

Pragmatics: Situation Cards

Category: Get To Know Your Students

Time: 50+ minutes

Requirements:

1. Projector
2. 10+ Participants
3. Paper
4. A copy of this PowerPoint [QR CODE]



Description: A roleplay activity to practice the language and content of a unit. This activity challenges participants to think of real world situations in the context of Japan, putting themselves in their Japanese ELs shoes.

Objectives: Participants will be able to...

1. Create 'situation cards' that are pragmatically sound in the context of Japan
2. Think of situations in the shoes of their Japanese ELs

Pre-Activity

1. Introduce the task. Inform the participants that they will be creating mini role plays in the form of 'situation cards' for their Japanese ELs. What are situation cards? They are cards detailing important contexts reflecting real-world situations. In our case, these situation cards are designed to reflect real-world situations with the context being Japan.
2. Project two situation cards on the board (Slide 1).

Example:

Situation: You are on your way to English class. Your mother calls you.

You pick up, but you are also in a hurry to class.

Your mother has something important to tell you.

Characters: student, student's mother

Situation: You are at an Ed Sheeran concert and you have a backstage pass for a small meet-and-greet.

You are a big fan of Ed Sheeran.

Ed Sheeran is grateful for his fans.

Characters: Ed Sheeran fan, Ed Sheeran

3. Put participants in groups (at least 4 people per group) to discuss the two situation cards. Ask: Are the situation cards appropriate to give your Japanese ELs? Which one would you give and not give to your students? Why?
4. After a few minutes of discussion, come back to a large class. Ask participants to share their answers.

Answer: The situation card on the left is good, but not so appropriate to give your Japanese ELs. Something to consider is: In this situation, would the student really use English with their mother? What is the likelihood of that?

The situation card on the right, however, is pragmatically sound. It puts the student in a situation where they would most likely use English.

5. Get into the details. Ask participants: What are important elements of a situation card?

REFER TO SLIDE TWO. One of the situation cards is already highlighted. As a group, highlight together.

6. Give participants a link to the PowerPoint. Designate each group to a slide where they make two situation cards. Remind groups to write in their names in their respective slide.
7. Give groups about 10-15 minutes. For the sake of the activity later, instruct groups to make situation cards between, at most, three characters - two would be preferred. During this time, go around and check.

REMINDER: "Remember that situation cards should be in the shoes of Japanese ELs in university."

Questions to consider: "Is this situation pragmatically sound? Would my Japanese EL use English in this situation?"

8. After time is up, or when all groups are finished, go over some situation cards together. Before this point, you (the teacher) should have already confirmed that all situation cards are pragmatically sound in the context of Japanese university ELs in Japan.

ACTIVITY

1. Instruct participants that they will perform these situation cards as a whole class. But don't fret because they will have time to practice in their groups first.
2. Hand out the grading rubric below and go over them accordingly. One per group or for every person is okay, too. They will not be writing on this rubric.
3. At this point, give groups time to go over all situation cards made. Groups should test out the situation cards - roleplaying them.
4. **IMPORTANT NOTE:** not every member in a group needs/will have a role when roleplaying a situation card. These members can act as teachers - giving feedback and even mock grading their classmates. These members can refer to the rubric below. So after every mini roleplay, these student-teachers can give an oral grading using the rubric. It would be a good idea to model a mini roleplay + student-teacher feedback as a group.
5. Give groups about 10-15 minutes for this.
6. After enough practice and feedback, time for the real deal!
7. For the 'presentations' you have two choices:
 - 1) have the same group members go up and perform a situation card of your choosing

OR

2) have all participants go back to their original seats and randomly select participants to roleplay a situation card of your choosing

NOTE: if option #1, try to select situation cards that were not made by the performers themselves.

8. During presentations, you will be grading each participant - either as a whole or individually. You can also organize this so that participants grade each other. You may have to print extra-extra copies of the rubrics.

9. Do this activity until all individuals perform.

Post-Activity: Discussion Questions

1. How did you experience the activity? How might your Japanese ELs respond to this activity?
2. Why do you think this activity might work well with Japanese ELs? How might it not work well?
3. How might you alter this activity for your students/classes?
4. Any concerns about this activity?

Activity Rationale

1. Generally speaking, roleplaying in Japanese education is done by standing up in front of the class and reading lines from a book or script. Therefore, modeling the activity and making your expectations clear is very important for Japanese ELs here as they may not be accustomed to this type of activity. So, modeling + going over the rubric is important.
2. A key element for this activity is for situation cards to be pragmatically sound as possible. Situation cards should reflect situations that would and can happen in Japan. For instance, the situation is: *What would you say to your friend if you met them unexpectedly on the street?* In this case, wouldn't the student greet in Japanese instead of English? By having a more realistic situation in roleplays (not including fairy tales, creative writing, etc...), students can utilize their knowledge and understanding of the English language better. This practice in class can also prepare them for out-of-class situations, too.

MINI ROLEPLAY RUBRIC

Vocabulary	3 Points	2 Points	1 Point
Was appropriate vocabulary used?	A variety of relevant vocabulary used accurately in the given situation.	A variety of vocabulary was used - but some with awkward usage.	Vocabulary was very limited and inaccurately used in the given situation.

Gestures/Facial Expressions Were appropriate gestures used?	2 Points A variety of relevant gestures used accurately in the given situation. Facial expressions were used accurately in conjunction with gestures and vocabulary.	1 Points Relevant gestures used. Some gestures may not have been appropriate to the situation. Not enough facial expression to support vocabulary and gesture in the given context	0 Points No appropriate gestures or facial expressions used.
Voice/Tone/Pacing Was the quality of voice appropriate? Was the pacing of words/sentences appropriate?	3 Points Volume, tone, and pacing of interaction between characters were appropriate to the situation.	2 Points Volume, tone, pacing of interaction between characters were mostly appropriate. May need to improve either volume, tone, or pacing.	1 Point Volume, tone, pacing of interaction between characters were not very appropriate. Needs to improve volume, tone, and pacing.
Length Was the length of the situation in the given context appropriate? Just enough exchange between characters? Too much? Too little?	2 Points The length of interaction between characters in the given situation were appropriate.	1 Point The length of interaction between characters in the given situation is either too long or not long enough.	0 Point The length of interaction between characters in the given situation is too short.

Names: _____

Total _____/10