Introduction:

Idioms are a type of non-literal language which occur frequently in spoken and written English. Children with language impairment struggle with comprehension of the non-literal meaning of idioms. Both literal and non-literal language comprehension is critical for future reading success (Van Kleek, Vander Woude, & Hammett, 2006).

Improving a school-aged child’s knowledge of idioms increases their vocabulary and improving overall skill in communication (Robert de Caro, 2009). One type of therapy approach is to teach idioms as they appear contextually in a passage (Nippold & Martin, 1989).

A different approach is to teach idioms with picture aids which illustrate the different between the literal and non-literal meaning of the idioms (Boers, Piquer-Priz, Stengers, & Eyckmans, 2009).

It is unclear if contextual based or picture illustration instruction of idioms will produce better outcomes for children with language impairments in the clinical setting.

Purpose:

Polly is a 9 year old girl who has been diagnosed with a mixed expressive/receptive language disorder. Polly struggles with comprehension of non-literal language and teaching idioms has been a target for therapy. Polly, is a 9 year old girl who has been diagnosed with a mixed expressive/receptive language disorder. Polly struggles with comprehension of non-literal language and teaching idioms has been a target for therapy.

Case Scenario:

- Polly is a 9 year old girl who has been diagnosed with a mixed expressive/receptive language disorder. Polly struggles with comprehension of non-literal language and teaching idioms has been a target for therapy.
- Gina is a graduate student clinician at the University of Nevada, Reno (UNR) Speech and Hearing Clinic who sees Polly individually for one hour sessions twice each week. Therapy has focused on treatment which targets non-literal language, specifically idioms, using a contextual literature based therapy but has not made marked progress.
- Gina wants help Polly to improve her understanding of idioms and she wonders if changing the therapy design to picture illustrations of idioms will provide better results for improving Polly’s non-literal language skills.

Methodology:

- Search Terms: non-literal language, idioms, school-age, therapy approaches, isolation, context, picture illustrations, picture elucidation, language therapy.
- Appraisal: Studies were appraised for internal validity using a revised 10-point CATE rating scale: Compelling (10 - 8 points), Suggestive (7 - 5 points), Equivocal (4 - 0 points).
- Inter-rater reliability: The averse for inter-rater reliability for ten research articles was 7. Five of the articles were chosen for inclusion in this evidence-based decision making process.

Results:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author, Date &amp; Research Design</th>
<th>Participants, Age, &amp; Description</th>
<th>Dependent Variable</th>
<th>Results:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Boers, Piquer-Priz, Stengers, &amp; Eyckmans (2009)</td>
<td>N = 38; Ages: 19 - 21 years; Description: all are Native Dutch speakers who are learning English</td>
<td>Idioms</td>
<td>Statistically higher recall of idioms for verbally presented idioms compared picture illustrated idioms, $p = 0.0347$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Haghshenas &amp; Hashemian (2016)</td>
<td>N = 80; Ages: not reported; Description: all are native Iranian Speakers who are intermediate learners studying English Control Group (CG), Etymological group (EG), Pictorial group (PG) Etymological/pictorial group (EPG)</td>
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<td>Idioms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nippold &amp; Martin (1989)</td>
<td>N = 475; Ages: 14-17 years; Description: All are native English speakers</td>
<td>Idioms</td>
<td>Idioms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roberto de Caro (2009)</td>
<td>N = 11; Ages: approx. 16-18 years</td>
<td>Idiom comprehension</td>
<td>Idiom comprehension improved language</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Discussion:

External Evidence: Research found that contextual presentation of idioms were effective in improving idiom comprehension (Boers et al, 2009; Nippold & Martin, 1989; Roberto de Caro, 2009; Van Kleek et al, 2006). Additionally, research found that contextual presentation along with picture presentation was the most effective in improving idiom comprehension (Haghshenas & Hashemian, 2016).

Internal Evidence to Clinical Practice: Two approaches for teaching idioms, contextual and with pictures, were discussed with Polly’s parents. They preferred a combination approach to improve Polly’s understanding of idioms.

F\'E\'B\'P Decision: Based on external evidence and patient preference, it was decided to implement a combination of the two approaches: idioms in literature based context and idioms taught with picture illustrations to improve Polly’s idiom comprehension and overall language skills. Polly’s idiom comprehension will be reevaluated in three months to determine if this approach was effective.

References: