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DEVELOPING FLIPPED CLASSROOM ASSISTED-PADLET TO ENHANCE PRAGMATIC COMPETENCE AND CRITICAL THINKING IN EFL CONTEXTS

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to develop and evaluate a Padlet-supported Flipped Classroom model to enhance pragmatic competence and critical thinking in EFL higher education. Employing a Research and Development (R&D) design, this study adopted the Four-D (4D) model consisting of Define, Design, Develop, and Disseminate stages. The study was conducted in an undergraduate EFL course at a higher education institution in Indonesia. Data were collected through expert validation questionnaires, lecturer and student practicality questionnaires, reflective responses from lecturers and students, as well as additional assessments of students' pragmatic competence using the Discourse Completion Task and critical thinking using a Critical Thinking Test. The collected data were analyzed through descriptive and interpretive approaches to examine the development process, validity, practicality, effectiveness, and user responses toward the developed model. The findings indicate that the developed Flipped Classroom model integrating Padlet was considered valid, practical, and effective in supporting students' contextual language use and reflective thinking. The model facilitated pre-class preparation, interactive classroom engagement, and post-class reflection through digital-mediated learning activities. This study contributes to EFL pedagogy by presenting a systematic instructional model that integrates pragmatic competence development and critical thinking within a flipped learning environment.

Keywords: Critical Thinking, Padlet, EFL Higher Education, Flipped Classroom, Pragmatic Competence

A. INTRODUCTION

Pragmatic competence and critical thinking have become increasingly significant in EFL higher education, particularly in contexts necessitating academic, professional, and intercultural communication (Al Zoubi et.al., 2025; Basu et.al, 2025; Muliyah et.al., 2025). Pragmatic competence enables learners to utilize language appropriately according to the context, the relationship between the speaker and listener, and the speaker's objectives (Jurgens et.al., 2023; Sari et.al, 2025; Santos, 2025). Critical thinking enables individuals to

assess situations, evaluate alternatives, and articulate their communication decisions (Gómez et.al., 2021; Campo et.al., 2023; Mavani & Parmar, 2025). Both abilities are important, but many EFL classrooms don't focus on them enough. Instead, they focus on grammatical accuracy and language use that isn't connected to a specific situation. Previous research consistently demonstrates that EFL learners may possess adequate linguistic knowledge yet struggle to apply language appropriately in authentic communicative contexts, indicating that pragmatic competence does not inherently develop through mere exposure to linguistic forms (Yang, 2022; Amaliah, 2024; Salih & Kurt, 2025).

A multitude of bibliographic and empirical studies have demonstrated limited pragmatic awareness and inappropriate pragmatic production among EFL learners in diverse contexts, particularly in settings marked by form-focused and teacher-centered instruction (Bardis et al., 2021; Bouftira, 2022; Abidi et al., 2025). These results demonstrate that conventional teaching methods do not provide sufficient chances for students to examine communicative situations, negotiate meaning, and reflect on language choices. Recent instructional research indicate that flipped classroom methodologies enhance students' pragmatic competence more effectively than traditional techniques by providing increased opportunities for interaction and contextual practice (Barranquero et al., 2022; Rehan, 2025). Similarly, although critical thinking is frequently considered a core educational objective in language programs, it is rarely effectively incorporated into classroom activities, resulting in students' limited ability for evaluative, reflective, and contextually aware communication (Negouscu, 2023; Prasodjo, 2025; Sagimin, 2025).

In response to these pedagogical challenges, methodologies that emphasize interaction, reflection, and learner engagement have received increased focus in EFL higher education. The flipped classroom is one such method. The adoption of the flipped classroom in language education has been associated with increased learner engagement and deeper cognitive processing, including opportunities for higher-order thinking and communicative decision-making (Baig & Yadegaridehkordi, 2023; Haetami, 2025; Saleem & Alvi, 2025). Among various digital platforms, Padlet has been recognized as a promising tool for supporting asynchronous collaboration and reflective learning. Previous studies suggest that Padlet-integrated Flipped Classroom instruction can enhance peer interaction, stimulate reflective discussion, and foster critical thinking through opportunities for students to articulate and evaluate ideas (Rath, 2025). However, these studies have not sufficiently explored how a Padlet-supported Flipped Classroom model can be systematically designed and evaluated to simultaneously develop pragmatic competence and critical thinking skills in EFL higher education settings. This indicates a need for a more pedagogically grounded and empirically validated model that integrates technology use with clearly defined communicative and cognitive learning outcomes.

Therefore, this research aims to develop and evaluate a Padlet-supported Flipped Classroom model for enhancing EFL higher education students' pragmatic competence and critical thinking. Specifically, the study focuses on designing the model, validating its quality through expert evaluation, examining its practicality in classroom implementation, and assessing its potential effectiveness in supporting students' contextual language use and reflective thinking

B. METHOD

This study employed a Research and Development (R&D) approach to develop and evaluate a Padlet-supported Flipped Classroom model for enhancing pragmatic competence and critical thinking in an EFL higher education context. The R&D design was selected because the study aimed not only to examine instructional outcomes but also to systematically develop, validate, revise, and evaluate an instructional model. The development process adopted the Four-D (4D) model proposed by Thiagarajan (1975 cited in Muqdamien et al., 2021; Indaryanti et al., 2025), consisting of four stages: Define, Design, Develop, and Disseminate. The developed model integrated flipped learning principles with Padlet as a digital learning platform to support students' contextual language use, interaction, reflection, and critical engagement. The study focused on producing an instructional model that could facilitate pragmatic competence and critical thinking development rather than comparing the effectiveness of different teaching methods. The study was conducted in an undergraduate English as a Foreign Language (EFL) course at a higher education institution in Indonesia. The participants were undergraduate EFL students who participated in the implementation of the developed Flipped Classroom model. The students were selected because they had prior experience using digital learning platforms, which supported their participation in Padlet-based learning activities. The learning context was chosen to address students' needs in developing appropriate language use in communicative situations and improving their ability to analyze and evaluate language-related decisions.

The development process followed the four stages of the 4D model. In the Define stage, the researchers conducted needs analysis, document analysis, and preliminary assessments to identify students' learning difficulties related to pragmatic competence and critical thinking. This stage aimed to determine the instructional gaps between students' linguistic knowledge and their ability to apply language appropriately in contextual communication. In the Define stage, we figured out what the kids needed to learn and what problems they had with learning by doing. The Design step involved putting flipped learning activities into three groups: before class, during class, and after class. It also included making conversational tasks with Padlet. During the Develop stage, the model was put into action through cycles of teaching that were repeated. The exercises included looking at Padlet-based resources before class, talking and reasoning together during class, and then thinking about and giving comments to classmates on Padlet after class. During the Disseminate step, the final model was put into action in the course, and the results of the instruction were recorded.

Data were collected using several instruments to evaluate the quality and effectiveness of the developed model. An expert validation questionnaire was used to assess the validity of the instructional model, including the alignment of learning objectives, instructional design, pragmatic competence integration, critical thinking components, and Padlet usability. Lecturer and student practicality questionnaires were administered to evaluate the feasibility, clarity, usability, and classroom suitability of the developed model. In addition, reflective responses from lecturers and students were collected to explore their experiences, perceptions, and suggestions regarding the implementation of the Flipped Classroom model. To evaluate students' learning outcomes, pragmatic competence was assessed using a Discourse Completion Task (DCT) adapted from Blum-Kulka (1982), while critical thinking ability was measured using a Critical Thinking Test. These assessments were used to examine changes in students' pragmatic awareness and critical thinking after the implementation of the developed model.

The collected data were analyzed using descriptive and interpretive approaches. Quantitative data from expert validation, practicality questionnaires, and learning assessments were analyzed using descriptive statistics, including mean scores, percentages, and paired-samples t-tests to examine changes in students' pragmatic competence and critical thinking performance. Qualitative data obtained from reflective responses and feedback were analyzed interpretively to identify patterns related to students' and lecturers' experiences, perceptions, and evaluations of the developed model. The findings from different data sources were triangulated to determine the validity, practicality, and effectiveness of the Padlet-supported Flipped Classroom model.

C. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The findings of this study are organized based on the objectives of the Research and Development (R&D) process, focusing on the development and evaluation of a Padlet-supported Flipped Classroom model. The discussion presents the major outcomes of the model development, validation, practicality, and implementation to demonstrate how the developed model supports students' pragmatic competence and critical thinking development.

1. Needs Analysis and Development Process of the Flipped Classroom Model

This section presents the Define and Design stages, including students' initial problems, learning needs, and the rationale behind developing the model. The define stage aimed to identify learners' needs and instructional gaps related to pragmatic competence and critical thinking in the EFL environment. The results of the needs analysis, document analysis, and preliminary assessments showed that students had good grammar and vocabulary skills. The average grammar score was 78.4 (SD = 6.8), and 72% of students passed the institutional standard, which showed that they were very accurate in formal writing.

However, students didn't seem to have much pragmatic awareness. Their lower average score of 61.2 (SD = 7.5) on pragmatic-oriented tasks showed this. Only 34% of them always used language that was right for the situation, the position of the person they were talking to, and what they wanted to say. Students demonstrated inadequate critical engagement, often reacting procedurally without evaluating implicit meaning, intention, or sociocultural factors. The define stage showed that there is a common problem in teaching and established a clear empirical basis for making a Flipped Classroom using the Padlet model that explicitly includes critical thinking and pragmatic competence as major learning goals. What was learned in the define step was used to plan the design stage. It was all about establishing a teaching framework that fit the demands that had been uncovered. The results thus far suggest that the learning design was able to adapt the difficulties that were uncovered into organized strategies to teach them. There are three parts to the flipped classroom model: activities before class, during class, and after class. The goals for each step are based on practical and analytical thinking.

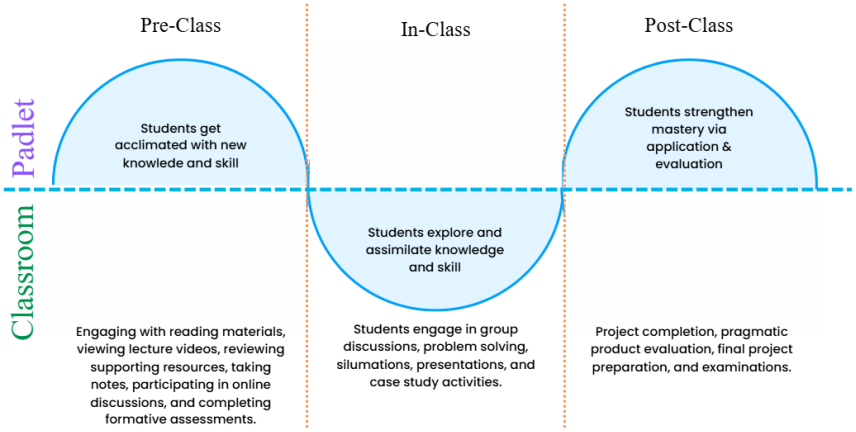

Figure 1. Design of Flip Classroom Model using Padlet

In pre-class, we prepared educational films, contextualized language samples, and guided questions to help students use what they previously know and start thinking about practical features. Padlet was purposefully incorporated as a mediating platform to facilitate asynchronous connection, enabling students to publish reflections, respond to peers, and participate with authentic communication scenarios prior to class meetings. The in-class part was supposed to be mostly about group discussions, role-playing, and problem-based assignments that made students think about their choices and explain why they made them. Padlet-based feedback, peer evaluation, and follow-up assignments were utilized to get people to think about what they had learned and make sure they understood it better after class. The design results reveal that Padlet was more than just a piece of technology; it was also a teaching tool that aided with engagement, reflection, and learning continuity at different stages of learning.

2. Validation and Practicality of the Developed Model

This section covers the Develop stage findings, including expert validation results, lecturer practicality responses, and student practicality responses. The development stage yielded outcomes concerning the validity, utility, and improvement of the instructional product. The results of expert validation demonstrated that the Flipped Classroom using the Padlet model had a lot of content validity. This was especially true when it came to making sure that the learning goals, teaching activities, and assessment indicators for practical competence and critical thinking all worked together. Experts also said that the learning sequences were very clear and that the communication assignments were very helpful for real-life EFL scenarios.

Table 1. Expert Validation of the Developed Model

Validation Aspect	V1	V2	V3	Mean	%	Category
Learning objectives alignment	5	4	5	4.67	93.4	Very valid
Pragmatic competence integration	4	5	5	4.67	93.4	Very valid
Critical thinking integration	4	4	5	4.33	86.6	Very valid
Flipped classroom design	5	5	4	4.67	93.4	Very valid
Padlet usability	5	5	4	4.67	93.4	Very valid
Overall				4.62	92.4	Very valid

Expert validation checks to see if the model that was made is good. The average score from experts was 4.62 (92.4%), which implies that the approach is very valid for matching learning goals, integrating practical skills, integrating critical thinking, developing a flipped classroom, and employing Padlet. Teachers and students who tried out the concept in real life said it was easy to use, flexible, and good for the classroom. Padlet makes it easier for kids to get to and take part.

Table 2. Lecturer practicality questionnaire results

Practicality Indicator	Mean	%	Category
Ease of implementation	4.60	92.0	Very practical
Instructional clarity	4.50	90.0	Very practical
Padlet flexibility	4.55	91.0	Very practical
Classroom suitability	4.55	91.0	Very practical
Overall	4.55	91.0	Very practical

The average score of 4.55 (91.0%) from lecturers shows that the model is extremely likely to function. This means that it is straightforward to use and effective for teaching. Responses from students (N = 32) about how beneficial the model is make it even more valuable. The students got an average score of 4.41 (88.2%), which suggests that the Flipped Classroom methods and Padlet-based activities were clear and made people want to join in.

Table 3. Student practicality questionnaire results (N = 32)

Practicality Indicator	Mean	%	Category
Instruction clarity	4.38	87.6	Very practical
Padlet ease of use	4.45	89.0	Very practical
Learning engagement	4.42	88.4	Very practical
Learning support	4.39	87.8	Very practical
Overall	4.41	88.2	Very practical

We made several small adjustments based on what experts and users said. These changes were mostly to make the task instructions easier to grasp, the prompts better at getting people to think, and the style of Padlet better for teaching. Before the model was completely used, these adjustments made it more useful and easier to grasp.

3. Lecturers' Perceptions of the Model's Adaptability

The limited dissemination stage was all about using the model for the first time and telling other people who were in the same circumstances about it. The outcomes from this phase indicate that the Flipped Classroom employing the Padlet model may be effectively implemented in a limited instructional setting, demonstrating a consistent instructional flow and positive classroom dynamics. Internal talks and small academic forums helped a lot of teachers understand more about the concept. This offered them a chance to give comments that was useful for their personal situations. Feedback gathered during limited diffusion revealed that the model was adaptable for diverse EFL courses while maintaining its core emphasis on pragmatic skills and critical thinking.

Table 4. Lecturers' Perceptions of the Model's Adaptability

Indicator	Mean	Percentage	Category
Suitability of the model for different courses	4.40	88%	Very suitable
Flexibility of activity implementation	4.35	87%	Very flexible
Consistency of focus on pragmatic competence	4.55	91%	Very consistent
Support for critical thinking development	4.50	90%	Very strong
Overall	4.45	89%	Very good

Table 5. Lecturers' Perceptions of the Model's Adaptability

Aspect	Summary of Feedback
Adaptability across EFL courses	The model was applicable to various EFL courses with minor contextual adjustments.
Instructional flexibility	Activities were flexible and adaptable to course needs and student levels.
Focus on pragmatic competence	Contextual language use and communicative intent remained central.
Support for critical thinking	Tasks promoted analysis, evaluation, and reflection.
Implementation constraints	Limited duration and sample size were noted.
Recommendations	Further large-scale dissemination and effectiveness testing were suggested.

4. **Effectiveness of the Flipped Classroom Model**

Pre-test and post-test design were used to see how well the developed model worked by measuring critical thinking and pragmatic ability. A Discourse Completion Task (DCT) was used to measure pragmatic competency. A paired-samples t-test confirms the statistical significance of this increase. The analysis in Table 5 yielded $t(31) = 9.47$, $p < .001$, with a notable effect size ($d = 1.67$), indicating the model's considerable effectiveness in enhancing pragmatic competence.

Table 6. Paired sample t-Test of DCT

Measure	Mean Diff.	SD	t	df	p	d
Pre–Post DCT	16.52	6.12	9.47	31	<.001	1.67

The model's use greatly improved pupils' ability to think critically. The average score went up from 63.12 on the pre-test to 80.45 on the post-test. The paired-samples t-test results show a statistically significant improvement in critical thinking, with $t(31) = 10.12$, $p < .001$, and a large effect size ($d = 1.79$).

Table 7. Paired sample t-Test of CT Test

Measure	Mean Diff.	SD	t	df	p	d
Pre–Post CT	17.33	5.87	10.12	31	<.001	1.79

Interviews with lecturers show that the methodology makes students more interested in learning, stimulates introspective and dialogic classroom interaction, and helps students make better judgments. Teachers said that Padlet made students more involved outside of class and worked for students who learned at different speeds. The students' views on the developed model support these results. Students gave a very positive overall response, with a mean score of 4.46 (89.2%). The best grades were for more pragmatic awareness, better ability to choose the right words, and better reflective learning using Padlet. This study confirms that a Flipped Classroom employing Padlet, methodically structured according to the 4D paradigm, can significantly improve pragmatic competence and critical thinking in EFL contexts. The results show that the Flipped Classroom only works as a teaching method when it is carefully connected with higher-order cognitive and communication goals, not just as a shift in procedure. Consistent with previous studies on flipped classrooms, the model fosters student engagement and communication development (Öztürk & Çakıroğlu, 2021).

D. CONCLUSION

This study aimed to develop and evaluate a Padlet-supported Flipped Classroom model to enhance EFL students' pragmatic competence and critical thinking in a higher education context. By employing the Four-D (4D) Research and Development framework, this study developed an instructional model that integrated pre-class preparation, interactive classroom activities, and post-class reflection through technology-mediated learning. The findings revealed that the developed Flipped Classroom model was valid, practical, and effective based on expert validation, lecturer and student responses, and learning assessments. The implementation of the model enabled students to apply language appropriately in contextual situations while promoting reflective engagement and critical thinking during learning activities. Furthermore, the findings indicate that the effectiveness of the model was supported by the alignment between learning objectives, pedagogical activities, and the use of Padlet as a digital learning platform that facilitated interaction, collaboration, and reflection.

Despite these findings, this study has several limitations. The research was conducted within a limited higher education context with specific participants, which may restrict the generalizability of the findings to other EFL learning contexts. In addition, the evaluation focused primarily on the immediate outcomes of the developed model; therefore, the long-term development of students' pragmatic competence and critical thinking remains unexplored. Future research is recommended to examine the sustained impact of the Flipped Classroom model on students' pragmatic development over a longer period. Further studies may also investigate the applicability of the model across different educational levels, learner characteristics, and pragmatic domains. Exploring the use of other digital platforms as alternative mediational tools may provide broader insights into the development of technology-enhanced EFL instruction.

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