FOUR OUT OF FIVE

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Keen Scrabble-player and wordsmith Michael Vnuk of Annerley in Queensland, Australia wrote to me recently:

The most interesting word I've come across lately is GRANDDADDY with its high concentration of Ds. After a quick search I found a few other letters which appear as four out of five consecutive letters in a word, e.g. PEEWEE, VOODOO, ASSESS, MUUMUU and PIZZAZZ. Most other words I can think of involve either E or O. Repeated consonants seem much rarer.

How many different letters is it possible to find example for? Firstly, a few rules:

- The odd letter out in the group must be in the middle, so that an internal 5-letter palindrome is formed. This disqualifies terms with three or more consecutive identical letters, like BRRRR, a variation of BRRR, expressing cold (OED)
- Hyphenated words such as TERROR-RIDDEN (Web 2) and WHHI-HHEE, a horse's neigh (OED), are not allowed
- Neither are coinages like HEHHEHHEH and BOWWOWWOW

Additions may be possible by including place-names and surnames. If you find an example for any of the missing letters, or can improve an existing entry, please let us know.

A RAABAAABA a coarse, rough-spoken person, in the Caribbean (DJE)
B HUBBUBBED mingled into a confused noise (OED)
C BOCCACCIO a rockfish of the California coast (F&W)
D GRANDDADDY a grandfather (Web 2)
E SLEEVEEN a smooth-tongued schemer (Web 2)
F CUFFUFFLE to toss straw, in northern Ireland (EDD)
G
H I PIIPII West Indian term for a turkey chick (DJE)  
J
K  
L PARALLELLESS without a parallel, unparalleled (OED)
M COMMEMMORATION early form of 'commemoration' (OED, ferial, 1563–87 quot.)
N UNNUNNING removing from nunhood (Web 2)
O BOOBOOK a small Australian owl (Web 2)
P UPPPOPPED popped up, poetically (Web 2)
RARRRA a Hokan language spoken by less than 1000 people on the NW coast of California (CIWL)

S POSSESSOR one who owns or holds (Web 2)

T RATTATTOO a sharp knocking sound (Web 2)

U MUUMUU a long and loose-hanging colourful dress worn by Hawaiian women (RHD)

V

W

X

Y

Z PIZZAZZ zest, vim, vitality (OED)

The next step is to look for words with letters appearing at six out of eight consecutive letters in a word, which may or may not produce an internal 8-letter palindrome, for example

HUBBUBBUBBOO a confused crying or yelling (OED)
BALLILLILLY-LOO Scots expression for a lullaby (EDD)
TOOMATOOGOOROO a spiny New Zealand shrub (OED)

REFERENCES

CIWL Classification and Index of the World's Languages, C.F. & F.M. Voegelin, 1977


F&W Funk & Wagnalls New Standard Dictionary of the English Language, 1924


Web 2 Webster's New International Dictionary, 2nd ed., 1934