Adjacency pairs in conversational exchanges

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Speech acts are clearly related to what conversation analysts have called adjacency pairs or pairs of utterances that usually occur together. The production of a speech act such as an offer will normally be accompanied by a response. And this response may be a preferred one, that is, acceptance, or a dispreferred one or refusal (Cook, 1989: 53). The most frequently used adjacency pair is question-answer. Other examples of expected pairings are greeting and greeting, information and acknowledgement, etc.

Adjacency pairs are pairs of utterances that usually occur together. The most often used adjacency pair is question-answer but there are others such as:

- a. greeting-greeting;
- b. congratulations-thanks;
- c. apology-acceptance;
- d. inform-acknowledge;
- e. leave taking-leave taking

Task A
Read through the following adjacency pairs taken from a corpus of film scripts and decide what type they are following McCarthy’s list

- LUCY: Bye. MOTHER: See you later.
- GEORGE: Well, it’s a terrific résumé, Polly. And, uh… Congratulations on the baby. POLLY: What baby?
- ANNA: Good night everyone. ALL: Bye.
- POLLY: Well, hello. GEORGE: Hi.
- CLAIRE: OK, I’m sorry. You’re right. It was a stupid thing to… NINA: You should never have asked. It’s so horrible.
- BERNIE: Hello, Anna. Delighted to meet you. ANNA: And you.
- TERRY: George, congratulations. GEORGE: Hey, Terry, how are you?
- LINUS: Hello, Sabrina. SABRINA: Hello, Linus.
- KATHERINE: Oh, my God! I just have a credit card. I’m sorry. Is that okay? CASHIER: No, it’s not okay. There’s a sign.

JUNE: And I’m sorry about last night. That was awkward. LUCY: Oh, not at all. Brian was unbelievable.
- ANNA: I’m really sorry about last time. He just flew in. I had no idea. WILLIAM: All right.
- SUZIE: I’ll take that. WILL: All right. So I’ll call. See you soon.
- JONAH: Hi. Dad. This is Jessica. SAM: Nice to meet you.
- LUCY: Good bye. JACK: Bye.
- KATHERINE: I’m so sorry. I apologize from the bottom of my heart. CASHIER: So sign already! I’d like to get home. You have my pen.
- CAROLYN: Night, Sandy. SANDY: Oh, bye, Carolyn.

LUCY: Bye-bye. GEORGE: Bye
- DANIEL: Just hold it right there, Miss Jones. I’m sorry to inform you, but I think you’ll find that, by contract you are expected to give at least six weeks’ notice. BRIDGET: Ah, yes.
- FRIEND: Oh, we’ll see each other. LUCY: You better.
- FRIEND: Of course. All right? LUCY: Nn-nn. FRIEND: Good-bye. See you.
- WILLIAM: Max, Bella. We’ll see you in a couple of days. Thank you everybody. ALL: Bye guys. Bye Anna.
- JOEY: I’m delighted you’re coming! MONSIGNOR RYAN: Thank you. I’m very delighted to have met you. See you this evening. You know, you two make me feel… quite extraordinarily happy!
•MARK: See you soon. NINA: Bye.
•GEORGE: All right. See you later. JUNE: Okay.
•MARY: Train. Okay, uh, I'll see you later. Okay. FRIEND: Thank you for coming.
•WILLIAM: I'm very sorry about the... 'surreal but nice' comment. Disaster... ANNA: That's fine

•CHRISTINE: ...how would you like to be Imogene's godfather? WILL: Seriously?
•DARCY: So how are you? BRIDGET: Well, apart from being very disappointed not to see my favourite reindeer jumper again, I'm well.
•JOE: Matthew, how are you? MATTHEW: Good.
•LUCY: What do you want from me, Jack? JACK: I want you not to be unhappy.
•WILL: So, Fiona, how are you? I mean, how are you feeling? FIONA: My stomach's fine, yeah.

•JEFF: If you don't mind I would like something too. Could you bring me up some really, really cold water? WILLIAM: I'll see what I can do.
•JERRY: Hi! Hi, how are you? CELESTE: How are you?
•WOMAN: How are you? KATHERINE: Fine.

•ANNA: 'Cartwright, Wainwright, whatever your name is, I promised little Jimmy I'd be home for his birthday, could you get a message through that I may be a little late.' WILLIAM: 'Certainly.'
•GEORGE: Hey, Terry, how are you? Still slicing people up? TERRY: Indeed.
•JONAH: Dad. Could you shut the door? SAM: Sure.
•WILL: Yeah, I heard you. I heard you. What do you want me to do about it? MARCUS: I don't know. You could talk to her.
•ANTHONY : How are you? MARK: I'm fine