
THE ABILITY OF THE 5TH-SEMESTER ENGLISH STUDENTS OF UMI IN THE USE OF ADJACENCY PAIRS

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Abstract

This study aimed to determine the students' ability to use adjacency pairs. The method of this study used quantitative research. The instrument used to collect the data was a test administered to the students on adjacency pairs, which were arranged on paper. The population of this research was the students at the University of Methodist Indonesia. The sample was taken from fifth-semester students in the Letters faculty, comprising 56 students. The result showed that the students' ability in using adjacency pairs was divided into 5 levels, namely: Excellent level, which was achieved by 19 students, then followed by Good level with frequency 11 students, Average level with frequency 14 students, Poor level with frequency 10 students, and Fail level with frequency 2 students. The students' average correct answers across the four types of adjacency pairs were 71.07% for request, 75.00% for command, 65.35% for offer, and 67.85% for assess. The writer found that some students understand how to choose the right answer, while others are confused about how to do so. It can be concluded that most fifth-semester students were able to use adjacency pairs in dialogue texts.

Keywords: Students' Ability, Adjacency Pairs, Dialogue Text

INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, English is a crucial international language with a significant role in Indonesian education, from elementary to university levels. However, as a foreign language, many students face challenges in oral communication due to limited practice and unfamiliarity with conversational structures. Effective communication is not merely about speaking but managing interactions through a structured exchange. In Pragmatics, this structure is studied through Conversation Analysis (CA), an approach that discovers the order and procedures of social interaction (Levinson, 1983; Paltridge, 2006).

A fundamental element of CA is adjacency pairs, which are conversational patterns consisting of a first-pair part and a second-pair part produced by different speakers

(Yule, 1996). These pairs, such as *greeting-greeting* or *question-answer*, create a structural expectation where the first utterance requires a specific follow-up (Schegloff & Sacks, 1973). Within these pairs, there is a preference structure—divided into *preferred* (expected) and *dispreferred* (unexpected) responses (Levinson, 1983; Yule, 1996). Furthermore, Stenstrom (1994) emphasizes the function of response, which categorizes how an addressee moves after a speaker's initiation, such as *complying*, *evading*, or *rejecting*.

Several studies have explored adjacency pairs in various contexts. Fauzia (2015) analyzed the *Romeo and Juliet* movie script, finding that *question-answer* was the most frequent type, while Hasan (2015) focused on the preference organization in *Knight and Day*. While previous research often focuses on cinematic scripts, there is a need to evaluate EFL learners' actual communicative competence.

This study aims to analyze the ability of 5th-semester English students at UMI in using four specific adjacency pairs: *request*, *command*, *offer*, and *assess*. By focusing on these types, the researcher intends to identify the functions of students' responses and their overall proficiency in maintaining meaningful English conversations. Theoretically, this study enriches the Pragmatic literature, while, in practice, it serves as a reference for improving students' understanding of conversational norms in English.

METHOD

The writers applied a descriptive quantitative method in this study. Quantitative research uses objective measurements to gather numerical data to answer questions (Ary, 2010), which, in this case, is used to determine students' ability to use adjacency pairs.

There were two categories of data: (1) dialogue texts containing four types of adjacency pairs (request, command, offer, and assess) taken from seven English conversation books published in English-speaking countries; and (2) students' answers to the test, which were categorized as correct or incorrect.

The population of this research was the students at the Methodist University of Indonesia. Using quota sampling—selecting typical cases from diverse strata based on known characteristics (Ary, 2010)—the writers selected 56 students from the 5th-semester English Department as the sample.

Research Instrument

The instrument used was a written test containing 20 dialogues. Students were required to fill in the blanks with suitable adjacency pairs within a 45-minute time frame (Ary, 2010).

The data were collected through several procedures:

1. Collecting and selecting 20 dialogue texts from several English conversation books based on types of adjacency pairs.
2. Arranging the dialogues into test sheets and distributing them to the participants.
3. Giving clear instructions and collecting the dialogue sheets after 45 minutes.
4. Identifying correct and incorrect answers using an answer key.

Technique of Data Analysis

The collected data were analyzed through the following steps:

1. Checking students' answers and calculating individual scores using the formula:

$$X = \frac{N}{n} \times 100$$

(*X* = Score, *N* = Number of correct answers, *n* = Number of test items).

2. Calculating the mean score and interpreting the results to classify the students' ability levels based on Arikunto (2013):

Table 3.1 Classification of students' achievement

No	Score Range	Level
1.	80- 100	Excellent
2.	66- 79	Good
3.	56- 65	Average
4.	40- 55	Poor
5.	<30- 39	Fail

FINDINGS

1. The Functions of Adjacency Pairs in Dialogue Texts

The writers identified the functions of adjacency pairs across 20 dialogue texts. To ensure clarity and conciseness, the identification of the First Pair Part (FPP), Second Pair Part (SPP), and their respective functions is summarized in Table 1.

Table 1: Summary of Adjacency Pairs Functions in 20 Dialogue Texts

Text ID	Adjacency Pair Type	First Pair Part (FPP)	Second Pair Part (SPP)	Function
D-1	Command	Advice/Directive	"Yeah, you are right."	Compliance
D-2	Offer	Dinner Invitation	"I'd like to, but..."	Rejection
D-3	Offer	Picnic Invitation	"Well, I'll go..."	Accepting
D-4	Request	Work Assignment	"That's all right..."	Accepting
D-5	Assessment	Opinion on City	"Yeah, that's right"	Agreeing
D-6	Command	Advice	"I'll just stay home"	Compliance

D-7	Offer	Dinner Invitation	"Sure"	Accepting
D-8	Request	Measure Foot	"They are not... what I want"	Rejection
D-9	Assessment	Opinion on Pictures	"Sure"	Agreeing
D-10	Request	Pick-up Request	"Oh, OK"	Accepting
D-11	Assessment	Opinion on London	"Yeah, it is right"	Agreeing
D-12	Request	Borrowing Camera	"Um, no. That's OK"	Accepting
D-13	Offer	Picnic Invitation	"Thanks, but I'm going..."	Rejection
D-14	Command	Bedtime Order	"Okay, I'll go to bed"	Compliance
D-15	Assessment	Opinion on Car	"You are right"	Agreeing
D-16	Offer	Concert Invitation	"Oh no, I have to work"	Rejection
D-17	Assessment	Opinion on Job	"I love it"	Agreeing
D-18	Request	Help with Picture	"I'd be glad to"	Accepting
D-19	Command	Volume Request	"Oh, but this is..."	Incompliance
D-20	Command	Silence Request	"Okay, I won't disturb."	Compliance

Table 1 summarizes the identification of functional responses across the 20 analyzed dialogue texts. The table demonstrates that each type of adjacency pair elicits different Second Pair Parts (SPP), such as acceptance and rejection within the Offer and Request categories, and compliance and incompliance within the *Command* category. These functions were determined based on the situational context provided in the English conversation sourcebooks.

Students' Ability in Using Adjacency Pairs

Quantitative data on students' performance were collected from 56 participants. The distribution of their ability levels and the specific results for the Request category are presented in the following tables.

2. Students' Ability in Using Adjacency Pairs

Table 2: The Students' Ability Level

No	Score Range	Level	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
1	80 - 100	Excellent	19	33.93%
2	66 - 79	Good	11	19.64%
3	56 - 65	Average	14	25.00%
4	40 - 55	Poor	10	17.86%
5	< 39	Fail	2	3.57%
Total			56	100%

Table 2 presents the distribution of the 56 students' proficiency levels in using adjacency pairs. The data reveals that the majority of students performed at the Excellent (33.93%) and Average (25.00%) levels. While a combined 53.57% of students reached the *Excellent* and *Good* categories, approximately 21.43% fell into the *Poor* and *Fail* categories, indicating a significant gap in pragmatic understanding among some participants.

Table 3: Students' Proficiency per Adjacency Pair Type

No	Adjacency Pair Type	Average Correct Percentage (%)
1	Command	75.00%
2	Request	71.07%
3	Assess	67.85%
4	Offer	65.35%

The tables detail the students' specific performance across the four types of adjacency pairs. Students achieved the highest proficiency in the Command category with a mean score of 75.00%, suggesting they are more adept at identifying instructional responses. Conversely, the Offer category (65.35%) proved to be the most challenging, indicating that students often struggle to determine the

correct response when dealing with offers, particularly when the response requires a "dispreferred" or indirect rejection.

DISCUSSION

In this section, the writers interpret the findings to address the research problems. The first problem concerns the functions of responses of adjacency pairs in the dialogue texts. Based on the analysis of 20 dialogues, the writers identified six specific functions: *request-accepting*, *command-compliance*, *command-incompliance*, *offer-accepting*, *offer-rejecting*, and *assess-agreeing to inform and opine*. These functional categories, as summarized in Table 1, demonstrate the variety of pragmatic responses found in conversational interactions.

The second problem addresses the ability of the fifth-semester students to use adjacency pairs across four types. Based on the statistical results presented in Tables 2 and 3, the writers found the average percentages of correct answers to be: Command (75.00%), followed by Request (71.07%), Assess (67.85%), and Offer (65.35%). These results indicate that while students have a solid grasp of commands and requests, they face greater challenges with offers and assessments. To provide a broader perspective, the writers present some relevant previous studies conducted by other researchers:

- Fauzia (2015): Conducted a pragmatic analysis of the *Romeo and Juliet* movie script. Using Sacks and Schegloff's theory, she identified 9 types of adjacency pairs, where *question-answer* (22 occurrences) and *assertion-agreement/disagreement* (20 occurrences) were the most frequent. She also identified four types of responses: responding to statements, questions, requests, and offers/invitations.
- Hasan (2015): Conducted a study on the *Knight and Day* movie using Levinson's theory. He identified 87 data points, including *question-answer* (28 data), *command-compliance/incompliance* (12 data), and *request-acceptance/refusal* (11 data), among others.

The similarity between these previous studies and the current research lies in the focus on adjacency pairs. However, the fundamental difference is that this study does not use movie scripts as the data source. Instead, it uses dialogue texts from English conversation books and evaluates students' ability based on their test scores. While previous researchers have focused on identifying types of pairs in cinematic discourse, this study directly measures students' proficiency and pragmatic competence in a pedagogical context.

CONCLUSION

Based on the data analysis discussed in the previous chapter, the writer concluded that the ability of the 5th-semester English students of UMI in using adjacency pairs was divided into 5 levels, namely: Excellent level which was achieved by 19 students, then followed by Good level with frequency 11 students, Average level

with frequency 14 students, Poor level with frequency 10 students and Fail level with frequency 2 students.

Based on types of adjacency pairs, the students' ability for request was 71.07%, followed by command 75.00%, offer 65.35%, and assess 67.85%. The writer found that some students understand how to choose the right answer while others are confused about how to choose the right answer. It can be concluded that most of the 5th-semester English students of UMI were able to use adjacency pairs in dialogue text.

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