

Analyzing the Linguistic Features of Peppa Pig and its Role in the Language Development of Young Viewers

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Abstract

The controversy surrounding Peppa Pig has sparked discussions and raised concerns among parents of young viewers of the animated show. Previous studies have indicated that the show portrays instances of pain, brutality, and violence, which can be alarming for some. However, there is also a promising perspective where some studies have reported that Peppa Pig could serve as an effective English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teaching tool for early language learners. It is suggested that the show should be incorporated into the teaching process by content and curriculum creators.

This study aims to analyze a corpus of 166 episode transcripts of the animated series Peppa Pig, comprehensively extracting and examining the linguistic features present within them. The findings of this study will make a valuable contribution to our understanding of language development in this digital age.

Keywords : Peppa Pig, Linguistic Features, Language Development and Digital Age

1. Introduction

One of the different types of audio-visual stimulation that affects children's language development is watching videos on YouTube. Both adults and children can enjoy the diverse range of entertaining audio-visual content available on the platform. Children particularly prefer videos featuring child characters and music, and they have the freedom to watch and re-watch these videos as many times as they desire (Handayani et al., 2021). The proliferation of educational animated videos on YouTube has a significant impact on behavior and the language learning process, and one of the most popular among these animated series is Peppa Pig.

Peppa Pig is a British preschool animated television series directed and produced by Astley Baker Davis in association with Entertainment 1, which originally aired on 31 May 2004. To date, six seasons have been completely aired, with a 7th currently airing. The show is aired in 180 countries (Vaidyanathan, 2010) and has received many awards. This show has five-minute-long episodes, which are ideal for young children who have short attention spans. However, it went on a hiatus for just two years before re-premiering on 14 February 2015.

Moreover, the Peppa Pig show was banned from a popular TikTok site in China due to some words used in the said program were associated with counterculture memes and used the term "social people," which was a slang term for "low lives and gangsters" (Hearn, 2020). While in Australia, Peppa's one of the episodes was recently taken out from the viewing schedule titled "Mr. Skinny Legs" because the episode alluded that spiders are not dangerous. Australia is home to a plethora of lethal arachnids, and Peppa Pig failed to examine the background of a certain country due to some simple usage of words (Stern, 2018). These are just a few of some controversial episodes of Peppa Pig in the mainstream.

On the other hand, the show's heroine is a 5-year-old female pig (Peppa) whom we see with her family and friends in their everyday lives, dealing with real-life problems. "Peppa's world reflects very closely the reality of a small child" (Scheffler, 2015 p. 15), which is why children can relate to it and can easily associate new words with their everyday experiences. The rare feature of Peppa Pig is that its lead character is a female but does not adopt the stereotypical role of women (Prosic-Santovac, 2017). On the contrary, it supports equality between men and women and presents a different role of women in society (Alexiou & Kokla, 2019b).

Peppa Pig can be an effective EFL teaching tool for early language learning and, in particular, for formulaic language acquisition, and it should be incorporated into content and curriculum creators (Kokla, 2021). However, research says there are almost nine incidents of pain, brutality, distorted views of violence, and zero sympathies from other characters (Stolworthy, 2020).

The acquisition of ESL to children in this study is anchored in socio-cultural theory that emerges from two perspectives: cognitive and social development of a learner (Aimin, 2013). Children's social engagement with Peppa pig as their playmate is fundamental in developing both cognitive and emotional impressions of reality. Consequently, this opens a new viewpoint on the process of second language acquisition in which learners are encouraged to think and talk like Peppa; that is to say, language and thinking should be intimately linked to one another to be effective.

Following the above statement, language acquisition should comprise at least three fundamental components: the development of language functions, growth in cognitive abilities, and a fusion of language and thinking. It has been proven in some studies that children are naturally lively and inquisitive, and they do not need persuasion to learn since they are intrinsically driven to explore and learn about everything. Very young learners need a lot of attention and effort in learning a new language. It is important to do actions and follow specific instructions in learning more precise vocabulary, and the acquisition of the target language can be very beneficial for them since they are fundamental to the English language learning process.

Moreover, Peppa pig videos in this situation build on children's diverse knowledge and imprint enthusiasm into them trying to imitate Peppa as they are continuously exposed in the characters' manner of speaking as well as the use of words in each episode create repetition patterns in the child's linguistic development and environment. Children nowadays choose to spend more time in digital media than outdoor play (Clements, 2004). Hence, the exposure time watching Peppa is tantamount to playing outside. Peppa's episodes are assumed to be the interactive and stimulating cultural environment of the children since they spend more time listening and watching Peppa on TV or YouTube.

Alexiou and Kokla (2019a) conducted a comprehensive linguistic analysis of Peppa Pig, demonstrating that the show contains a mix of familiar and unfamiliar words used in young children's everyday lives. Furthermore, the researchers discovered that this animation has lexical chunks that are regularly repeated throughout and between episodes.

This study examines the linguistic features and language functions present in the animated television series "Peppa Pig" specifically it intends to (1) identify the linguistic features based on absolute frequencies, relative frequencies, and N-grams (2) describe and thematize the frequently used keywords, and (3) explain its role in the language development process.

2. Data and Methodology

Data

The subject of the study is the in-demand Peppa Pig children's animated television show. Peppa Pig has shown various animated television series directed and produced by Astley Baker Davis in association with Entertainment 1, which originally aired on 31 May 2004. It went on a hiatus for just two years before re-premiering on 14 February 2015. To date, six seasons have been thoroughly aired, with a 7th currently airing. As of March 2019, Peppa Pig has a total of 277 episodes. Each season usually has 52 episodes. The show is aired in 180 countries (Vaidyanathan, 2010) and has received many awards. This show has five-minute-long episodes, which are ideal for young children who have short attention spans—this study comprised 166-episode transcripts from 277 episodes, with the most viewed on YouTube. A total of 73,239-word tokens were processed by AntConc, with 3171-word types to examine the linguistic features of the words being used in the said children's program.

Methodology

This study employed discourse analysis to analyze the transcripts of the animated series Peppa Pig and comprehensively extract the linguistic features present on it. According to Johnson & McLean (2020), discourse analysis is an adaptable and iterative method of analyzing different items in repetitive sequences. Moreover, discourse analysis attempts to create a strong interpretation about particular issues, domains, or themes in linguistics. To do this research, this study adapted the framework of Waitt (2005) in conducting discourse analysis. The following steps are (1) Collecting data and building the corpus, (2) coding and identifying key themes, (3) investigating between the texts, and (4) recognizing inconsistencies.

The current study collected a corpus of transcripts from the most viewed episodes of Peppa Pig on YouTube. These transcripts were processed using Antconc to capture the total number of wordlists, word types, and the most frequently used words uttered by the characters, which were then grouped into themes. Additionally, this analysis examines how these frequent words were used in the context of the dialogue, including where and when they were uttered, as well as how they were formed.

During this analysis, the researchers employed an iterative approach. Four raters were involved in identifying the keywords and grouping them into themes to ensure the reliability of the results. Based on the investigation, the researchers derived implications from these utterances.

3. Results

The corpora of Peppa Pig

From the data analysis, it was found that there were seventy-three thousand, two hundred thirty-nine (73, 239) word tokens in the corpus of 166 most viewed episodes of the Peppa Pig. Three thousand one hundred seventy-one (3171) word types were used by the main characters in the said TV program.

1. Absolute Frequencies

Table 1 Top 10 words with highest absolute frequencies in the corpora

Rank	Frequency	Word
1	4255	pig
2	2685	Peppa
3	2318	the
4	1672	daddy
5	1557	i
6	1515	you
7	1466	s
8	1465	and
9	1428	a
10	1391	to

The finding on the reflected table shows the top 10 highest frequencies in the corpora of the animated children's program Peppa Pig from 166 episodes. The common noun word "pig" has been frequently used in the findings rather than the proper noun name "Peppa." Looking at this data, all episodes mention the words Peppa and pig to reinforce the viewers to remember the main character of the program by always mentioning and emphasizing these two highest corpora. While the definite article "*the*" with a frequency of 2318 was commonly mentioned and mostly preceded a noun to emphasize that the reader is aware of the word's identity, the indefinite article "*a*" is at the second least rank on frequently used words in the said program to emphasize a noun or an adjective before the noun. The least frequently used word for the highest top 10 words in Peppa pig is the word "to"; here, the word was used as a preposition together with the indefinite article "*a*" such as "*to a crater, to a little tree, etc.*" It only proves that the top 10 highest frequency words are mostly metalinguistic features that analyze the use of determiners, nouns, and "*to*" as a preposition which can be used to communicate a multitude of different ideas.

2. Relative Frequencies

Table 2 Top 20 keyword list with highest relative frequencies in the corpora

Rank	Frequency	Keyness	Effect	Keyword
1	4255	+3659.46	0.1098	pig
2	2685	+2298.83	0.0707	Peppa
3	2318	+1965.05	0.0614	the
4	1672	+1408.56	0.0446	daddy
5	1557	+1309.95	0.0416	i
6	1515	+1273.97	0.0405	you

Rank	Frequency	Keyness	Effect	Keyword
7	1466	+1232.01	0.0392	s
8	1465	+1231.16	0.0392	and
9	1428	+1199.49	0.0382	a
10	1391	+1167.85	0.0373	to
11	1191	+997.04	0.032	is
12	1187	+993.63	0.0319	George
13	1122	+938.21	0.0302	it
14	1091	+911.8	0.0292	mummy
15	832	+704.9	0.0225	narrator
16	706	+584.72	0.0191	we
17	614	+506.85	0.0166	in
18	580	+478.1	0.0157	are
19	542	+445.99	0.0147	can
20	487	+399.55	0.0132	t

Table 2 shows the top 20 words with the highest relative frequencies of the corpora. The absolute frequency of the corpora was compared against the frequency in the spoken language of the British National Corpus (BNC) using log-likelihood. The BNC contains 100 million words from the late twentieth century's spoken and written languages. The BNC spoken section was used as a reference corpus because it comprises transcriptions, casual discussions, and spoken languages from various contexts like corporate meetings, media, and radio shows. Comparing the two corpora will convey common linguistic patterns and produce more accurate results.

Surprisingly, twelve from the top 20 keyword list of the Peppa Pig corpora (*The, i, you, s, and, a, it, is, we, in, to, t*) are also present in the top 20 spoken list of BNC. The articles *the* and *a*, and pronouns *I, you, we, and it* were commonly used in the transcript. The articles were used to indicate identity, for example: "**The** Big Bad Wolf is pretending to be Grandma."; "**The** police drive cars."; and "my sister's having **a** baby!" On the other hand, pronouns were used to emphasize various personalities of the characters, such as "**I** am a beautiful swan"; "**I** am a clever parrot"; "**I** like cookies"; "you **are** tiny"; "**are you** a pussy cat?", "**We** all had fun today", and "**He** can fix **it**!"

Aside from the prepositions *in* and *to* which show spatial relationships and locations like "*Are they in a crater?*" and "*We buried it next to a little tree.*" One of the highlights is the usage of apostrophe S. 'S was used in two forms: It is used to show that something belongs to some characters in the TV program. For example, *Peppa and George are playing in Mummy's and Daddy's bedroom; George, this is the snowman's body; Duck does not want to give Peppa's boots back; and the children love mummy pig's book.* It is also used to show contraction for the word *is*. For example, *It's George's pop-up dinosaur book; It's going to bang into the bridge!; Sorry, George. It's only mud.*

Top 10 Frequent 2N-Grams

Table 3 The total number of N-Gram Types is 26075 and Total No. of N-Grams Token 73236

Clusters	Frequency	Examples
it s	405	It's a beautiful dress.
i m	324	I'm a butterfly
this is	235	This is a silly game.
peppa and	233	Peppa and George are having a lot of fun.
in the	226	Mummy Pig is looking in the flower bed
and george	214	Peppa and George are going shopping.
don t	200	Don't be silly, Peppa. Granny Pig and Grandpa Pig are going to babysit.
pig and	189	
that's	182	That's an owl.
let's	147	let's clean up quickly

Table 3 reveals the top ten 2-grams in Peppa. The cluster “*it s*” has been frequently used in the corpora as a contraction word of “*it is*” rather than using it as a possessive form of the pronoun. The word “*and*” also emerged in 3 clusters; it was used as a function word to indicate a connection between characters. This clearly shows that the TV program promotes relationships and bonds. Seven words from the top ten 2N-grams in the corpus are also included in the BNC Spoken list, these are *the, and, I, that it, s, and in*. It may be assumed that the frequent utterances in the corpora also exist in a wide range of language registers.

3. Keywords Categorize by Theme

Table 3 lists the Top 50 keywords in the corpus that were categorized into themes. The first theme shows words related to family, the second theme reflects words related to friends, the third theme displays words related to oneself and the last theme reveals words related to activities.

Table 3 Top 50 Keywords categorize by theme

Keywords	Frequency	Keyness	Effect	Example
Words relating to family				
Daddy	1672	1408.56	0.0446	<i>if you made daddy a father's day card...</i>
Peppa	2685	2298.83	0.0707	<i>Peppa and her family are on their way to.. Sorry, Mummy. I was just showing George what not..</i>
Mummy	1091	911.8	0.0294	<i>George and daddy pig are getting ready</i>
George	1187	993.63	0.0319	<i>this is daddy pig</i>
this	467	382.68	0.0127	

Keywords	Frequency	Keyness	Effect	Example
Grandpa	418	341.38	0.0113	<i>Grandpa and Granny are going to be very sad.</i>
Hello	333	269.85	0.0091	<i>Hello, Grandpa Pig. Hello, Granny Pig.</i>
for	366	297.6	0.0099	<i>Daddy Pig has made a birthday cake for Mummy Pig</i>
little	252	201.88	0.0069	<i>my little baby brother and sister really are cute!</i>
the	2318	1965.05	0.0614	<i>I'm the mummy and daddy. You can be the children.</i>
a	1428	1199.49	0.0382	<i>Peppa and George are having a lot of fun.</i>
Words relating to friends				
rabbit	470	385.21	0.0128	<i>Molly Mole and Rebecca Rabbit are best friends!</i>
and	1465	1231.16	0.0392	<i>Peppa and George are playing with Suzy Sheep and Pedro Pony</i>
of	462	378.46	0.0125	<i>Peppa and George are having a lot of fun.</i>
suzy	267	225.5	0.0073	<i>Peppa and Suzy are best friends.</i>
all	344	279.1	0.0093	<i>Her friends join her, they form a circle around her and they all hold hands</i>
your	268	215.29	0.0073	<i>He is your best friend.</i>
there	254	203.55	0.0069	<i>Hello there, my lovelies! I'm Mrs. Badger the Farmer.</i>
re	225	179.27	0.0061	<i>You're very welcome, Mr Dinosaur.</i>
on	389	316.95	0.0106	<i>okay mandy you're on my team</i>
Words relating to oneself				
Pig	4255	3659.46	0.1098	<i>Goodbye, Mummy Pig and Daddy Pig.</i>
i	1557	1309.95	0.0416	<i>I am an expert at French.</i>
s	1466	1232.01	0.0392	<i>Peppa's boat is a sailboat.</i>
is	1191	997.04	0.032	<i>Peppa is admiring herself in the mirror.</i>
yes	459	375.93	0.0125	<i>Yes, I am the best at it.</i>
my	364	295.92	0.0099	<i>This is my best birthday ever.</i>
mr	347	281.62	0.0094	<i>Mr Dinosaur is safe.</i>
m	325	263.13	0.0088	<i>'m a tiny little fairy princess.</i>

Keywords	Frequency	Keyness	Effect	Example
be	279	224.51	0.0076	<i>I want to be a butterfly.</i>
not	261	209.42	0.0071	<i>I'm not a flower! I'm Peppa Pig!</i>
me	243	194.34	0.0066	<i>This is my sweet little brother George. This is Mummy Pig. This is me.</i>
very	228	181.78	0.0062	<i>I'm not very well, Suzy. I have to stay in bed.</i>
t	487	399.55	0.0132	<i>I don't know.</i>
that	475	389.43	0.0129	<i>that's mine.</i>
Words relating to activities				
we	706	584.72	0.0191	<i>we all danced as swans</i>
you	1515	1273.97	0.0405	<i>Can you fix it please,</i>
to	1391	1167.85	0.0373	<i>We'd like to buy a tree, please.</i>
it	1122	938.21	0.0302	<i>You could flip it higher, Mummy Pig.</i>
in	614	506.85	0.0166	<i>Peppa jumping in a puddle</i>
are	580	478.1	0.0157	<i>Peppa and her family are going for a picnic.</i>
can	542	445.99	0.0147	<i>Can I feed her, Mummy Pig?</i>
what	434	354.86	0.0118	<i>What can we do?</i>
have	399	325.37	0.0108	<i>we thought we'd have a picnic in the garden</i>
like	299	241.29	0.0081	<i>George and Richard like playing together.</i>
up	249	199.36	0.0068	<i>Let's clean up quickly before Mummy sees the mess.</i>
has	241	192.66	0.0066	<i>Granny Pig has made the tomatoes, lettuce and cucumber into a salad.</i>
but	224	178.44	0.0061	<i>Peppa loves playing in the wet grass, but she doesn't want to get her new shoes wet.</i>
oh	476	390.27	0.0129	<i>oh but we wanted to jump in muddy</i>
do	333	269.85	0.0091	<i>And I would do all the work.</i>

The first 50 words in the corpus were categorized into themes. The first theme in Table 3 shows words related to family, the second theme reflects words related to friends, the third theme displays words related to oneself and the last theme reveals words related to activities.

Peppa Pig is the century's most renowned children's television character who is a four-year-old female pig who enjoys spending time with her family and friends. The first two themes involve phrases that make clear connections with family and friends. The first to four ranked

words are Daddy, Peppa, Mummy, and George who are the main members of the family in the said children's program. These four characters show a complete member of the family in a society in the character of cute pigs that are popular children's television characters.

Moreover, Peppa Pig's episodes are approximately five minutes in length and feature a very loose, low-stakes plot that typically revolves around Peppa and her family and friends. The discourse analysis proves that the keywords have clear connections on how to show the standard culture and social related conditions that children should acquire when exposed to viewing the program such as the relationship of the siblings to their parents, camaraderie, and the extended family culture where the keyword grandpa got 341.38 keyness rate. It only shows that the word grandpa has a great effect on the cognitive and social development of the viewers and shows the importance of kinship care as a cultural value in extended families is associated with positive child outcomes, based on the keywords reflected in table no. 3.

Words related to oneself are also manifested in Table 3. The word *Pig* has the highest rating that proves the program has reflected B.F. Skinner's operant conditioning is essential for the proper development of language (Brunkow, 2021). Since Peppa pig is considered as part of children's routine, the more often a child hears the word Pig in dialog and content that is being displayed the further it provides language development for a child's sociocultural survival. Nominative pronouns were mostly reflected in the transcripts which shows Peppa's character is focused more on her personal feelings or emotions.

On the other hand, the words relate to activities, where Peppa involves different characters to complete her tasks for the day prove the engaging activities that Peppa enjoys, such as dancing, jumping in the puddle, playing in wet grass, and having a picnic in the garden with her family and friends. These data are reflected in the word relating to activities themes. Vygotsky believed that every aspect of a child's cognitive development is influenced by the social context (Christy, 2013) like playing and other social endeavors such as what Peppa always does in her episodes in which they are raised and educated with the activities reflected in the program. Having an activity for that matter can only be accomplished with the assistance of another individual. Thus, the program Peppa Pig has crafted dialogs and activities with her family and friends to provide assistance for the language development of the child. When a child is immersed in the program, he/she learns a new skill, and the program serves as a mentor that provides scaffolding to aid in the child's learning just like Peppa Pig who is constantly learning new things.

Role in the Language Development

1. Development of Language Functions

Some adults were once taken aback by their parents' accounts of growing up without access to television. Giuffre, L. (2015), stated that nowadays, growing up without television was not only unusual but cruel. Despite the fact that children's videos function as a babysitter for friends and family members, yet the children's television program such as Peppa Pig is still intended to teach and entertain, where a child can acquire a language and form favorable values from the videos that they watch, at a given time slot.

Peppa Pig shows assigned semantic roles to signal words and encoded data sets that critically build the identity of the viewer. The children believe that Peppa pig is a good, jolly, and sometimes naughty pig to her friends and families so they also have this identity of having these character traits in real-life situations when they keep watching the kids' program. Through simply watching videos on their

television or smartphones, the program promotes the social interaction of Peppa pig with her friends and family which shows a friendly identity.

Moreover, some children learn more effectively in a social interactive program as discovered by this study. The opportunity for learning new words and acquiring new values was manifested in the program based on the data collected. Moreover, the characters in the program also promote respect and close family ties in the episodes because the top 10 frequently uttered words are mostly Peppa's family members.

2. Growth in Cognitive Abilities

Peppa Pig plays an essential role in developing the cognitive aspects of its viewers, especially the kids. It introduces hundreds, if not thousands, of vocabularies that can be applied in various contexts. Some episodes focus on family, friends, school, and surroundings. These words were inculcated into the minds of the young audiences. Loopies (2015) claimed that kids are naturally fond of copying, mocking, or imitating words that are new to them. This is also supported by the theory of language acquisition where children aged 6-13 are more receptive to the language being introduced to them. It is the stage where children learn most in language. While Peppa Pig enhances and offers a variety of content and function words for the development of their language structure, it also provides children values and stimulates the mind of its audience to different issues and phenomena. Since characters in the show were confronted with conflicts, viewers also tend to adapt to how these characters address and solve conflicts they have.

Peppa Pig also gives its viewers the means to critical respond in different contexts, particularly the young ones. It allows young viewers to see the different perspectives in life, especially how to treat and socialize with other people. This skill is vital to be inculcated to them since one of the misconceptions about kids being exposed to gadgets is that they will form poor interpersonal skills.

3. Fusion of Language and Thinking

Language is an important tool for thought. It allows people to share their ideas, thoughts, and feelings with others. In the same way, children learn language from their environment and are influenced by what is around them. Children's language develops through rich interactions with people in their lives.

Peppa Pig episodes encounter everyday experiences-both familiar and unfamiliar-and provides a role model for positivity and resilience. Young viewers learn self-awareness where they easily relate to-and learn from-the characters' entertaining adventures such as knowing how to handle their emotions, understand the feelings of others, interact in a positive way and make responsible and age-appropriate decisions.

The television program, Peppa Pig, also promotes self-management among its young viewers. When conflicts and problems arise among and between the characters, children learn to seek positive solutions and discover joyful outcomes.

Social awareness such as kindness, respect for others, and an appreciation of diversity is the core of the television program. These are evident in the many episodes of the show. The interactions between Peppa, her family members, and friends are true to life and the importance of listening, teamwork, and cooperation are repeatedly addressed.

Decision-making is another lesson that young viewers can learn from watching the program. Peppa together with her family and friends is sometimes confronted with conflicts and

problems. They do not always know what to do or how to deal with their problems but they do their best in dealing with them and learn lessons as they face each situation.

4. Conclusion

In conclusion, the animated show Peppa Pig provides a combination of educational and entertaining content for its young audience. It promotes important skills such as coordination and communication, encompassing various aspects of social life. The language used in the show helps in building vocabulary and understanding of different concepts. Peppa Pig episodes leverage children's diverse knowledge and enthusiasm, encouraging them to imitate the characters' manner of speaking and the use of words in each episode. This repetition pattern contributes to the child's linguistic development and creates a language-rich environment. The format of the program is designed to be interactive and engaging, adding to its entertainment value. Children learn new things effortlessly as they watch each series. The content is carefully tailored to be age-appropriate, and every episode presents positive outcomes and addresses various challenges. Furthermore, Peppa Pig plays a role in promoting the social development of its young viewers. The importance of spending quality family time is highlighted, as demonstrated by the numerous activities the characters engage in with their families and friends.

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