

# The use of adjacency pairs in the selected conversations from Global level 1

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## Abstract

The aim of this paper is to study the use of Adjacency Pairs which are found in the selected conversations from Global level 1. The objectives are to analyze the frequency of adjacency Pairs and to find out what types of adjacency Pairs are used in the selected conversations. Ten adjacency pairs proposed by Finegan (1999) were used for the analysis. They are question and answer, greeting and greeting, invitation and acceptance assessment and agreement/disagreement, apology and acceptance, request for a favour and granting and summons and acknowledgement, congratulation and thanks and farewell and farewell. It was found that question and answer is the most frequently used type and farewell and farewell is the least used type.

**Keywords:** 'Adjacency Pairs', 'conversation', 'turn-taking'

## Introduction

In linguistics, an adjacency pair is an example of conversational turn-taking. An adjacency pair is composed of two utterances by two speakers one after the other. The speaking of the first utterance (the first pair part or the first turn provokes a responding utterance (the second pair part, or the second turn). Adjacency pairs exist in every language and vary in context and content, based on the cultural values held by speakers of the respective language. They are often based on the cultural values held by speakers of the respective language. Thus, Adjacency Pairs may present their challenges when a person begins learning a language which is not native to them, as the cultural context and significance behind the Adjacency Pairs may not be evident to a speaker outside of the primary culture associated with the language. Adjacency Pairs also convey politeness and willingness from one speaker to acknowledge the feelings of the second speaker. For example, in English the greeting "How are you?" is mostly followed by "I'm doing well", thus creating an adjacency pair that demonstrates a polite interest from one speaker and a reciprocal acknowledgement of that interest from the other. Failure to reply politely to the greeting "How are you?" is usually a sign of bad manners or unwillingness to converse, thus showing how an adjacency pair is necessary to establish a working rapport between two speakers. In conversation analysis, an adjacency pair is a two-part exchange in which the second utterance is functionally dependent on the first, as exhibited in conventional greetings, invitations, and requests. The aim of the research is to study how adjacency

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pairs are used in the conversations in the current English language text the “Global Level 1”.

## 2. Literature Review

In this chapter, theoretical background and related research are presented.

### 2.1. Theoretical Background

Adjacency pairs are pairs of utterances produced by different speakers. To compose an adjacency pair, there are at least two speakers. In adjacency pairs, there are two types of utterances—first pair part and the second pair part. If the first speaker initiates an utterance which demands for a response from the second speaker, it will be regarded as the first pair part and the second speaker's response for the first pair part will become second pair part.

#### (1) Conversation

According to Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary (2005), conversation is defined as an informal talk involving a small group of people or only two; the activity of talking in this way: eg. a telephone conversation.

Levinson (1983) says that conversation is 'familiar predominant kind of talk in which two or more participants freely alternate in speaking which generally occurs outside specific institutional settings like religious services, law, courts, classroom and the like'.

According to Nofsinger (1991), conversation is a process of interaction, where conversational action tends to occur in pairs and where utterances must be taken into account not just for what they say, but for the talk that surrounds it.

#### (2) Adjacency Pairs

According to "Longman Dictionary of Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics", adjacency pair is a sequence of two related utterances by two different speakers. The second utterance is always a response to the first. In the following example, speaker A makes a complaint, and speaker B replies with a denial:

A: You left the light on.

B: It wasn't me.

The sequence of complaint-denial is an adjacency pair. Other examples of adjacency pairs are greeting-greeting, question-answer, invitation - acceptance / non-acceptance, offer-acceptance/ non-acceptance, complaint-apology.

According to Finegan (1999), one useful mechanism in the covert organization of conversation is that certain turns have specific follow-up turns associated with them. Questions take answers, greetings are returned by greetings, invitations by acceptances or refusals, and so on. Certain sequences of turns go together, as in these adjacency pairs.

#### Greeting and Greeting

Speaker 1: Hi!

Speaker 2: Hello!

### **Question and answer**

Speaker 1: Where's the milk I bought this morning?

Speaker 2: On the counter

### **Invitation and Acceptance**

Speaker 1: I'm having some people to dinner Saturday, and I'd really like you to come.

Speaker 2: Sure!

### **Assessment and agreement**

Speaker 1: I don't think Harold would play such a dirty trick on you.

Speaker 2: Well, you obviously don't know Harold very well.

Such adjacency pairs comprise two turns, one of which directly follows the other. In a question/ answer adjacency pair, the question is the first part, the answer the second part. Here are other examples of adjacency pairs.

### **Request for a favour and granting**

Guest: Can I use your phone?

Host: Sure.

### **Apology and Acceptance**

Speaker 1: Sorry to bother you this late at night.

Speaker 2: No, that's all right. What can I do for you?

### **Summons and Acknowledgement**

Mark: Bill!

Bill :Yeah?

### **Accusation and Denial**

Speaker 1: "Look, Look what you made me do"

Speaker 2: "I made you do? I wasn't near you."

### **Congratulation and Thanks**

Speaker 1: " Congratulations!"

Speaker 2:" Thanks"

### **Farewell and Farewell**

Speaker 1: "Bye!"

Speaker 2: "Bye!"

To sum up, Finegan (1999) classified adjacency pairs into ten types.

### **(3) Characteristics of Adjacency Pairs**

Finegan (1999) mentions three characteristics of adjacency pairs. First, the two parts are contiguous and uttered by different speakers. A speaker who makes a statement before answering a question sounds strange (and can provoke anger) because the parts of the adjacency pair are not consecutive:

Speaker 1: Where's the milk I bought this morning?

Speaker 2: They said on the radio that the weather would clear up by noon. It's on the counter.

Second, the two parts are ordered. Except on TV game shows like "Jeopardy" , the answer to a question cannot precede the question; in ordinary conversation, one cannot accept an invitation before it has been offered; and an apology cannot be accepted before uttered (except sarcastically).

Third, the first and second parts must be appropriately matched to avoid such odd exchanges as the following:

Speaker 1: Do you want more coffee?

Speaker 2: That's all right, you're not bothering me in the least!

Finegan (1999) also asserts occasionally that the requirement of being contiguous of both parts of an adjacency pair is usually violated in a socially recognized way. For example:

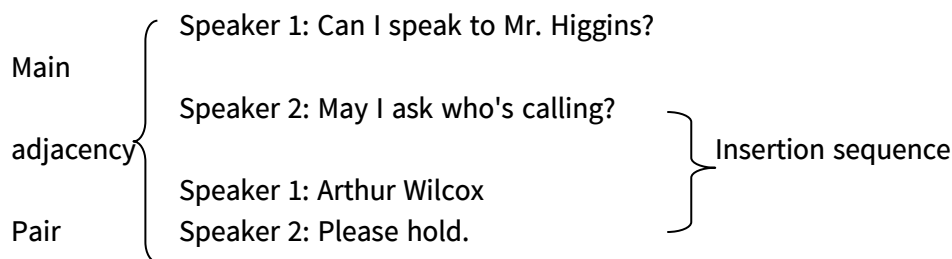
Ann: Where's the milk I bought this morning?

Pat: The skim milk?

Ann: Yeah.

Pat: On the counter.

In order to provide an accurate answer to Ann's question, Pat must first know the answer to another question and thus initiates an insertion sequence—another adjacency pair that interrupts the original adjacency pair and puts it 'on hold'. The interaction thus consists of one adjacency pair embedded in another one, as in the following telephone conversation.



Finegan (1999) adds that certain kinds of adjacency pairs are marked by a preference for a particular type of second part. For example, requests, questions, and invitations have preferred and dispreferred answers. Compare the following interactions in which the first one has a preferred (positive) second part and the second one has a dispreferred (negative) second part.

Speaker 1: I really enjoyed the movie last night. Did you?

Speaker 2: Yeah, it was pretty good.

Speaker A: I really enjoyed the movie last night. Did you?

Speaker B: No, I thought it was pretty crummy, though I can see how could've liked certain parts of it.

To an assessment also, the preferred second part is agreement.

Speaker 1: I think Ralph's a pretty good writer.

Speaker 2: I think so too.

Speaker A: I think Ralph's a pretty good writer.

Speaker B: Well, his imagery's interesting, but apart from that I don't think he writes well at all.

Dispreferred second parts tend to be preceded by a pause and to begin with a hesitation particle such as well or uh. Preferred second parts tend to follow the first part without a pause and to consist of structurally simple utterances.

Speaker 1: Would you like to meet for lunch tomorrow?

Speaker 2: Sure!

Speaker A: Would you like to meet for lunch tomorrow?

Speaker B: Well, hmm, let's see... Tomorrow's Tuesday, right? I told Harry I'd have lunch with him. And I told him so long ago that I'd feel bad cancelling. Maybe another time, okay?

In addition, dispreferred second parts often begin with a token agreement or acceptance, or with an expression of appreciation or apology, and usually include an explanation.

Speaker 1: Can I use your phone?

Speaker 2: Oh, I'm sorry, but I'm expecting an important long-distance call. Could you wait a bit?

## **2.2 The English Language Textbook Global Level 1**

For the undergraduate English specialization students in Myanmar, the English language textbook Global was prescribed from 2013 to 2019. The Global Level 1 was for the first year English specialization students, the Global Level 2 for the second year English specialization students, the Global Level 3 for the third year English specialization students and the Global Level 4 for the fourth year English specialization students.

## **2.3 Related researches**

There have been various analyses carried out by different researchers. Only two related papers on adjacency pairs are presented due to the page limit in this chapter.

The research 'Analysis of Adjacency Pairs and Speech Acts of Praise in Facebook' was carried out by Vidi Irwan Wijays (2013) from Bina Nusantara University. The objectives of the research were to find out structure functions of the praises, to reveal types and functions of the responses and to figure out the relations between praises and responses. The research reveals that praises and responses happen most in Facebook. Wallposts and responses were collected as words, phrases or sentences to be analyzed using pragmatic approach on adjacency pairs and speech acts proposed by Finegan (1999). The results

show that adjectives are most used in praises, confirmations most in responses, and correct pairs and preferred acts in the pairs.

The research 'A Study of adjacency pairs in the selected conversations from straightforward 3A and 3B ' was carried out by Ma Khaing Khin Ko (2015). The objectives were to identify adjacency pairs used in the selected conversations, to classify adjacency pairs used in the selected conversations and to observe which types of adjacency pairs are used most frequently and which types are least used in the selected conversations. The classification of adjacency pairs proposed by Finegan (1999) in ' Language : its structure and use ' was used to analyse six selected conversations. It was found that adjacency pairs are one of the most useful mechanisms in English conversations.

### 3. Research Methodology

In this chapter, data collection, data analysis and data interpretation are presented.

#### Data Collection

The conversations to be analyzed were taken from Global level 1. The conversations in the four audio scripts were selected to identify adjacency pairs.

#### Data analysis and data interpretation

The types of adjacency pairs proposed by Finegan (1999) were to be used as a framework to identify adjacency pairs in all the conversations produced by the speakers.

Firstly, all the adjacency pairs produced by different speakers in the selected English conversations were identified. Then, different types of adjacency pairs used in the selected English conversation were categorized and then observed to find out which adjacency pairs were the most used ones and which were the least used ones. Finally, the adjacency pairs in all utterances in each conversation were counted and totaled.

**Table 1: Analysis of Adjacency Pairs in Audioscript (1)**

Sr No.	Speakers	Utterances from Audioscript (1)	Type of Adjacency Pairs
1	A	Oh, when was this photo taken?	Question
	B	That one? Five years ago, I think.	Answer
	A	Mmmm. It's quite a good photo of you.	Assessment
2	B	I don't know. I don't think I looked good with that beard.	disagreement
	A	I think you look nice and mmm, intelligent.	Assessment
	A	How's the baby?	Question
	B	Oh great. Great.	Answer
	A	It's 'she', right?	Question
	B	Yes, yes. I'll show you a photo. She looks like her father.	Answer
	A	Oh, yeah, bald just like her dad! How old is she?	Question
	B	Six months now.	Answer
	A	She looks really happy. She's got a great smile.	Assessment

3	A B	Who's this a photo of? Don't you know? It's Bella!	Question Answer
	A B	Bella? Oh yes! She looks so different here. How long ago was this? At the end of university.	Question Answer
	A	Wow. Her hair was much longer then, and so curly.	Assessment
4	A A B	What does the suspect look like? I can't hear you. What does the suspect look like? The suspect is a white, older man.	Question Answer
	A B	Anything else? Just a second... yes. He's got grey hair and a moustache.	Question Answer
	A B	What kind of car does he drive? An old white Volvo.	Question Answer
	A	Thanks.	Thanking
5	A B	Hello. Hello.	Greeting Greeting
	A B	First time here? Sorry?	Question (Inquiry) Asking for clarification
	A B	I said, is this you first time here? At the conference. Yes. Yes	giving clarification Confirming
	A B	Well, hello. My names' George. Hi George. Nice to meet you.	Greeting Greeting
6	A B	Oh, look at the time. It's getting late. What time is it?	(Giving warning) (Inquiry)
	A B	Eleven o'clock. And I have a class tomorrow. Oh. Well, OK then.	Answer and explanation Acceptance
	A B	Yes, Thanks for everything. No problem.	Thanking Acceptance
	A B	Goodnight. Bye.	Farewell Farewell
7	A B B	And this is from me. Aww. Oh my .....	(Giving explanation) Acceptance
	A B	It's a dog! Isn't that great? Er. yes. A dog. Thank you very much.	Question Answer
	A	You're welcome. Happy birthday.	Acceptance

8	A	Hello? Oh hi, listen I'm on the train. It's not a good time right now....	Greeting
	B	Hey!	Exclamation
	A	Wait a minute ... Oh, I'm sorry, I didn't see you and....	Apology
	B	That's all right.	Acceptance
	A	Here, let me help you with your bag.	offer
	B	No, it's fine.	Decline

**Table 2: Analysis of Adjacency Pairs in Audioscript (2)**

Sr No.	Speakers	Utterances from Audioscript (2)	Type of Adjacency Pairs
1	A	Here you go. Anything to drink?	Offer
	B	Sorry, I think there's a mistake here. I wanted a hamburger, not a hot dog.	Complaint
	A	Ok, sorry. Just a minute. One hamburger, please.	Apology
	B	Thanks.	Acceptance
	A	Anything to drink?	Question
	B	Uh.... A diet Coke, please.	Answer
	A	Small, medium or large?	Question
	B	Small, please.	Answer
2	A	More coffee?	Offer
	B	No thanks, I'm fine.	Decline
	A	Did you enjoy your breakfast?	Question(Inquiry)
	B	It was lovely, thanks.	Answer (Thanking)
	A	Good.	Giving opinion
	B	Could I have the bill?	Request
	A	You have to pay over there for the buffet service.	Giving instruction
	B	Sorry, where?	Asking for clarification
	A	Over there, next to the plants and the exit sign.	Answer (explanation)
	B	Oh, I see it. Thanks again.	Thanking
	A	You're welcome.	Acceptance

**Table 3: Analysis of Adjacency Pairs in Audioscript (3)**

Sr No.	Speakers	Utterances from Audioscript (3)	Type of Adjacency Pairs
1	A	So, what did you think?	Question
	B	I don't know. Horror films, well, they should be thrilling, you know, be a bit scary.	Answer
	A	I think so too.	Giving opinion
	B	And that film wasn't.	Giving opinion



	A B	Oh come on, it was. No, I don't agree. It was not scary.	Giving opinion Decline
2	A B	Now, you believe that there are too many big budget get action films in the cinema. That's right.	Assessment Agreement
	A B	And that there should be more space for films from around the world. More world cinema.' Exactly. There are lots of great films from other countries, but we only see our own American films here. And I don't think that's right.	Giving suggestion Agreeing
	A B	I agree with you there, John. So what films do you think we should see? Well....	Question (asking for opinions) Answer (Initiation)
3	A B	What about this one? What, a musical?	Question (Giving Suggestion) Question (asking for clarification)
	A B	I know you think that musicals are terrible. Absolutely, you're absolutely right. They are awful!	Assessment Assessment
	A B	Well, maybe but.... I read this one was different. We always see the same films anyway. Oh please. We see lots of different films. Last week we saw a French film.	Giving opinion Request
	A	Fine, you choose the DVD them.	Acceptance

**Table 4: Analysis of Adjacency Pairs in Audioscript (4)**

Sr No.	Speakers	Utterances from Audioscript (4)	Type of Adjacency Pairs
1	A B	Oh, Look at the time. My train's leaving soon. Shall I pay for these?	Giving instruction offer
	A B	That would be great. OK. Wait. I don't have enough for both of them.	Acceptance Decline
	A B	Hold on. How much is it? 2.75.	Question Answer
	A B	I'll pay for it. Here's five. I really have to go now though. Thanks again. Have a good trip, and see you next Monday!	offer Acceptance and Farewell
	A	Bye! See you Monday.	Farewell
2	A B	Hey! What time do you need to get to the airport? I'm planning to be there two hours before the flight. Why?	Question Answer

	A	Well, look at the time. The airport train leaves in five minutes.	Giving Instruction
	B	Oh no.	Exclamation
	A	I'm sorry, we were talking and I didn't see the time...	Apology
	B	No, don't worry. I... I won't take the train. I'll take a taxi.	Acceptance
	A	A taxi? They're quite expensive. Let me drive you to the airport.	Offer
	B	Really? That would be great. Thanks.	Acceptance
	A	No problem. We can continue our conversation in the car.	Giving suggestion
3	A	Can I help you?	offer
	B	Yes, thanks, Erm, I... I've missed my train. Can I use this ticket for the next train?	Acceptance and Request
	A	Yes , you can. The next train is the six o'clock fast train. you'll need to pay an extra ten euros for that. Or you can take the six fifty train and you don't have to pay anything extra.	Giving Suggestion
	B	Ok, I'll take the six fifty train then. Thank you.	Acceptance and Thanking
	A	You're welcome.	Acceptance
4.	A	Are you ready to order?	Question
	B	Yes, I'll have a salad.	Answer
	A	I don't understand this.	Complaint
	B	That's all right. I'll help you.	offer
	A	The next train is in twenty minutes.	Giving information
	B	Shall we take it or wait?	Asking for suggestion
	A	Here, let me take those bags.	Offer
	B	Thanks, but it's OK. I'll carry them.	Denial

## Findings and discussion

This paper makes an attempt to study the use of Adjacency Pairs in the selected English conversations. The selected English conversations from Global level 1 were analyzed using ten types of Adjacency Pairs used in the selected conversations and the findings of the frequency will be presented.

**Table - 5 Frequency and percentage of adjacency pairs in the selected English conversations**

Sr. No.	Types of Adjacency Pairs	Audioscripts				Total	Percentage
		1	2	3	4		
1	Question and answer	10	2	1	3	16	64%
2	Greeting and Greeting	2	-	-	-	2	8%
3	Invitation and Acceptance	-	-	-	-	0	0%
4	Assessment and Agreement/ Disagreement	1	-	2	-	3	12%
5	Request for a favour and Granting/ Denial	-	-	-	-	0	0%
6	Accusation and Acceptance Denial	-	-	-	-	0	0%
7	Apology and Acceptance	1	1	-	1	3	12%
8	Summons and Acknowledgement	-	-	-	-	0	0%
9	Congratulation and Thanks	-	-	-	-	0	0%
10	Farewell and farewell	1	-	-	-	1	4%
	Total	15	3	3	4	25	100%

## Conclusion

This paper is to analyze the Adjacency Pairs used in the selected English conversations from Global level 1, the English Language Textbook. The types of Adjacency Pairs proposed by Finegan (1999) were used as a framework for the analysis.

The pair of Question and answer were found to be the most frequent one as it is 64% of all. The second most used type of Adjacency Pairs were the pair of Assessment and Agreement/Disagreement and the pair of Apology and Acceptance. It was found that the percentages of Invitation and Acceptance, Request for a favour and Granting/Denial, Accusation and Acceptance/Denial, summons and Acknowledgement, congratulation and Thanks were comparatively low because each constitutes only 0% of total Adjacency Pairs. Thus, it can be concluded that the use of the types of Adjacency Pairs varies depending on the purposes of the participants. Therefore the use of Adjacency Pairs is very useful and important in English conversations.

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