, and Arab learners, consistently show common difficulties, particularly with grammatical patterns like noun + preposition and adjective + preposition (Al Ghazali, 2015; Alsulayyi, 2015; Boonraksa & Naisena, 2021). To address these challenges, there is an emphasis on the need for teaching materials and textbooks that actively include collocations and provide varied, meaningful practice to help learners gradually internalize natural word combinations and enhance overall language proficiency.

Moreover, it is recommended that English language classes be supported with modern technology to enable web-enhanced instruction (Sildon, 2025; Yucedal & Kara, 2023). Recent studies highlight the benefits of audio-visual input, especially video materials, for both incidental and intentional learning of formulaic sequences. It was found that watching second-language television can improve learners' knowledge of phrasal verbs, collocations, and idioms by exposing them to these expressions in context (Puimège & Peters, 2020). Similarly, a study explored the

effects of different subtitle conditions on Iranian learners' acquisition of formulaic sequences (Khatami et al., 2023). Their findings suggest that subtitled videos support vocabulary learning to varying degrees, and they recommend integrating such resources into both classroom instruction and independent study.

From a pedagogical perspective, the need to integrate formulaic language more systematically into language instruction is then encouraged. Studies using learner corpora reveal that even advanced learners underuse or misuse these expressions compared to native speakers, particularly in academic and formal settings (Paquot & Granger, 2012). The underuse of formulaic sequences can negatively impact fluency, coherence, and naturalness in spoken and written language (Wood, 2010). Moreover, learners process formulaic sequences more slowly and less accurately than native speakers; hence, there is a need for explicit instruction or increased exposure (Jiang & Nekrasova, 2007).

Previous studies have widely recognized formulaic language as essential to second language proficiency. Despite this awareness, existing proficiency assessments rarely provide a comprehensive evaluation that includes idioms, collocations, and phrasal verbs together. Most research isolates one category, for example, focusing solely on idioms (Boers et al., 2006; Cucchiaroni et al., 2022; Iskandar, 2016; Yusuf et al., 2018), phrasal verbs (Chansongkhro & Sukying, 2023; Zhou & Thomas, 2025) or collocations (Gablasova et al., 2017; Macis & Schmitt, 2017), while studies assessing all three categories simultaneously remain limited. While previous studies include a few formulaic language items, they often fail to measure learners' overall proficiency across these categories in a systematic way. Additionally, digital and multimedia tools, especially video-based micro-learning, are underutilized in addressing formulaic language gaps, even though they are shown to improve learner engagement, contextual understanding, and memory retention (Mayer, 2009; Sildon, 2025). To bridge this gap, this study answers the following research questions:

1. What is the current proficiency level of BAEL students in formulaic language, specifically in the use of idioms, phrasal verbs, and collocations?
2. What targeted video-based intervention can be developed to address learner proficiency in formulaic language?

## **METHOD**

This study utilized a quantitative, descriptive research design to evaluate the formulaic language proficiency of all 43 first-year Bachelor of Arts in English Language (BAEL) students at a state university in North Luzon. This design was appropriate as it describes students' proficiency without manipulating variables (Bryman, 2016), and provides a basis for identifying learning gaps and developing a targeted instructional intervention. The research employed total population sampling to ensure a comprehensive assessment of the target group specializing in English. Data were gathered through a researcher-made 90-item multiple-choice proficiency test composed of three 30-item sections targeting idioms, collocations, and phrasal verbs. To ensure instrument quality, the test was validated by English language experts and subjected to Kuder-Richardson-20 (KR-20) reliability testing, undergoing necessary revisions until an acceptable reliability coefficient of 0.776 was achieved. Ethical clearance (REC 007-007-2025) was granted by the University Research Ethics Committee, and data collection involved face-to-face administration after obtaining informed consent and guaranteeing participant anonymity.

**Table 1.** Proficiency Scale

Score	Descriptive Equivalence
25-30	Advanced Proficient
19-24	Proficient
13-18	Approaching Proficient
7-12	Developing Proficient
1-6	Beginner Proficient

The resulting data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, including frequency counts and mean scores, to categorize performance across a researcher-developed five-level proficiency scale ranging from "Beginner Proficient" to "Advanced Proficient", as shown in Table 1. Furthermore, an item analysis was conducted to identify specific formulaic expressions that consistently cause confusion or errors. These findings directly informed the development of a targeted video-based intervention titled "Idiom Hub," which utilized Facebook Reels to deliver short, context-rich instructional content. The design of this intervention was grounded in the Cognitive Theory of Multimedia Learning (CTML) and Dual Coding Theory, specifically combining verbal and visual stimuli to enhance memory retention and semantic processing.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### 1. Proficiency Levels of BAEL Freshmen in Formulaic Language

#### a. Proficiency Levels in Idioms

Table 2 presents the scores of the BAEL freshmen. The students obtained a total mean score of 16.51 out of 30, which, based on the descriptive equivalence, is interpreted as approaching proficient.

**Table 2.** BAEL freshmen's Score Ranges in Idioms

Respondents	Score Range	Descriptive Equivalence
0	25-30	Advanced Proficient
15	19-24	Proficient
20	13-18	Approaching Proficient
8	7-12	Developing Proficient
0	1-6	Beginner Proficient
<b>Total R = 43</b>	<b>Grand Mean = 16.51</b>	<b>Approaching Proficient</b>

The highest score of 23, achieved by two students, is interpreted as proficient, while the lowest score of 9, also obtained by two students, is interpreted as developing proficient. This indicates a noticeable gap in learners' idiom proficiency. Fifteen students scored between 19 and 23, falling under the proficient category, twenty students scored between 13 and 18, categorized as approaching proficient, and eight students scored between 7 and 12, interpreted as developing proficient. Overall, 28 out of 43 students scored below the score of 19, suggesting that many still struggle with comprehending idioms. Since the data were obtained through a multiple-choice proficiency test, the inclusion of literal interpretations as options may have contributed to confusion (Tarrant et al., 2009). This further indicates that students have limited understanding of the figurative meanings of idioms and face challenges in grasping their intended meanings.

Out of 43 students, 39 correctly identified the meaning of the idiom “as cool as a cucumber,” while only four students answered incorrectly. This contrasts with the findings that only eight students at Zanzibar University and ten students at Sumait University answered this idiom correctly (Ngoge, 2023). This suggests that familiarity with idioms may depend on learners’ exposure, local teaching practices, or cultural contact with English, highlighting the need for localized assessment when selecting idioms for instruction or intervention.

Conversely, most students struggled with Question 19, which featured the idiom “pig in a poke,” with only two out of forty-three students selecting the correct meaning. This mirrors a study (Ngoge, 2023) assessing English idiom comprehension among 180 university students in Zanzibar, which reported that most students struggled with the same idiom, with overall performance below average (26–28% correct across universities). The persistent difficulty with this idiom can be attributed to its opacity and the students’ lack of cultural familiarity, making it a valid choice for inclusion in the intervention.

Similarly, the idiom “batten down the hatches” was answered correctly by only five students. This aligns with the findings of a study (Jelčić Čolakovac, 2019) which identified this idiom as having low transparency, as its figurative meaning, to prepare for a difficult task, cannot be easily deduced from its individual components. These findings underscore the importance of targeted interventions for idioms with low transparency and cultural specificity, as comprehension remains challenging even in multiple-choice contexts.

These findings are consistent with past literature (Cacciari, 2014; Liontas, 2015; Wray, 2000), which report that idioms are among the most challenging types of formulaic expressions for second language learners. It was also emphasized that the non-literal meanings and inherent complexities of idioms require deeper cognitive understanding (Hajiyeva, 2024). In the present study, the BAEL freshmen demonstrated similar difficulties in the idiom tests, with most scores interpreted as *approaching proficient*, indicating limited awareness of figurative meaning. Comprehending idioms proves challenging for these students due to their semantic opacity and the cognitive effort needed to infer meaning, underscoring the necessity of targeted, context-rich instructional approaches, as traditional methods often fall short in addressing idiomatic complexities.

Theories further support this observation. Dual Coding Theory (Paivio, 2013) suggests that idioms are harder to learn because they often lack direct imagery. Figurative expressions such as “*a feather on the cap*” do not have concrete representations corresponding to the literal meanings of the words, which helps explain why students struggled with such items. Overall, the proficiency level of BAEL freshmen in this category of formulaic language highlights that idioms remain a critical challenge due to their semantic complexity, cultural specificity, and non-literal nature, corroborating previous research that identifies idioms as one of the most difficult types of formulaic language for L2 learners.

#### b. Proficiency Levels in Collocations

Table 3 presents the scores of BAEL freshmen in collocations. The students obtained an overall mean score of 19.06 out of 30, which is descriptively interpreted as proficient. The lowest score was 8, falling under developing proficient, while the highest score was 24, interpreted as proficient, indicating considerable variability in students’ collocational knowledge. Out of 43 students, eleven scored below the passing mark, whereas thirty-two students scored between 19

and 24. The most frequent score was 20, obtained by ten students, suggesting a central tendency of substantial collocational knowledge among the freshmen.

**Table 3.** BAEL freshmen's Scores in Collocations

Respondents	Score Range	Descriptive Equivalence
0	25-30	Advanced Proficient
32	19-24	Proficient
8	13-18	Approaching Proficient
3	7-12	Developing Proficient
0	1-6	Beginner Proficient
<b>Total R = 43</b>	<b>Grand Mean = 19.06</b>	<b>Proficient</b>

From a theoretical perspective, the Cognitive Theory of Multimedia Learning (CTML) and Dual Coding Theory are particularly relevant to collocation learning, especially when contextualized with multimedia visuals. Many collocations are concrete (e.g., driving rain) and can be more easily understood and retained when paired with visual representations, supporting more effective learning outcomes.

#### c. Proficiency Levels in Phrasal Verbs

Table 4 presents the individual scores of BAEL freshmen in phrasal verbs. Out of forty-three students, just over half scored above the passing mark of 19, suggesting that these students have developed effective strategies for identifying phrasal verb meanings.

**Table 4.** BAEL freshmen's Individual Scores in Phrasal Verbs

Respondents	Score Range	Descriptive Equivalence
6	25-30	Advanced Proficient
17	19-24	Proficient
15	13-18	Approaching Proficient
5	7-12	Developing Proficient
0	1-6	Beginner Proficient
<b>Total R = 43</b>	<b>Grand Mean = 19.11</b>	<b>Proficient</b>

Fifteen (15) students scored between 13 and 18, indicating a basic understanding of phrasal verbs but difficulty with more complex or less transparent forms. Meanwhile, five students scored between 7 and 12, reflecting limited knowledge of phrasal verbs. Overall, the students achieved a mean score of 19.11, which is interpreted as proficient.

These results align with a report that many phrasal verbs, particularly common ones such as go on, turn up, or come on, frequently occur in spoken English and digital media, allowing learners incidental exposure (Garnier & Schmitt, 2015). For instance, Question 2, which used the phrasal verb going out, was correctly answered by 42 students, with only one incorrect response.

However, another study notes that learners continue to face challenges due to the semantic ambiguity and syntactic complexity of many phrasal verbs. For example, Question 12, which included the phrasal verb ran out, was correctly answered by only four students. The errors may be attributed to the polysemous nature of ran out, causing students to interpret it literally or confuse it with related expressions about insufficient quantity rather than understanding its context-specific meaning.

These findings are supported by reports that ESL and EFL learners often misinterpret phrasal verbs because their meanings cannot be inferred from individual words (Amret & Yousif, 2018; Liao & Fukuya, 2004). Overall, although most students performed well in phrasal verbs,

some still misinterpreted or misunderstood specific items, highlighting the need for targeted instructional support to improve phrasal verb comprehension.

#### d. Summary of the Proficiency Levels in Formulaic Language

**Table 5.** Summary of the Overall Mean Scores across Three Categories

Formulaic language	Mean score	Descriptive equivalence
Idioms	16.51	Approaching Proficient
Collocations	19.06	Proficient
Phrasal Verbs	19.11	Proficient

Table 5 presents the summary of the overall mean scores of students across the three categories of formulaic language. The results show that idioms received the lowest mean score, while collocations and phrasal verbs had nearly identical mean scores, indicating stronger knowledge in these two categories. This aligns with previous research (Boers et al., 2006; Liontas, 2015), which emphasizes that idioms require deeper cultural grounding and figurative processing. The cognitive demand of idioms is higher because students cannot easily visualize them, which negatively affects retention (Paivio, 2013). As highlighted in the present study, the meaning of idioms cannot be inferred from individual words, making repeated exposure and structured classroom instruction necessary (Al-kadi, 2015; Cacciari, 2014).

Specifically, idioms had a mean score of 16.51, collocations 19.06, and phrasal verbs 19.11. These results indicate that while students have foundational knowledge of formulaic language, their understanding is uneven across categories. This pattern suggests that although learners have been exposed to formulaic expressions, they have not received structured instruction that links usage, meaning, context, and imagery. The findings are consistent with the Cognitive Theory of Multimedia Learning (CTML) and Dual Coding Theory, which posit that learners benefit from integrating verbal and visual cues. Overall, these results highlight a clear pedagogical need for instructional materials that present formulaic language using contextual examples, visual aids, and multimodal strategies.

## 2. Targeted Video-Based Intervention

To address the second objective of this study, the researchers developed a targeted video-based intervention based on the most difficult category of formulaic language identified among BAEL freshmen, which is idioms. These were ranked according to the number of respondents who got the items incorrectly.

**Table 6.** The Ten Most Difficult Idioms for BAEL Freshmen

No.	Items	Rank
Q #19	Mae is very careful in buying a new tablet because it might turn out to be a pig in a poke.	1
Q #14	Xhian brings home the bacon and makes his parents very proud.	2
Q #11	When the teacher said "batten down the hatches," students should ____.	3
Q #27	The evidence found was a red herring meant for investigators and the family's victims.	4
Q #3	Sophia improved her vocabulary and earned a feather on her cap.	5

Q #5	The class president is always called the backseat driver in the classroom by other officers.	6
Q #26	I wanted to put a bug in your ear about what will happen in the socialization ball next week.	7
Q #24	The employees threatened to down the tools if their salary is still delayed next month.	8
Q #25	You can't believe everything Mark says; he loves to pull someone's leg.	9
Q #22	Cath is afraid to act at the switch, when their group project failed on the spot.	10

Table 6 presents the ten most difficult idioms out of the 30-item formulaic language test, ranked according to the number of incorrect responses. The most frequently missed item was Q19, containing the idiom “pig in a poke,” which was answered correctly by only two students, while Q22 (“act at the switch”) had the least number of errors. These ten idioms served as the core content for the intervention material.

The video-based intervention was grounded in Dual Coding Theory (Paivio, 2013), which posits that learning is enhanced when verbal and visual information are presented simultaneously. Guided by this principle, the researchers developed context-rich videos that integrate gestures, facial expressions, images, subtitles, and sample sentences to support comprehension of both the literal and figurative meanings of idioms. This design aligns with previous studies emphasizing the effectiveness of technology-enhanced instruction. Research recommends integrating modern technology into English classes (Yucedal & Kara, 2023) and that contextualized audiovisual input improves learners' knowledge of idioms, phrasal verbs, and collocations (Puimège & Peters, 2020). Similarly, it is highlighted that visualization techniques, such as videos, make idiom learning more accessible by bridging the gap between literal and metaphorical meanings (Hajiyeva, 2024). Further, subtitled videos support vocabulary development and should be integrated into both classroom instruction and independent learning (Khatami et al., 2023).

In the development of this intervention, the researchers created a Facebook page called *Idiom Hub*, where the instructional videos were posted. This platform choice is supported by research findings which indicate that social media platforms such as Facebook are effective media for sharing instructional materials and enhancing learner engagement (Sildon, 2025). Her work further emphasizes that integrating technology into language instruction improves instructional quality and creates a more motivating learning environment, thereby supporting the use of a video-based intervention to address the “Approaching Proficient” level identified in the idiom assessment. Facebook Reels, designed for brief and visually engaging content (Dugho & Sumayo, 2025), is particularly suitable for micro-learning interventions due to its wide reach and attention-friendly format



Figure 1. Sample Frames of the Targeted Video-based Intervention

Figure 1 presents sample frames of the targeted video-based intervention created by the researchers. The videos, which range from 45 seconds to one minute, were intentionally designed to maintain learner attention and prevent disengagement. Each video follows a clear, step-by-step instructional structure, beginning with the tagline *"From Words to World: Idioms in Action."* The video presents idioms by showing both their literal and figurative meanings. At the end of each video, viewers are asked to construct sentences using the idioms and post them in the comment section. This approach addresses students' difficulty in understanding figurative meanings by explicitly explaining each idiom and providing example sentences that students can watch in their free time. Repeated viewing allows learners to gain additional exposure to idioms in meaningful contexts, which enhances comprehension, reinforces memory retention, and improves proficiency. The Facebook page was shared with the BAEL freshmen, who served as the primary respondents of the study. This is to ensure they had direct access to the targeted video-based intervention and could watch, interact with, and learn from the posted materials.

## CONCLUSION

The findings of this study demonstrate that while first-year Bachelor of Arts in English Language (BAEL) students possess a foundational knowledge of formulaic language, their proficiency is significantly uneven across different linguistic categories. In response to the first objective, the research concludes that students have achieved a "Proficient" level in phrasal verbs and collocations, likely due to higher incidental exposure through digital media and the relative semantic transparency of these forms. However, students remain only "Approaching Proficient" in idioms, which emerged as the most significant linguistic hurdle. This deficiency is attributed to the high semantic opacity and deep cultural grounding required to process idiomatic expressions since idiomatic expressions cannot be understood simply by analyzing individual components. It is important to note as a key limitation of this study that it only measured students' formulaic language proficiency at a single point in time and did not assess the actual effectiveness or learning gains resulting from the developed intervention.

*Idiom Hub* Facebook Page was developed to address the second objective. It is meant to bridge the gap between assessment and pedagogy through micro-learning. This intervention is theoretically grounded in the CTML and Dual Coding Theory, which suggest that the cognitive load associated with abstract, non-literal language is significantly reduced when verbal information is synchronized with visual and contextual cues. This demonstrates how modern technology can be repurposed to transform traditional vocabulary instruction into an engaging, multimodal experience that facilitates the transition from literal decoding to figurative comprehension. The practical applications of this research extend to both classroom instruction and independent study as it offers a scalable model for integrating targeted multimedia tools into the English language curriculum to support learners specializing in English. However, as this study focused on the proficiency test and did not measure the actual learning gains resulting from the intervention, future studies should employ a quasi-experimental pre-test/post-test design to quantify the effectiveness of the "Idiom Hub" in improving long-term retention compared to traditional methods. Further research is also needed to explore how local cultural contact or L1 interference specifically affects the acquisition of these expressions in Philippine higher education contexts.

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