



an online platform designed to communicate & preserve the Trinidad English Creole Language

**Using an interactive web platform,
Trini Talk teaches the oral language of Trinidad
through the island's history, shows how the
language is used and establishes a platform
to preserve the language**

**THESIS PROJECT
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ITP - NYU
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INSPIRATION

I created this project because I wanted to learn about the history of the dialect of Trinidad and Tobago – especially the dialect of my island, Trinidad. While nationals are well versed in the language, most of us don't know the etymology of the words that we choose to speak.

Trinidad English Creole (TrinEC) is a reflection of the history of the island. It is an oral language that's a mix of vocabulary from French, Spanish, English, Portuguese, African and Indian languages, to name a few. While English is the official language and used in more formal settings, TrinEC is spoken more casually - by everyone.

DESIGN CHALLENGE

How can I teach the etymology of the TrinEC language?

- Will people want to learn TrinEC?
- What value, if any, will it bring?
- How does the language impact the culture?
- Where can etymological data be found?
- Does something like this already exist?
- What appropriate technology can be useful to articulate this goal?
- Is there a benefit to teaching/learning the formal history of an oral language?

OUTCOME

01 | INTERACTIVE DICTIONARY

Data visualization that tells the story of how the language developed over course of the nation's history

02 | LANGUAGE USAGE

Interactive video shows how the language is used in every day settings

03 | PRESERVATION

Provides an opportunity for users to contribute undocumented words, sayings and abbreviations to the vocabulary

Trini Talk

ABOUT HISTORY USAGE PRESERVATION CONTACT

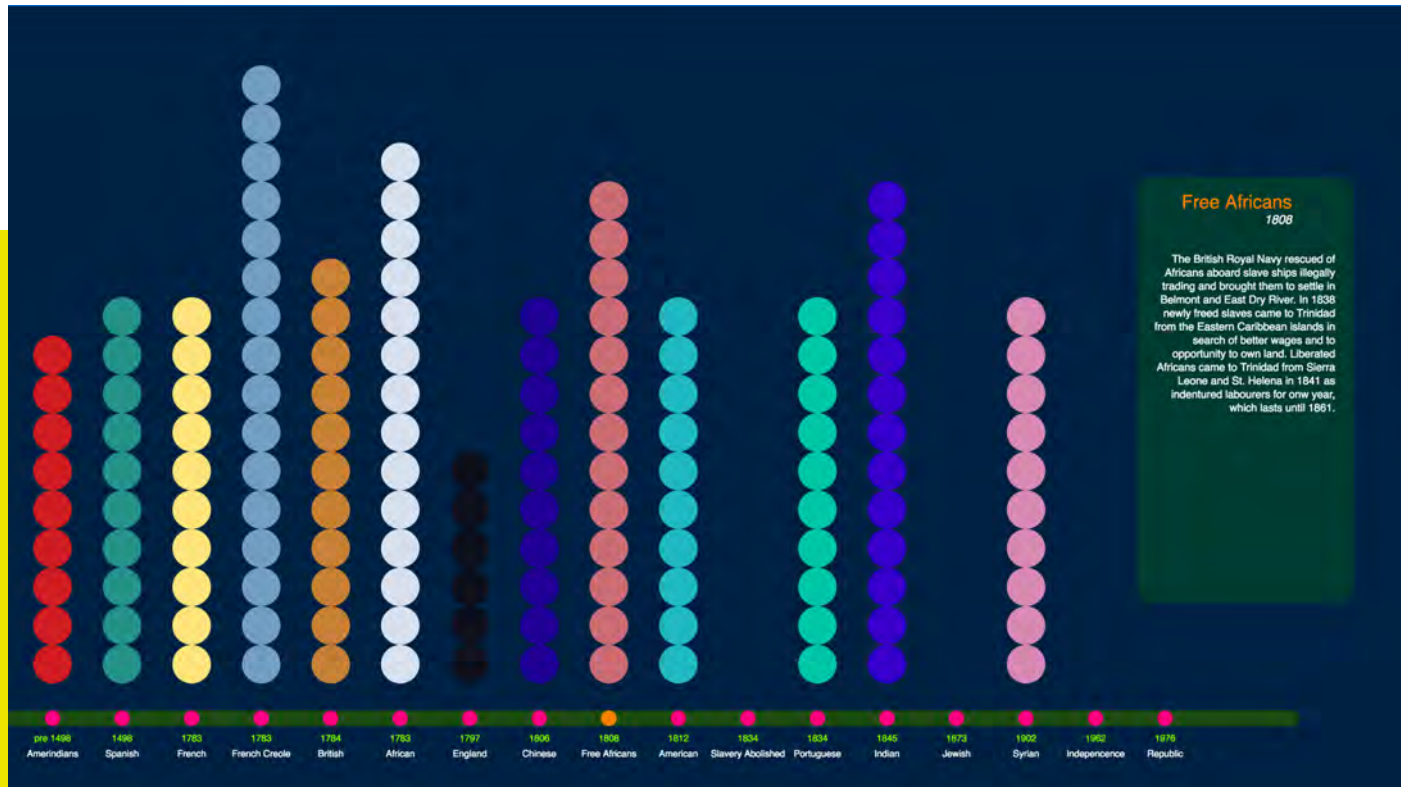
TRINI TALK

An invitation to embrace our Trinidad English Creole Language

TELL ME MORE

01 | INTERACTIVE DICTIONARY

This platform aims to tell the story of how the languages of the Spanish, French, African, Chinese, East Indian, Portuguese and dialects of other Caribbean nations merged to form Trini talk. The timeline shows which groups settled, when and also gives some historical information about them. The language of each group is displayed - giving you the option to explore each word more. Click on each word to hear its pronunciation and to get more information.




02 | LANGUAGE USAGE

This section uses interactive video to show and explain how Trinidad English Creole is spoken in real-life situations. Because Trini is an oral language we don't just use words to speak. We use our bodies and other forms to communicate what we mean.

Trini Talk

ABOUT HISTORY USAGE PRESERVATION CONTACT




Learn Watch

House Lime shows interactions during a lime.

A **lime** is a casual social gathering.

A **house lime** happens at someone's home.



Context

Scene 3

03 | PRESERVATION

This section serves to preserve the language, both the old and new. As an oral language, TrinEC is growing and evolving. Users are prompted to enter new words, sayings and abbreviations to an online API.

TRINIDAD SAYINGS

CONCEPT

The Trinidad & Tobago dialect is comprised of the languages of the people who came. As an oral language, TrinEC uses storytelling and sayings to communicate. Those wise and odd phrases uttered to you by your parents and elders, meant to impart wisdom.

Help collect the sayings.

saying:

meaning:

submit

✕ CLOSE

[ABOUT](#) [HISTORY](#) [USAGE](#) [PRESERVATION](#) [CONTACT](#)

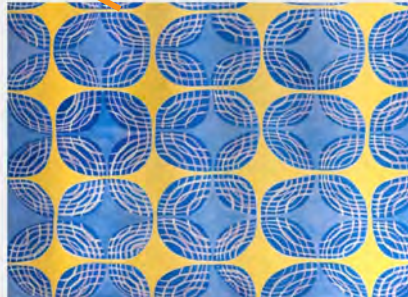
PRESERVATION

Preserving the language: the old and new.



Words

Add words to the vocabulary



Sayings

Add sayings to the vocabulary



Abbreviations

Add to the local texting vocabulary

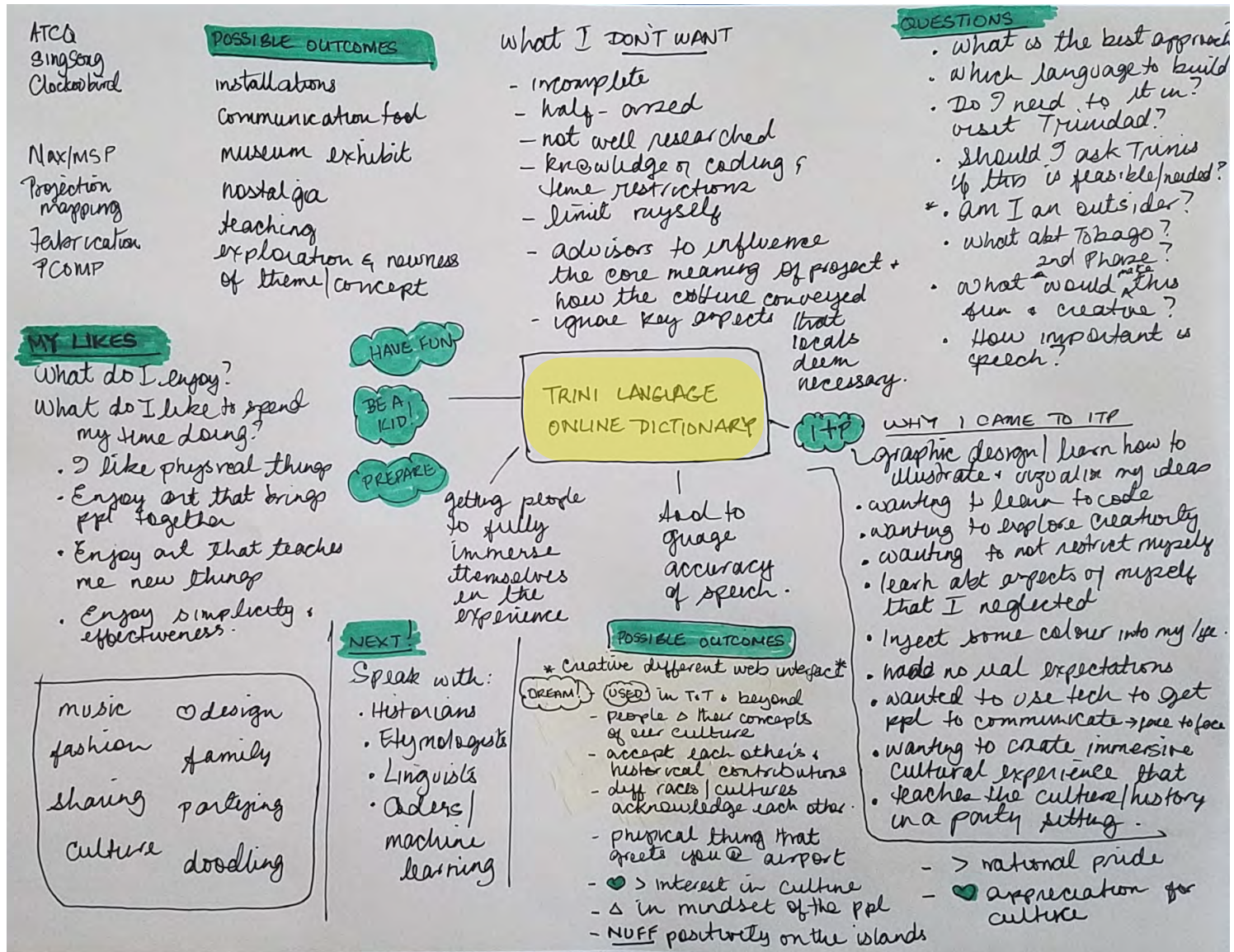
THE DESIGN PROCESS



CORNELL BOX

Drawing inspiration from the aspects of Trinidad culture that I am familiar with: the currency, music, carnival (glitter), colour, trees, nature, clothes pins, steel pan, sayings, anthem, national colours. The white represents all that I don't know about my home.

SYSTEMS THINKING



Taking time to flush out the undertaking, while also paying attention to my accomplishments, my plans, desires and what brings me creative satisfaction.

DESIGN RESEARCH

think of the content, then find the tech to do it

Through interviews with

- Trinidadians
- Linguists
- Anthropologists
- Technologists/Coders
- Librarians
- Data Scientists
- Historians

and examinations of

- history of oral languages
- linguistics documentaries

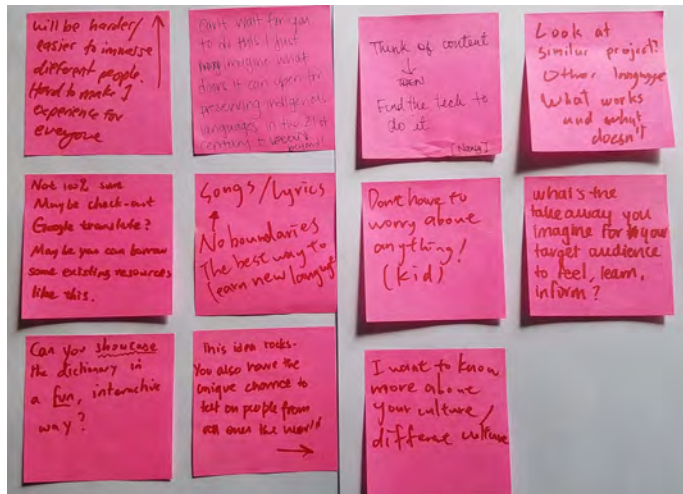
I sought to

- Assess the validity of the undertaking
- Assess the nature of the language
- Assess the potential impact for users
- Define my user
- Identify the appropriate technology

LANGUAGE & USER RESEARCH



I recorded Trinidadians speaking in the dialect. The inquiry was to see if there is a distinct difference in vocabulary and mannerisms - when not speaking 'proper' English. Basically, can I make a case to establish a need to document this unique dialect.

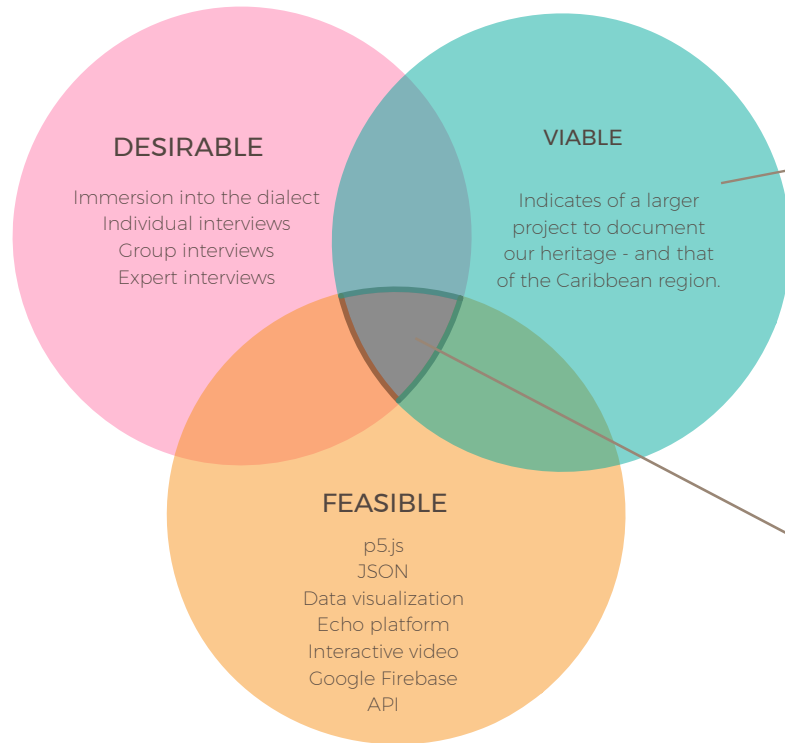


Feedback

INITIAL CONCEPT/DESIGN FEEDBACK

- It will be harder/easier to immerse different people. Hard to make it an experience for everyone?
- Not 100% sure. Maybe check-out Google translate? Maybe you can borrow some existing resources like this.
- Can you showcase the dictionary in a fun, interactive way?
- Songs/lyrics: no boundaries. The best way to learn new language
- This idea rocks. You also have the unique chance to test on people from all over the world.
- Can't wait for you to do this! Just imagine what doors it will open for preserving indigenous languages in the 21st century and beyond!
- Look at a similar project? Other language, what works and what doesn't
- What's the takeaway you imagine for your target audience to feel, learn, inform?
- I want to know more about your culture/different culture
- Think of content, then find the tech to do it.

SHAPING THE OUTCOME



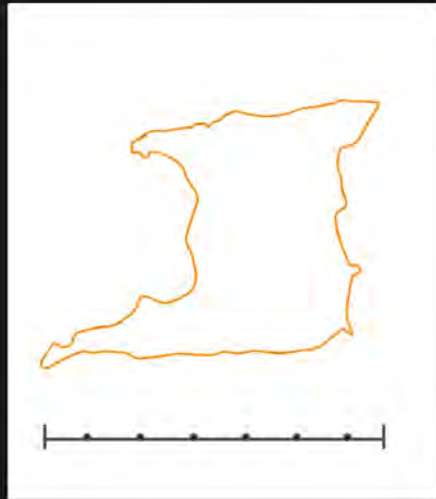
IMPORTANCE

- Nothing like it exists
- Provides wider access to what is ours
- Allows people to participate in the preservation
- Language and culture are inseparable
- Effort to digitally preserve the language

TRINI TALK

- a website
- data visualization of words and etymology
- showing history of the country and inhabitants
- interactive video to show usage in real life situations
- platform to preserve the language

STORYBOARDING



HISTORY

a colour coded timeline showing the history of when different groups and their respective languages were introduced to the island

HISTORY

AMERINDIAN

When an individual language/settler was selected for exploration: history of that group is explained and the vocabulary they contributed is shown.

Represents words contributed by the group that are used in the dialect today!

HISTORY

SPANISH

Exploring another group shows their respective vocabulary and history. The vocabulary aggregates. It is added to the visualization of the previous group.

VOCABULARY WORDS

- Words are clickable
- Link to
 - video
 - soundbyte
 - definition
 - etymology

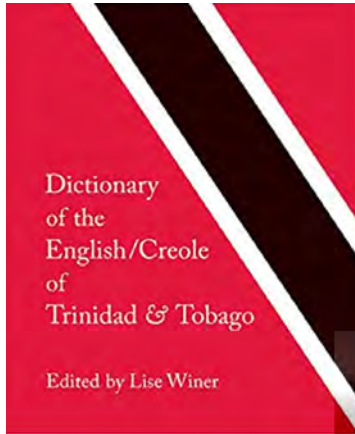
VIDEO

Shows the dialogue between people using the dialect.

Interactive video to reveal the context, meaning and etymology

[MAP AGGREGATE]

IMPLEMENTATION



DATASETS

1. LANGUAGE ETYMOLOGY

A sample database of TrinEC was compiled using the etymological dictionary by Dr. Lise Winer.

Enties include words/phrases, their meanings, information about which group contributed the word i.e. etymology.

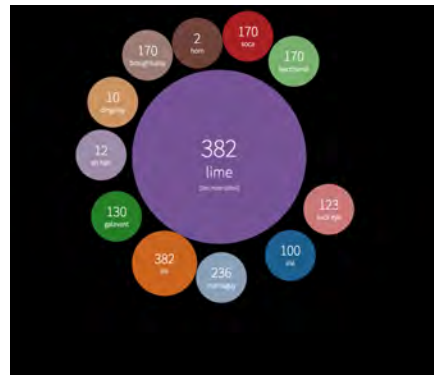
Sound is included to articulate the pronunciation of each word/phrase.

2. HISTORY

The history of Trinidad was compiled into a database. The history articulates when each group came to Trinidad, and shared some historical information about them.

DATA VIZUALIZATION

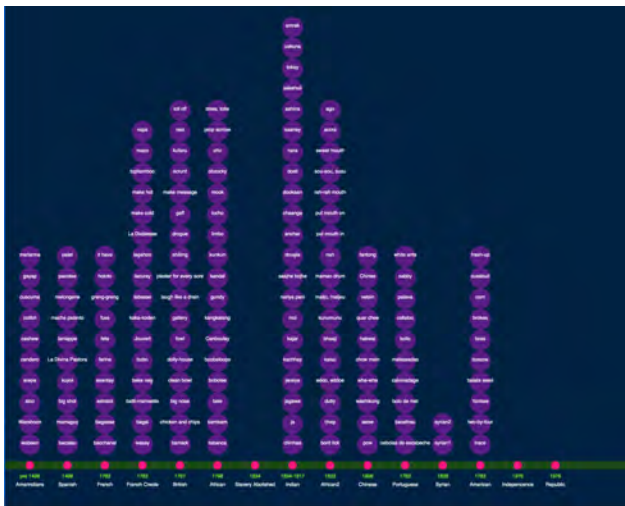
A few designs were created before deciding upon the final look of the language and history data viz. This was created using p5.js and JSON databases.



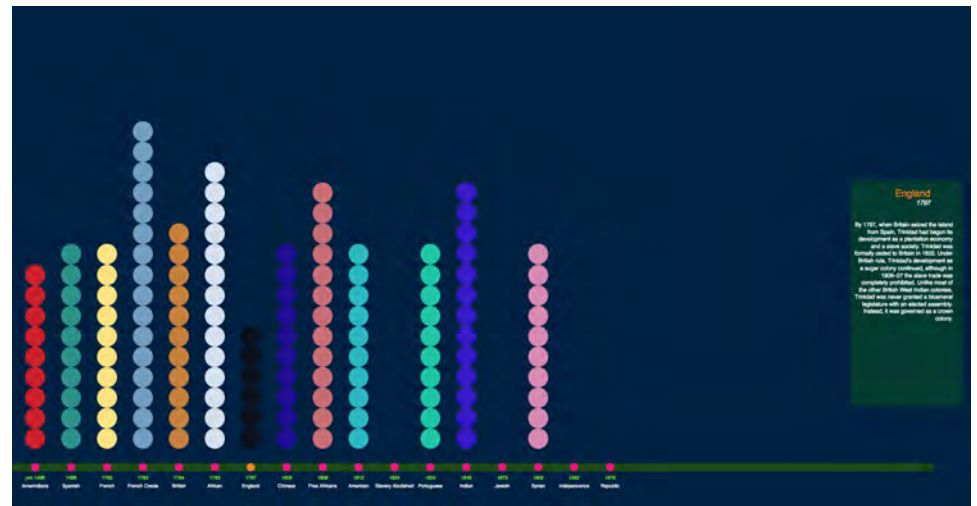
Two possible options for the data visualizaion using D3.js.



Initial visualization using P5.js



Testing the integration of both language and history databases



Closing in on the final design

CROWDSOURCING PLATFORM

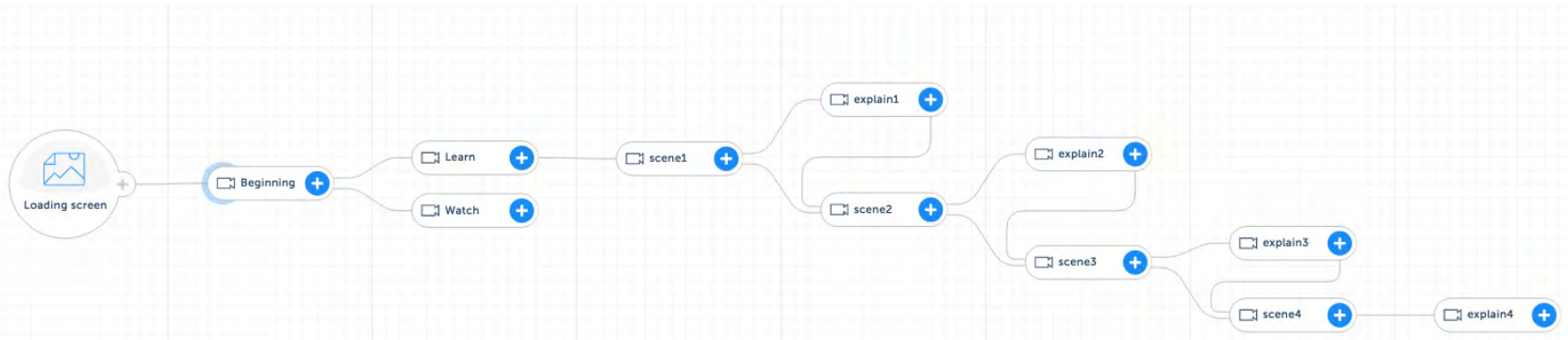
Three preservation platforms were created: words, sayings and abbreviations. P5.js was used and integrated with the Google Firebase API. This was the initial mockup of the platform for testing. Submitting the crowdsourced data through the Trini Talk platform automatically adds to the online API.

Initial design of the crowdsourcing page while testing P5.js integration with Firebase

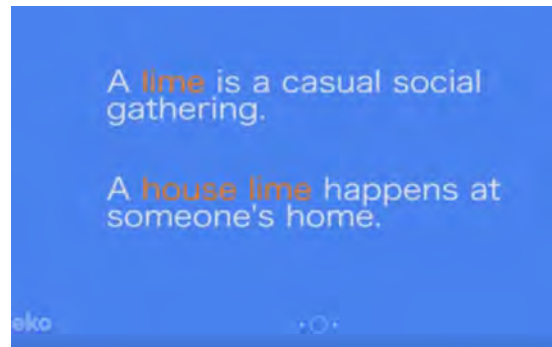
Final design of the crowdsourcing page

INTERACTIVE VIDEO FOR SHOWING LANGUAGE USAGE

I used a video from a family gathering to show how TrinEC is used in a natural unscripted setting. The video allows the user to navigate and decide at marked intervals to either continue watching the video or to learn about what is happening. This was created using the Eko platform and Adobe Premiere.



Wireframe of the interactive video platform



Explaining the context and meaning of the language

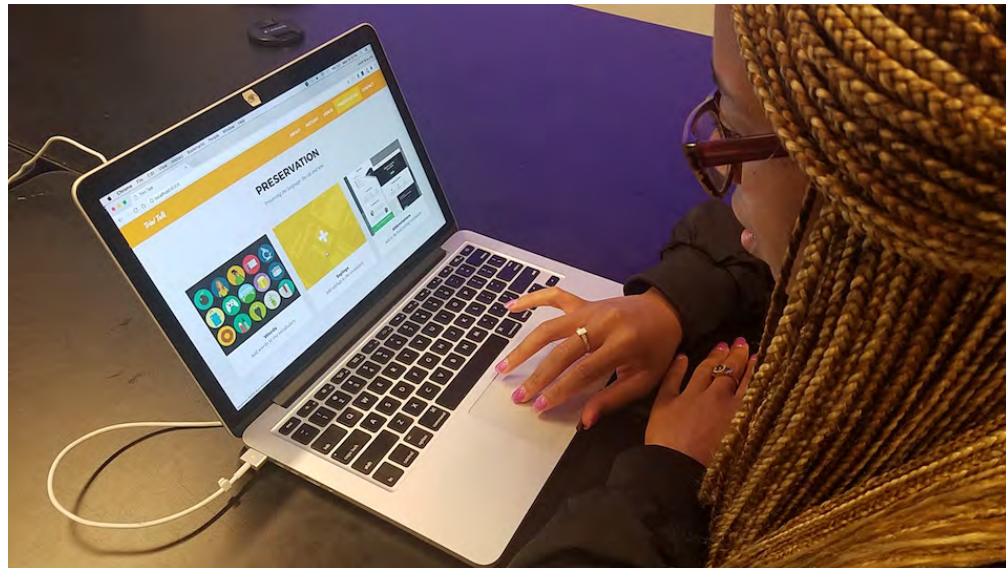
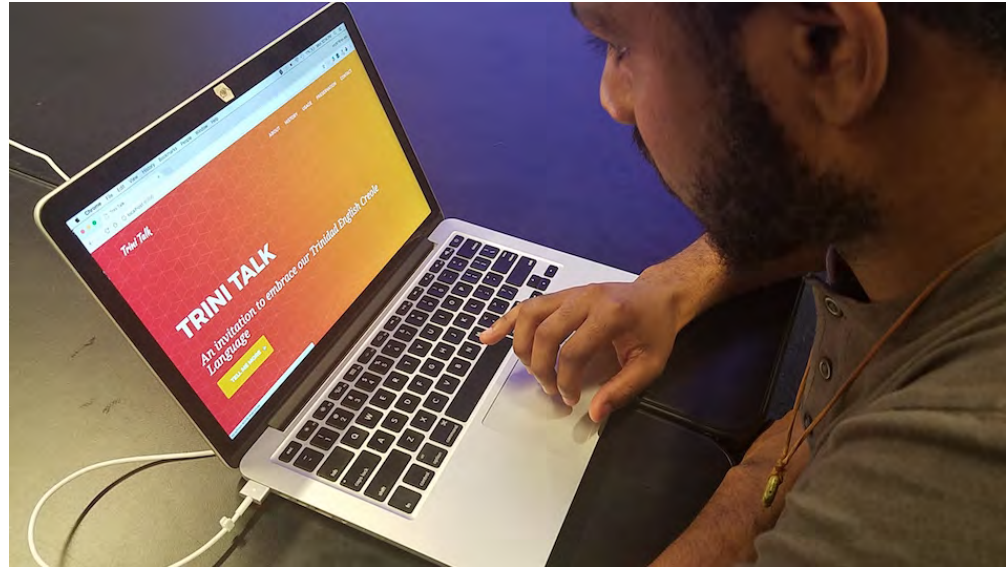


User scenario: showing the option to either learn more about the context of the current scene or move on to view the next scene.

USER TESTING



Playtesting the initial database design



Testing with Trinidadians

NEXT STEPS

Conduct further research

Complete the TrinEC and history APIs

Add a search feature

Expand to include Tobago English Creole (TobEC)

Create a translation platform

Use machine learning to create a speech translation tool

Create a physical installation