

Practice Unit 7

1. Analyse the following exchange between an adult and a young child, using Grice's cooperative principle and maxims. The adult asks her question a few days before the child's third birthday:

Adult: *And when are you going to be three years old?*

Child: *On my third birthday.*

What has gone wrong?

2. Study the use of *like* in the extract from the Santa Barbara corpus given in Unit 7. What functions does this form perform in context? Are these usages recorded in your learner's dictionary?
3. Arrange the following commands in descending order of politeness. Which qualify as indirect speech acts? Which linguistic devices add to the politeness of the utterance?

Get out of this room!

You'll get out of this room.

Could you get out of this room?

Couldn't you get out of this room?

Get out of this room, could you please?

So you're staying, are you?

4. Comment on the relationship between syntactic structure and discourse context on the basis of the following examples of reported speech.

Betty said: "I won't come back here tomorrow."

Betty said that she wouldn't go back there tomorrow.

Betty said that she won't go back there tomorrow.

** Betty said that she won't go back here tomorrow.*

Find one further acceptable example of indirect speech, and one further unacceptable one.

5. In a study of contrasting pragmatic conventions in German and English conversations, Juliane House (1996: 347) has suggested that expectations differ along the following five dimensions:

German	English
directness	indirectness
orientation towards self	orientation towards other
orientation towards content	orientation towards addressees
explicitness	implicitness
ad-hoc formulation	verbal routines

A typical native speaker of German would express himself or herself directly, display an orientation towards the content of the message and the speaker, make his message explicit and use creative ad-hoc formulations in doing so. The typical speaker of English, by contrast, would value indirectness/implicitness, have a different orientation and tend to use pre-fabricated set expressions such as *if you know what I mean* or *I wonder if you could help me*.

In the same paper, she relates the following illustrative anecdote - from an American student's diary documenting her stay in Germany:

When I said something (in English) to my (German) boyfriend like 'Would you like to go to the cinema tonight?', which means to me 'I want to go to the cinema tonight and you're taking me' - and it's got much more force than it sounds as though it has - he would just say 'No, not really.' (House 1996: 351)

Using House's theoretical framework, make explicit what has gone wrong in this particular exchange. Suggest ways of raising German learners' awareness of such contrastive-pragmatic issues.