

## Lesson 5

### Responding to manager's requests

#### Teacher's booklet

#### Phase 1: Guided noticing (approx. 30 min)

#### *Exercise 1. Warm-up and predicting*

*Note: The terminology should be removed in the student's version of the booklet.*

*Instructions:* Can you think of some real-life situations in which people may say something like this:

*Note: Here teachers can provide more than 3 examples (any examples from the shortlist).*

- I would love to help, but

Possible situation (s): \_\_\_\_\_

- I'm afraid I can't do it

Possible situation (s): \_\_\_\_\_

- I wish I could stay and help out, but

Possible situation (s): \_\_\_\_\_

**Exercise 2. Exploration through written contextualized input**

*Background:* 8 native speakers of English were asked to respond to the following scenario:

*Your manager is asking you to stay for several extra hours after work today. However, you have other things planned, so you can't stay. What would you say in this situation?*

Read their responses below and try to notice and underline any expressions/word combinations that were similar to those we discussed at the beginning of today's lesson (e.g., *I'm afraid I can't do it*). The first response has been done for you.

1. **Unfortunately, I am unable to stay** later today. I have important matters that I have to deal with at home.
2. I wish I could stay and help out, but I have an appointment I need to attend, and I can't change it. I could come in a bit earlier tomorrow and stay later if that would help.
3. I'm afraid I can't do it tonight. I have other things to attend to.
4. I'm really sorry, I would love to help but am going to Toronto to visit my grandmother this weekend. We are heading out within the next hour. Can I work on it on Monday?
5. Unfortunately, I am unable to stay today, as I have some pressing errands I need to run. Is there another way I can help you?
6. Oh gosh I can't tonight I have to attend a function or otherwise I would. I could come in early tomorrow if that would help.
7. I would usually stay the extra hours, but I have plans to go.
8. I'm sorry, but today I'm not able to stay late. I would be happy to work overtime another day.

**Phase 2: Deep cognitive engagement and stimulating retention (approx. 60 min)**

***Exercise 1. Form-comparison and explicit metapragmatic explanation***

*Instructions:* Now compare the expressions you've underlined in Exercise 1 with the list provided in your handout. Were you able to notice most of them?

**Teacher's script:**

Such expressions are also called '*pragmatic formulas*'. These are fixed or semi-fixed multi-word combinations *frequently used* by the native/highly proficient speakers of the language for *specific communicative purposes*. Such expressions can be very beneficial for developing *fluency* and *accuracy* in a second language. The knowledge of these expressions can also help you improve your *pragmatic competence* (ability to use your second language in a contextually appropriate way in order to be properly understood by the native/highly proficient speakers of the language). Such expressions can help you *sound more natural* in your second language, and, as a result, you are more likely to be accepted into the '*inner social circle*' of the second language community.

Now let's move on to Exercises 2 and 3. These exercises were designed to help you better memorize these formulas and understand how they are used in context (in this lesson, *Responding to manager's requests*).

***Target pragmatic formulas:***

1. Unfortunately, I am unable to stay
2. I wish I could stay and help out, but \_\_\_\_ + [excuse]
3. I'm afraid I can't do it
4. I would love to help, but \_\_\_\_ + [excuse]
5. Is there another way I can help?
6. *I could* \_\_\_\_ + [promise of future action], *if that would help*
7. *I would usually* \_\_\_\_ + [help], *but* \_\_\_\_ + [excuse]
8. I would be happy to \_\_\_\_ + [work overtime] another day

OPTIONAL: *At this point in the lesson, teachers may also want to discuss the following questions with the group to enhance cross-cultural linguistic awareness:*

**Awareness-raising discussion questions:**

1. Are the responses provided by the native English speakers different from/similar to your your native language?
2. Are these responses different from/similar to your own responses in English?
3. What are the main similarities (if any) between your own responses and those provided by the native speakers?
4. What are the main differences (if any)?

***Exercise 2. Understanding the implied meaning of the target formulas and explicit metapragmatic explanation***

***Review 1. Match the pragmatic formulas with their best paraphrased versions. Pay careful attention to the hints provided for you.***

1. I wish I could stay and help out, but \_\_\_\_ + [excuse]

*Hint: the verb 'wish' expresses regret in this context*

2. I would love to help, but \_\_\_\_ + [excuse]

*Hint: the phrase 'would love it' doesn't mean 'have romantic feelings for somebody' in this context*

3. I'm afraid I can't do it

*Hint: the phrase 'I'm afraid' doesn't mean 'I'm physically scared' in this context*

4. Is there another way I can help?

*Hint: the phrase 'is there another way' doesn't refer to the actual way/road in this context*

- a. I would really like to help, but I can't
- b. Unfortunately, I can't stay and help
- c. Can I help you with anything else meanwhile?
- d. I regret to inform you that I can't stay

***Note: Note that these paraphrased versions are the interpretations of the author; teachers may want to create their own paraphrases.***

<b>Answer key: 1-b; 2-a; 3-d; 4-c.</b>
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Review 2. Review each pragmatic formula again and decide whether each pragmatic formula is a direct or an indirect speech act.

In other words, how direct was the speaker when he/she declined his/her manager's request? Circle or underline the chosen answer.

Very direct      Somewhat direct      Somewhat indirect      Very indirect

*Hint: Direct speech acts is when the speaker says exactly what he/she means. Indirect speech acts is when the speaker means more than he/she says in reality. Indirect speech acts are generally considered more polite in English.*

1. Unfortunately, I am unable to stay

How direct was the speaker when he/she declined his/her manager's request?

Very direct      Somewhat direct      Somewhat indirect      Very indirect

2. I wish I could stay and help out, but \_\_\_\_ + [excuse]

How direct was the speaker when he/she declined his/her manager's request?

Very direct      Somewhat direct      Somewhat indirect      Very indirect

3. I would love to help, but \_\_\_\_ + [excuse]

How direct was the speaker when he/she declined his/her manager's request?

Very direct      Somewhat direct      Somewhat indirect      Very indirect

4. I could \_\_\_\_ + [promise of future action], if that would help

How direct was the speaker when he/she declined his/her manager's request?

Very direct      Somewhat direct      Somewhat indirect      Very indirect

5. I would be happy to \_\_\_\_ + [work overtime] another day

How direct was the speaker when he/she declined his/her manager's request?

Very direct      Somewhat direct      Somewhat indirect      Very indirect

6. I'm afraid I can't do it

How direct was the speaker when he/she declined his/her manager's request?

Very direct      Somewhat direct      Somewhat indirect      Very indirect

7. I would usually \_\_\_\_ + [help], but \_\_\_\_ + [excuse]

How direct was the speaker when he/she declined his/her manager's request?

Very direct      Somewhat direct      Somewhat indirect      Very indirect

8. Is there another way I can help?

How direct was the speaker when he/she declined his/her manager's request?

Very direct      Somewhat direct      Somewhat indirect      Very indirect

*OPTIONAL: At this point in the lesson, teachers may also want to provide some explicit explanation as to 3 key socio-pragmatic factors speakers have to keep in mind when engaging in a conversation to enhance L2 pragmatic competence development:*

**Teacher's script:** *When you engage in a conversation with 2 or more people, there are 3 key factors you need to keep in mind:*

1. **Social distance** (how well do the speakers know each other; age & gender)  
Note: As the level of social distance increases (goes up), the level of politeness increases (goes up), *which affects the language choices*
2. **Power** (does the speaker have any power/authority over the hearer or vice versa; what are their roles)  
Note: As the level of power (goes up), the level of politeness increases (goes up), *which affects the language choices*
3. **Imposition** (the type of obligation the speaker is forcing the hearer to do- e.g., borrow money vs to borrow a pen- is this a high stakes context? What are potential risks?)  
Note: As the level of imposition (obligation/responsibility) increases, so does the level of politeness, *which affects the language choices*



***Exercise 3: Speech act analysis***

*Instructions: Read each response and divide it into meaningful components (parts). Next, find a phrase that matches speaker's communicative strategy, as shown in the example. Check your answers with the rest of the class.*

Example: Unfortunately, I am unable to stay later today. I have important matters that I have to deal with at home.

*Part 1*

Unfortunately, I am unable to stay later today

*Part 2*

I have important matters that I have to deal with at home

Speaker's strategy

*Regret + refusal* →

*Excuse* →

Phrase

Unfortunately, I am unable to stay later today

I have important matters that I have to deal with at home

1. I wish I could stay and help out, but I have an appointment I need to attend, and I can't change it. I could come in a bit earlier tomorrow and stay later if that would help.

*Regret + excuse* → \_\_\_\_\_

*Offering help* → \_\_\_\_\_

2. I'm afraid I can't do it tonight. I have other things to attend to.

*Regret+ refusal* → \_\_\_\_\_

*Excuse* → \_\_\_\_\_

3. I'm really sorry, I would love to help but I am going to Toronto to visit my grandmother this weekend. We are heading out within the next hour. Can I work on it on Monday?

*Apology* → \_\_\_\_\_

*Regret + excuse* → \_\_\_\_\_

*Offering help* → \_\_\_\_\_

4. Unfortunately, I am unable to stay later today. I have important matters that I have to deal with at home.

*Regret + refusal* → \_\_\_\_\_

*Excuse* → \_\_\_\_\_

5. Unfortunately, I am unable to stay today, as I have some pressing errands I need to run. Is there another way I can help you?

*Regret + refusal* → \_\_\_\_\_

*Excuse* → \_\_\_\_\_

*Offering help* → \_\_\_\_\_

6. Oh gosh I can't tonight I have to attend a function or otherwise I would. I could come in early tomorrow if that would help.

*Refusal + excuse* → \_\_\_\_\_

*Offering help* → \_\_\_\_\_

7. I would usually stay the extra hours, but I have plans to go.

*Excuse + refusal* → \_\_\_\_\_

8. I'm sorry, but today I'm not able to stay late. I would be happy to work overtime another day.

*Apology + refusal* → \_\_\_\_\_

*Offering help* → \_\_\_\_\_

### **Phase 3: Practice (approx. 30 min)**

*Instructions:*

Students and the two teachers role-play the following scenario:

**'Managers'**- teachers play the role of a manager

**'Employees'**- students play the role of an employee

The 'managers' are requesting their 'employees' to stay extra hours after work (*scripts are provided*) to finish an important report. The 'employees' are going to decline their 'manager's' request *by using the target pragmatic formulas* from their lists. The 'employees' also need to make sure that they offer help to their 'managers' at some point in the conversation (*again, by using the target formulas*). Once they do that, the 'managers' will suggest several other potential times and start negotiating with the 'employees' until a consensus is reached.

**Scripts for the managers:**

**Manager 1**

- Hi \_\_\_\_\_(name)! How is it going? I was wondering if you would be willing to stay until 7 today to finish that report we've been working on. Can you make it?

*Wait for 'employee's' response*

- Oh, I see. But we really need it to be done by the end of next week...

*Wait for 'employee's' response- at this point, they should have offered help.*

- Ok, great. How about you stay longer on Monday to finish it. Would that work?

*Wait for 'employee's' response. Continue negotiating until a consensus is reached.*

**Manager 2**

- Hi \_\_\_\_\_(name)! How is it going? Would you be able to stay until 7 today to finish that report we've been working on. Can you make it?

*Wait for 'employee's' response*

- Oh, I see. But we really need it to be done by the end of next week...

*Wait for 'employee's' response- at this point, they should have offered help.*

- Ok, great. How about you stay longer some time early next week. Would that be possible?

*Wait for 'employee's' response. Continue negotiating until a consensus is reached.*