

HOW NURSERY RHYMES INTRODUCE WORD FORMATION TO YOUNG CHILDREN: A STUDY ON COCOMELON NURSERY RHYMES SONG LYRICS

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Abstract

This research aims to explore the most dominant word-formation process used in the well-known nursery rhymes providers named CoComelon and found out the extent to which they provide exposure of English word-formation to young children. The data source is taken from 40 song lyrics of 4 CoComelon nursery rhymes albums which were transcribed through their official YouTube channel. This study's main theories were adopted from the word formation processes of O'Grady & Archibald (2019) and the nature of language in L1 and L2 learners of Saville-Troike, M., & Barto, K. (2016). The method used in this research is qualitative method. It begins with selecting words (which formed through the process of word formation) from the transcript lyrics, record it in the predesigned table, then analyzed all. After analyzing, the researchers recorded the related data. The results revealed that out of 9 word formation processes used in CoComelon song lyrics, the inflection process is the dominant one. Through its findings, it is concluded CoComelon facilitate children through it lyrics as the inflection which are said to be mastered first by L1 and L2 English learners, dominantly used in CoComelon song lyrics.

Keywords: Word-Formation; Nursery Rhymes; Second Language Acquisition

INTRODUCTION

Children, in their early age, learn word formation in many ways. One of which is through exposure of audio-visual media whose elements involve picture, graphs, shapes to convey message to children (Nicolau, 2019). This type of exposure has been favored by parents because this media is based upon the ideas of presenting moderate information and visual representation steps which simplify parents to teach their children (Ervine, 2016). Audio-visual that are very popular nowadays are the ones provided in digital platform which has greater penetration to the audiences such are Facebook, Vimeo, Netflix, and YouTube. According to theory of Jean Piaget, young children are born with various sensorimotor schemata, which furnish a structure for children's early interchange with their surroundings (Ibda, 2015). Early experience the child will be determined by this sensorimotor schemata. At this sensory stage, infants move from instinctive reflex action from birth to beginning symbolic thought. Young children build an understanding of the world through coordination sensor experiences with physical action (Marinda, 2020). Of all audio-visual media sources out there, the researchers focus on one of the most popular digital platforms named YouTube. YouTube provides a wide range of content types, starting from the ones for university students up the ones for young children which in the form of nursery rhymes. Nursery rhymes, which was called as Mother Goose rhymes a long time ago, is clearly aimed for young children as traditional songs or short poems which are made with rhymes (Mullen, 2017). The Indonesian National Education System Law 2003, as cited in John (2019), defined young children are those who are in the age range of 0-6 years old.

Nursery rhymes introduced to young children not only by involving their mother tongue, for instance Indonesian, but also using foreign languages, such as English. Nursery rhymes are very suitable for young children because the rhythms of the songs are interesting and easy to follow by young children (Yanti, 2017). In addition, the songs provided are usually accompanied by unique movements that attract children's attention so that they are happy. As a result, they want the songs to be repeated (Yanti, 2017). These simple movements help children in interpreting the meaning of the song they are listening to or singing, for example the song "Rain Rain Go Away" which has the movements of raining and "do away" with hand movements.

Furthermore, of all English learning contents on YouTube, the researchers are intrigued to conduct research by involving one of its most popular channels named CoComelon. CoComelon, established in 2006, as stated on their official YouTube channel <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCbCmjCuTUZos6Inko4u57UQ>, aims to help pre schoolers' prosocial life lessons, and provide parents with an opportunity to teach and play with their children as they watch together. CoComelon which has launched four nursery rhymes albums containing 40 songs with its lyrics will be chosen as the data source of this research because its popularity among its counterparts, placing itself as a Red-Diamond-awarded YouTube channel with 146 million subscribers (recent total on November 2nd, 2022). With such popularity, CoComelon has reached billions of users and that means it has brought impacts to English language learning process to billions of children and parents all around the world, as a medium to educate their children in English. Research involving language development in children language acquisition has been interesting of many researchers, but none has explored how nursery rhymes help young children to learn word-formation processes through CoComelon nursery rhymes. A paper written by Balegzadeh and Dargahi (2010) talking about children's EFL reading ability affected due to the effect of nursery rhymes tells readers about how nursery rhymes are good for children during their language learning and the reason it is popular since a long time ago. Sayakhan and Bradley (2019) in their paper explain that nursery rhymes act as a vehicle of teaching English as foreign language to children. Furthermore, recent research written by Gildon (2021) entitled Language Development in Toddlers: A Hermeneutic Phenomenological Study of Nursery Rhyme use by Mothers with Their Toddlers, simply explained that nursery rhymes usage affects children in their language development as it contributes to their experiences using nursery rhymes. All those related studies above indeed discuss nursery rhymes and word formation, but none has explored how CoComelon helps children in learning word formation.

To explore the word formation used in CoComelon songs, the researchers refer to the 15 processes of word formation by O'Grady & Archibald's (2019), which are:

1. Inflection

A process which expresses through affixation and won't change words literal meaning, for example:

| | | |
|--------------------|--|------------------------|
| Nouns | Plural <i>-s/-es</i> | the bottles |
| | Possessive (genitive) <i>- 's</i> | Tasha's book |
| Verbs | 3 rd person singular non-past <i>-s</i> | She shouts loud. |
| | Progressive <i>-ing</i> | She is shouting. |
| | Past tense <i>-ed</i> | She shouted. |
| | Past participle <i>-en/-ed</i> | She has spoken/shouted |
| Comparative | Comparative <i>-er</i> | the larger one |
| | Superlative <i>-est</i> | the largest one |

Table 1. The English Inflectional Affixes

2. Derivation

Similar to inflection, but it distinct words literal meaning, for instance:

| Affix | Change | Examples |
|-----------------|--------|-----------------------|
| Suffixes | | |
| -ing | V to N | the sleeping beast |
| -less | N to A | useless, brainless |
| Prefixes | | |
| anti- | N to N | anti-body, anti-virus |
| re- | V to V | redo, rewrite |

Table 2. The English Derivational Affixes

3. Compounding

A process to combine two or more existing words, for example: in-to, blue-berry and green-house.

4. Internal Change

A process which replaces non-morphemic part for another to mark grammatical changes, for example: goose → geese, blow → blew and foot → feet.

5. Suppletion

A process to replace a morpheme with the different one aiming to mark grammatical class changes, for example: go → went and is → was.

6. Reduplication

A process which duplicates all or part of the base to which it applies to mark a grammatical or semantic contrast, for example: walkie talkie, humpty dumpty and womp womp.

7. Tone (Tone replacement)

In Mono-Bili (uttered in Congo), this process is used to mark past or future tense, for examples:

| Past | Future |
|--------|------------|
| dá | dà |
| spank | will spank |
| wó | wò |
| killed | will kill |

Table 3. The Tone Examples

8. Cliticization

The use of clitics ('m (am), 's(is) and 're(are)) which would always be pronounced with other words as its hosts.

9. Conversion

A process which changes base category to a new syntactic category without changing its original form, for example from noun → verb, adjective → verb and vice versa.

10. Clipping

A process to shorten polysyllabic words by eliminating one or more syllable of words, for examples professor → prof and caravan → van.

11. Blending

A process to build words from non-morphemic parts of two already existing words, for example brunch from the words breakfast and lunch.

12. Backformation

A process which creates new words by eliminating real or supposed affixes from the words, for example resurrect from resurrection.

13. Acronyms and Initialisms

To form words from taking the words initial parts in a clause or title, for example UNICEF (United Nations International Children Emergency Funds) or PEI (Prince Edward Island).

14. Onomatopoeia

A process which a word is constructed as the imitation like what it describes, for examples *meow* (sound of a cat) and *cock-a-doodle-doo* (sound of a rooster).

15. Coinage (word manufacture)

The creation of new terms into a language and is usually names of scientific words, for instance aspirin (Acetyl + Apirsäure Salicylic Acid), invented product (Kodak, Dacron, etc.) or even from someone's name as, for example, Watt from James Watt.

In addition to the theory above, to explore the process of young children learning their language, the researchers also involve the theories of nature of language in L1 and L2 learners of Saville-Troike, M., & Barto, K. (2016). Saville-Troike, M., & Barto, K. (2016), in their book, mentioned that language is systematic which contains repetitive elements in regular relationship patterns, which is in accordance as human natural character to communicate through verbal features, oral and written ones. Due to this nature of language, young children, for example, may not be aware of the sounds and orders of linguistics elements of a language they see and hear, however, young children, may still end up having the ability to know and thus produce sounds of a language. When people do not understand a sentence or statement, they will reread the sentence until they understand its meaning and purpose. Likewise, when young children learn their language, they will repeat the words taught or heard and they repeat the words until they understand the purpose of those words Saville-Troike & Barto (2016). This study is about word formation and how CoComelon can serve many functions to various parties. In addition to filling in the research gap in the research horizon of word formation, this research also would provide reference to parents in helping their children to not only be able to recite the nursery rhymes above but also to be able to bring them to a deeper level of understanding of the how words are built. When children are started to get familiar with a language, children will be more able to hone their abilities in various fields of language such as understanding grammatical structures, vocabulary, patterns, dialects, and even pronunciations that may be found when they are studying other fields of studies (Kenney, S., 2015). This research would also help preschooler teachers to teach their students as it the use of nursery rhymes can be one of approaches to teach English language to children. To sum up, children are indeed developing their language skills in many different ways. As mentioned above, nursery rhymes are popular ways as a language learning medium for young children. By focusing on CoComelon nursery rhymes songs as transcribed from their official YouTube channel. The researchers aim to find out how the nursery rhymes help children master English word formation processes. With the aforementioned research background, the researchers were raised with the following research questions: 1) What kind of word formation process is mostly used in CoComelon songs? 2) To what extent do CoComelon songs provide exposure of English word formation to children?

METHOD

In this chapter, the way this research are conducted, and the techniques used are explained. Creswell (2003) stated a research method is a strategy for researchers to obtain and collect data for specific purposes and uses. Qualitative method is the way researchers collect and analyze non-numerical data to understand the concepts of what the researchers looks for (Bhandari, 2021). In this research, the researchers applied document analysis technique in collecting and

analyzing the research data for this research which conducted on the lyrics of CoComelon songs from its 4 nursery rhymes albums. Document analysis technique is a way of collecting data from written sources by the researcher in order to obtain support for analysis (Subroto, 1992). This method enabled the researchers in showing and explaining the findings easily, as also help the readers easier to understand through the explanation given.

The data sources in this research are taken from transcribed lyrics of 40 songs lyrics of four CoComelon nursery rhymes albums in CoComelon's official YouTube channel. The data collection and analysis steps were:

1. Preparation

In the first step, the researchers had read and transcribed the lyrics of the 40 songs from four CoComelon albums and comprehend the lyrics. The lyrics which were transcribed then be the data source of this research. In addition, the researchers created a table according to O'Grady and Archibald (2019) as the data store of data found from the data source (see appendix 1).

2. Data Collection

Once the research instrument was ready, the researchers carefully read each line of the lyrics to find and select the words which are categorized in word-formation processes. The categorized words found in CoComelon song lyrics are put into the instrument which has been created (see appendix 1) according to the order of the albums and songs.

3. Data Analysis

After collected, the data were counted, analyzed, and categorized to which word formation category they belong in the instrument (see appendix 1) and the data results then showed which word formation process is the mostly used in CoComelon nursery rhymes song lyrics. Furthermore, the data result then helped the researchers in responding to the second research question which is also helped by the used theory of Saville-Troike & Barto (2016) about the nature of language to find out how the lyrics of the CoComelon songs facilitate young children in learning English word formation processes.

4. Conclusion

The researchers concluded the findings based on the data analysis to answer research question 1 and research question 2.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

After reading and classifying the words used in CoComelon nursery rhymes song lyrics, the researchers found that there are 237 words that are proceeded through word formation processes. Further analysis was conducted by the researchers to find out the types of word formation used in the CoComelon songs. It was found out that of 15 types of word formation processes, CoComelon nursery rhymes songs use only 9 types, namely inflection, derivation, compounding, internal change, suppletion, reduplication, cliticization, clipping, and onomatopoeia. Figure 1 below shows the details of the findings covering the types of word formation used in the CoComelon song lyrics along with the number of the data found. The further explanation is given in the discussion.

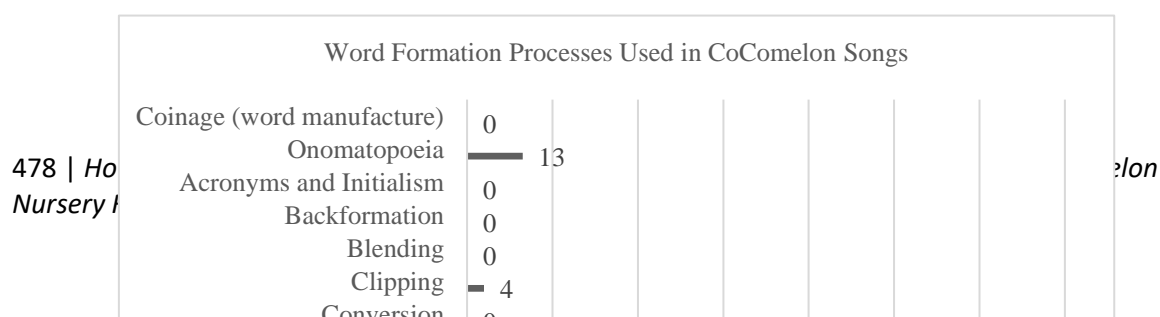


Figure 1. Word Formation Processes Used in CoComelon Songs

As shown in Figure 1, it is concluded that inflection, as one of the word formation processes, is the most dominant process used in CoComelon nursery rhymes song lyrics. The following are the examples of words in the CoComelon song lyrics that use word formation processes. As it is not possible to display all 237 data, the researchers only provide two examples for each word formation process. The complete findings can be found in appendix 1.

1. Inflection

- a. Peas → Pea + -s (plural)
“peas, peas, it’s time to eat your *peas*”
(Yes Yes Vegetables Song, Kids Hits Vol. 1)
- b. Likes → Like + s (verb-3rd person singular)
“See, see, Teddy *likes* the shoes”
(Yes Yes Playground Song, Kids Hits Vol. 2)

2. Derivation

- a. Smiling → Smiling (v) to smiling (n) as it is describing the puppy face.
“And *smiling* face”
(My Dog Song (Bingo, Kids Hits Vol. 2)
- b. Rainy → Rain (n) and added -y so it becomes rainy which is an adjective.
“Let’s save our coins for a *rainy* day”
(Piggy Bank Song, Kids Hits Vol. 4)

3. Compounding

- a. Bubblegum → Bubble (a rounded liquid encircle gas) + gum
(chewable candy). So, bubblegum means a chewing candy that able us to blow bubble.
“Sister blew some *bubblegum*, what’ll I do?”
(The Laughing Song, Kids Hits Vol. 4)
- b. Backpack → Back (human body area from shoulder to hips) + pack
(a cardboard which has items in it). So, backpack means a bag with shoulder straps.
“Do you have your *backpack*? Yes I do!”
(First Day of School, Kids Hits Vol. 1)

4. Internal Change

- a. Came → Came is the past form of come.
“Down *came* the rain, and washed the spider out”
(Itsy Bitsy Spider, Kids Hits Vol. 1)
- b. Men → Men is the plural subject of man.
“All the king’s horses and all the king’s *men*”
(Humpty Dumpty, Kids Hits Vol. 1)

5. Suppletion

- a. Went → Went is the past form of go.
“Rain, rain *went* away”

- (Rain-Rain Go Away, Kids Hits Vol. 4)
- b. Had → Had is the past form of have.
“We all *had* fun”
(Clean Up Song, Kids Hits Vol. 4)
6. Reduplication
- a. Looby loo → The word loo is duplicating the initial part of looby.
“Here we go *Looby Loo*”
(Looby Loo, Kids Hits Vol. 2)
- b. Scrub-a-dub → The last two letters in the word dub is duplicating the final part of scrub.
“Scrub scrub *scrub-a-dub*”
(Wash Your Hand Song, Kids Hits Vol. 4)
7. Cliticization
- a. Broccoli’s → Broccoli + is
“Good, good! The *broccoli’s* good for you”
(Yes Yes Vegetables Song, Kids Hits Vol. 1)
- b. I’ll → I + will
“Yes, yes, yes, *I’ll* put them on right now!”
(Yes Yes Playground Song, Kids Hits Vol. 2)
8. Clipping
- a. Ok → The shortened version from its original form, okay.
“But it will be *ok* on my first day of school”
(First Day of School, Kids Hits Vol. 1)
- b. Cubby → The shortened version from its original form, cubbyhole.
“Did you find your *cubby*? Yes I did!”
9. Onomatopoeia
- a. Swish, swish → It is imitating the wipers sound.
swish
“The wipers on the bus go *swish, swish swish*”
(Wheels on the Bus, Kids Hits Vol. 1)
- b. Beep, beep → It is imitating the horn sound of vehicles.
beep
“The horns on the bus go *beep, beep, beep*”
(Wheels on the Bus, Kids Hits Vol. 1)

Discussion

After finding the 237 data in CoComelon song lyrics, the researchers conducted data analysis to generate the answers for the two research problems. The first research problem is regarding which word formation is dominantly used in CoComelon songs.

As mentioned in the results (see figure 1), it is clear that the most dominant type of word formation processes is the inflection type which has 136 data out of 237 data in total.. As elaborated in the previous paragraphs, inflection becomes the most dominantly used word formation processes throughout CoComelon nursery rhymes song lyrics by dominating the overall finding (i.e., 139 data)With this finding, the researchers can further examine what positive things children can benefit from listening to CoComelon nursery rhymes song lyrics in their pursuit of learning word formation in English; and this discussion of the answer for research question 2 about the extent to which CoComelon facilitates young children in their learning the word formation processes.

Inflection, as one of the word formation processes, is mentioned to be acquired first in the beginning of young children language learning journey as stated by Saville-Troike, M., &

Barto, K. (2016), matches the lyrics of CoComelon nursery rhymes songs which according to the findings of this paper are the most dominant used word-formation process. From this, the researchers find that CoComelon nursery rhymes facilitate young children in early stage of their language learning regardless of English as their L1 or L2. With its lyrics that are dominated by inflection process, CoComelon also has repetitive lyrics which is one of the characteristics of nursery rhymes itself. Through the repetition of CoComelon nursery rhymes lyrics which are mostly categorized in inflection type, it would make it even easier for young children to memorize and imitate the words they hear because children need repetition in their language learning (Webb, 2007). Moreover, the combination of 3D animation display, cheerful songs that are repetitive, and bright colors that draw young children's attention can make children happy and watch CoComelon more often. CoComelon nursery rhymes songs are also filled with lyrics that are easy for both kids and adults to follow. CoComelon nursery rhymes song lyrics cover children's daily lives, how to socialize with family and good friends, learning to count, learning animal sounds, and much more. Alongside that, the researchers concluded that CoComelon nursery rhymes songs can be an educational show that can stimulate young children's brains like this are indeed good if given the right amount. In another sense, giving the young children watching CoComelon can indeed have a positive impact on children, but parents/teachers still have to pay attention to their screen time.

CONCLUSION

Based on the data analysis, out of 9 word formation processes which were inflection, derivation, compounding, internal change, suppletion, reduplication, cliticization, conversion, clipping, and onomatopoeia, the inflection process is said to be the most dominant process in CoComelon nursery rhymes song lyrics which nominated the data. CoComelon, which the lyrics are dominated by the inflection process, facilitates the young children in the beginning of their language learning journey which in accordance with the theory of Saville-Troike, M., & Barto, K. (2016). nursery rhymes song lyrics mostly repeating its lyrics, it makes it easier for children to learn new words they hear as stated by Saville-Troike, M., & Barto, K. (2016) languages are systematic which created according to rules or principles which speakers are usually not knowing if they acquired the language(s) as a young child. With its repetitive lyrics, and most of the data using the inflection process, CoComelon can facilitate young children who are listening to it to begin to be introduced to word formations. As expressed, CoComelon can help children in the process of young children language learning, especially English according to the lyrics of CoComelon nursery rhymes songs. Therefore, CoComelon, in accordance with their goals stated on their official YouTube channel, helps children in learning and also helps parents or teachers to accompany the learning stages of their children and students.

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