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Fostering EFL Students' Pragmatic Competence Through Flipped-STAD Learning: A Study of ELT in an Islamic Higher Education Context

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ABSTRACT
This study investigated the impact of integrating Flipped Learning (FL) and Student Team Achievement Division (STAD) on the pragmatic competence of English as Foreign Language (EFL) students, with a particular focus on their pragmalinguistic competence related to making requests and refusals. Conducted in an Islamic higher education setting,

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this research addresses a gap in the existing literature, as the combined effect of FL and STAD on pragmatic competence remains underexplored. The study aimed to empirically assess the influence of this integrated pedagogical approach and examining students' perceptions of its effectiveness. The research gathered quantitative and qualitative data using a sequential explanatory mixed-methods design. Initially, quantitative data were collected from pre- and post-test scores using a two-group experimental design (experimental group N=28, control group N=28). Discourse Completion Tests (DCTs), focusing on requests and refusals, were employed to evaluate pragmatic competence. Subsequently, semi-structured interviews with eight students from experimental group were conducted to delve into their perceptions. ANCOVA statistical analysis revealed that the flipped-STAD group significantly outperformed the control group on post-test scores, demonstrating its effectiveness for enhancing pragmatic competence in requests and refusals. In contrast, the control group received traditional teacher-centred instruction, which limited opportunities for interactive pragmatic practice. This comparison between student-centred and teacher-centred methods might inherently favour the interactive approach. The findings from the Interviews indicated that students had positive perceptions of flipped-STAD for developing pragmalinguistic competence. Thus, flipped-STAD seems a promising strategy for enhancing pragmatic competence in EFL, offering educators with an effective method. However, further research is needed to compare it with other student-centred approaches.

Keywords: EFL Students, Flipped-STAD Learning, Pragmatic Competence, Sequential Explanatory Research

INTRODUCTION

The field of English Language Teaching (ELT) increasingly recognises the vital need to enhance pragmatic competence among English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners with a specific emphasis on their ability to make requests and refusals. Pragmatic competence involves using language appropriately in diverse social contexts and remains a significant challenge for many EFL students. Traditionally, EFL curricula have often prioritised grammatical accuracy over the practical use of language in context, which has created a gap between learners' linguistic knowledge and their ability to communicate effectively in real-world situations. This imbalance frequently leads to communication

breakdowns, underscoring that pragmatic competence is not merely an add-on but a fundamental bridge between linguistic knowledge and successful interaction. Addressing this long-standing deficiency in EFL pedagogy is now urgent.

To address the challenges in language learning, the flipped classroom model has emerged as a promising strategy that fosters a more engaging and student-centred environment. This model shifts direct instruction to out-of-class engagement with multimedia resources, freeing up valuable classroom time for interactive activities that reinforce and apply learned material, thereby promoting deeper understanding (Haghighi et al., 2019; Li et al., 2025). Complementing this, cooperative learning strategies like Student Team Achievement Division (STAD) are well-known for boosting collaborative skills and academic performance in language learning (Awada et al., 2020; Yuste, 2022). The strategic combination of these, termed Flipped-STAD, maximises student engagement and interaction, aiming to significantly enhance EFL learners' pragmatic competence through structured practice, peer interaction, hands-on activities, and immediate feedback. This approach leads to increased enthusiasm and cognitive engagement among students.

Despite these benefits, significant research gaps exist regarding the Flipped-STAD model on pragmatic competence, particularly within specific cultural and educational contexts. While existing studies have explored the effectiveness of flipped classrooms for practical skills development and STAD for collaborative skills, there is a notable lack of empirical evidence on how this integrated Flipped-STAD approach explicitly fosters pragmatic competence. Furthermore, this research's novelty is emphasised by its specific focus on Islamic higher education institutions in Indonesia, which present unique pedagogical and cultural nuances that are largely unexplored.

The integration of Flipped Learning (FL) and STAD offers a unique approach to enhancing pragmatic competence. FL allows students to prepare independently, dedicating class time to STAD's engaging and collaborative activities. This combination fosters a collaborative, practical, and personalised learning environment, significantly improving students' pragmatic competence through active participation. This study is pivotal in developing and validating an instructional model for

pragmatic development in EFL, providing valuable empirical evidence and practical recommendations for culturally responsive pedagogy. Thus, this research aims to answer: first, how does the Flipped-STAD model affect EFL learners' pragmatic competence? Second, what are EFL learners' perspectives on Flipped-STAD learning?

Flipped Learning

Flipped Learning (FL) is a pedagogical model that redefines the traditional classroom structure by requiring students to engage with learning materials, such as videos or readings, before class (Moreno-Guerrero et al., 2021). This preparatory work allows in-class time to be devoted to more in-depth activities, including discussions and problem-solving, fostering higher-order cognitive tasks (Moreno-Guerrero et al., 2021). The core of FL lies in balancing pre-class preparation with in-class interaction, promoting enriched communication and collaborative learning (Umar & Ko, 2022). Technology plays a vital role in delivering pre-class materials and facilitating student engagement outside the classroom, enabling students to review at their own pace and participate more actively (Huang et al., 2022). The success of FL relies on student participation in pre-class assignments and their active involvement in-class, supported by technology that provides access to resources and tasks beyond the traditional classroom boundaries (Polat & Karabatak, 2022). Pre-class activities, such as video tutorials, readings, and quizzes, are critical for building foundational knowledge to facilitate deeper in-class engagement (Makruf et al., 2021). By emphasising pre- and in-class activities, FL maximises learning time and enhances student readiness for complex tasks.

Student Team Achievement Division (STAD)

Student Team Achievement Division (STAD) is a cooperative learning technique often used in language education. However, its implementation can be challenging due to its complex procedures and connections to psychological, sociocultural, and cognitive apprenticeship theories (Balfakih, 2003; Dewi et al., 2020). Its core principles include team rewards, individual accountability, and equal opportunities for learning success (Jamaludin & Mokhtar, 2018; Slavin, 1978). In practice, STAD involves three phases: material orientation, team-based projects with peer correction and instructor feedback, and a final post-test (Ishtiaq

et al., 2017). The effectiveness of STAD is influenced by factors like students' prior knowledge, pre-test scores, and teaching quality (Shafiee Rad et al., 2022). Additionally, its efficiency can be significantly boosted by integrating technology, which has shown promise in improving English grammatical skills (Ishtiaq et al., 2017; Khan & Akhtar, 2017), as well as argumentative writing (Awada et al., 2020), and expository writing (Shafiee Rad et al., 2022).

Pragmatic Competence

Pragmatic competence (PC) refers to the ability to use language effectively and appropriately in diverse social settings, going beyond mere grammatical accuracy (Cenoz, 2015). It involves understanding non-literal meanings such as implicatures, presuppositions, and speech acts, all of which are essential for successful interaction (Taguchi, 2015). For example, grasping sarcasm requires accurate contextual interpretation. PC comprises elements like implicature, presupposition, speech acts, reference and deixis (linking language to context), and conversational rules (e.g., turn-taking) (Ishihara & Cohen, 2010). Cultural variations profoundly impact PC; what might be considered appropriate in one culture could be rude in another, underscoring the importance of cultural awareness (Spencer-Oatey, 2000). In professional settings, PC is vital for effective teamwork and negotiation. A lack of PC can result in communication breakdowns, especially in multilingual environments (Koike & Armstrong, 2007). Therefore, developing PC is essential for language acquisition, fostering overall social competence.

A key aspect of PC is pragmalinguistic competence (Thomas, 1983). Pragmalinguistic competence refers to the linguistic resources speakers use to convey meaning, focusing on how linguistic forms map to pragmatic functions. It includes choosing appropriate grammar and vocabulary for specific intentions (e.g., using "Could you possibly...?" to express politeness), understanding the pragmatic force of utterances, and knowing conventionalised phrases. Essentially, it is about the linguistic means for conveying pragmatic meanings. Failures in this area, known as pragmalinguistic failures, occur when language is grammatically correct but pragmatically inappropriate due to an incorrect linguistic choice for the intended function.

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The Synergy of Flipped Learning STAD

The Flipped Learning (FL) environment and the Student Team Achievement Division (STAD) model, while distinct in approach, converge in their student-centred, interaction-driven design that effectively supports the development of pragmatic competence (Nguyen & Kim, 2022; Wang & Liu, 2021). FL offers asynchronous pre-class exposure to authentic language use, enabling students to build foundational pragmatic knowledge, in-class sessions are then optimised for contextual application through discussions, role-plays, and collaborative tasks (García & Romero, 2020). STAD, on the other hand, promotes cooperative learning through structured group work that requires negotiation, peer support, and mutual understanding—key aspects of pragmatic communication (Li & Zhang, 2023). Although there are limited direct empirical studies linking STAD to pragmatic competence, its emphasis on social interaction and interpersonal skills suggests an indirect impact (Park & Lee, 2021). When integrated, FL's pre-class preparation complements STAD's collaborative in-class application, creating a synergistic learning environment rooted in sociocultural theory (Johnson & Smith, 2024). By engaging with content prior to group activities, students can interact more deeply with the material and subsequently hone their communicative skills. This integrated approach enhances both the linguistic and social aspects of pragmatic competence (Chen & Huang, 2022). Although research on this combination remains limited, the theoretical and practical alignment between FL and STAD indicates significant potential for fostering holistic communicative abilities that are essential for real-world interactions.

RESEARCH METHODS

Research Design

This study employed a sequential explanatory mixed-method design (Creswell, 2014), combining quantitative and qualitative data to explore the Flipped-STAD model's impact on EFL students' pragmatic competence. This mixed-method approach integrates statistical analysis with qualitative insights, enhancing study validity through triangulation (Košmerl, 2021). The quantitative phase involved statistical analysis,

preceding the qualitative phase, where exploration aided result interpretation (Ivankova et al., 2006; Yan, 2017). This design provides a comprehensive understanding of the model's effectiveness in improving pragmatic competence among EFL students in Islamic higher education.

Setting and Participants

The study was conducted at an Islamic higher education institution in Indonesia. A total of 56 EFL students participated, with 28 assigned to the experimental group receiving Flipped-STAD instruction, and 28 in the control group receiving traditional teacher-centred instruction. The experimental group engaged in flipped lessons at home followed by cooperative learning in class, while the control group received conventional lectures. Furthermore, eight students from the experimental group were interviewed to gain insights into their experiences with Flipped-STAD. These eight students were purposefully selected as the sample was deemed sufficient, and data saturation had been reached.

Instruments and Procedures of Data Collection

Data collection was conducted using two methods: a Discourse Completion Test (DCT) and semi-structured interviews. The DCT, which included eight items focused on requesting speech acts, was designed to assess students' pragmatic competence and was scored using Taguchi's (2011) rubric, with a maximum score of 40 points. Additionally, semi-structured interviews took place with eight experimental group students to explore their engagement with flipped lessons and cooperative learning. The data collection process spanned 12 meetings, including pre- and post-tests using the DCT as well as the intervention that implemented the Flipped-STAD model.

Table 1. Request Appropriate Rubric (Taguchi, 2006)

Rating	Score	Criteria
Completely appropriate	5	- The request expressions are entirely appropriate based on the provided contextual situations - The request expressions are free of grammatical mistakes
Mostly appropriate	4	- The request expressions are almost suitable

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Rating	Score	Criteria
		- The request expressions comprise a small number of grammatical mistakes, but are still understandable
Generally appropriate	3	- The request expressions are somehow acceptable - The request expressions comprise several grammatical mistakes
Not very appropriate, but acceptable	2	- The request expressions are not appropriate because of grammatical mistakes
Not appropriate and not acceptable	1	- The request expressions are not understandable because of wrong responses and heavy grammatical mistakes - No request expressions are produced

Data Analysis

Quantitative data analysed using SPSS (including descriptive statistics and ANCOVA), examined the impact of the Flipped-STAD model on pragmatic competence while controlling for pre-existing differences. The qualitative interview data were thematically analysed, revealing student perceptions. Notably, these qualitative findings largely corroborated the positive statistical results, demonstrating overwhelmingly positive student responses and no major contradictions. Rather than conflicting with the quantitative outcomes, the qualitative insights enriched the findings by providing nuanced explanations and real-world examples of how the model impacted learning. This integrated approach provides a comprehensive understanding of the model's effectiveness in enhancing pragmatic competence within the context of Islamic higher education.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Impact of Flipped-STAD Learning on EFL Learners' Pragmatic Competence

Table 2 presents the results of descriptive statistics for the EFL learners' pre- and post-test scores on pragmatic competence. The data from these tests provided initial evidence of the effectiveness of the

flipped-STAD instructional approach in enhancing students' pragmatic competence. At the pre-test stage, both the experimental group (M = 22.18, SD = 5.79) and the control group (M = 20.07, SD = 6.09) demonstrated comparable performance levels, indicating a balanced starting point before the intervention. This initial similarity is crucial, as it ensures that any observed differences in the post-test scores can be attributed to the treatment rather than pre-existing disparities. Additionally, the normal distribution of scores across both groups at the pre-test stage supports the validity of subsequent parametric analyses.

Following the intervention, the experimental group showed a notable increase in mean performance (M = 28.18, SD = 4.86), outperforming the control group (M = 23.57, SD = 5.08). This improvement indicates a gain in pragmatic competence among students who experienced the flipped-STAD learning model. The reduced variability in the experimental group's post-test scores suggests that the instructional approach helped students achieve more consistent learning outcomes. These findings suggest that flipped-STAD learning fosters deeper engagement and collaborative learning, resulting in greater improvements in pragmatic competence compared to traditional instruction. As such, the descriptive results align with the overall aim of this study, further reinforcing the potential of flipped-STAD as an effective pedagogical strategy in EFL and Islamic higher education contexts.

Table 2. Results of Descriptive Statistics of Pre- and Post-test Scores

Group	Test	N	Mean	Std. Dev	Std. Error	Min	Max	Skewness	Kurtosis
Experimental	Pre-test	28	22.18	5.79	1.09	12	32	-0.19	-1.23
Control	Pre-test	28	20.07	6.09	1.15	12	32	0.35	-1.06
Experimental	Post-test	28	28.18	4.86	0.92	18	38	-0.14	-0.82
Control	Post-test	28	23.57	5.08	0.96	15	32	0.14	-1.06

Furthermore, to determine whether the flipped-STAD instructional model significantly impacted students' pragmatic competence, an ANCOVA was performed. In this analysis, the post-test

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scores served as the dependent variable, the group (experimental vs. control) was the independent variable, and the pre-test scores were included as the covariate (see Table 2). The use of ANCOVA was appropriate for controlling initial differences in pragmatic competence and isolating the effect of the instructional treatment. Assumption testing confirmed that the data met the required conditions of normality, homogeneity of variances, and homogeneity of regression slopes.

The ANCOVA results revealed a statistically significant effect of the instructional method on post-test scores after adjusting for pre-test performance, $F(1, 53) = 10.25$, $p = .002$, with a partial eta squared of .162, indicating a moderate effect size. This finding showed that flipped-STAD learning approach significantly improved students' pragmatic competence beyond what could be attributed by their initial ability levels. In contrast, the control group, which received conventional instruction, demonstrated smaller gains. These findings confirm the effectiveness of the flipped-STAD model and support its implementation as a teaching strategy to enhance pragmatic competence among EFL learners in Islamic higher education settings.

Table 3. Analysis of Covariance on the Post-test Scores of the Experimental and Control Groups

Source	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Score	F	Sig.	Partial η^2
Group	120.85	1	120.85	10.25	.002	.162
Pre-test	830.12	1	830.12	70.45	.000	.571
Error	625.34	53	11.80			
Total	-	56	-			

The findings of this study provide empirical evidence supporting the effectiveness of flipped-STAD learning in enhancing EFL learners' pragmatic competence in an Islamic higher education context. After controlling for pre-test scores, the ANCOVA results indicated that the experimental group significantly surpassed the control group in the post-test. The descriptive statistics further reinforced this conclusion by showing higher mean gains and decreased variability in the experimental group. These results suggest that the combination of the student-centred structure of the flipped classroom with the collaborative, accountability-driven framework of STAD can generate meaningful gains in learners'

ability to use language in socially and culturally appropriate ways. The result aligns with previous studies showcasing the positive impact of flipped learning on pragmatic skills and supports the notion that the flipped-STAD model can help learners achieve more confident and contextually accurate language use.

Islamic higher education institutions often emphasise character building, interpersonal ethics, and religiously informed communication (Hasan, K., Abdullah, & Ahyar, 2024). These values closely aligned with pragmatic competence. The flipped-STAD learning model enhances student autonomy and active participation while promoting collaborative learning, critical reflection, and constructive peer feedback—principles consistent with Islamic educational values (Alfurqan et al., 2024; Romanyshyn & Freiuk, 2024). As demonstrated in this study, the model created an interactive environment in which learners engage in meaningful language practice while receiving immediate social reinforcement from peers, reflecting the social nature of pragmatic development. Furthermore, the model responds to the call for innovative pedagogies that support the development of communicative and intercultural competence among Muslim learners, especially in contexts where English is taught not merely as a subject, but as a tool for dawah, scholarship, and global engagement (Makruf et al., 2021).

Critically, these findings highlight the necessity of a pedagogical shift in EFL instruction at Islamic universities. For effective pragmatic development, traditional teacher-centred approaches—though valuable for foundational grammar and reading instruction—often lack sufficient opportunities for interactional input and feedback (Maharsi et al., 2021; Thu Bui, 2016). Flipped-STAD model offers a solution by integrating asynchronous content delivery with cooperative in-class learning tasks that foster deeper pragmatic awareness. However, challenges such as students' digital literacy, access to technology, and readiness for self-regulated learning must be addressed to ensure successful implementation (Jamshed et al., 2024). Moreover, instructors need pedagogical training that supports flipped-STAD principles and aligns with institutional values and the socio-cultural identities of the learners. Given that the research followed a mixed-methods sequential explanatory design (Ivankova et al., 2006; Fetters et al., 2013), the integration of

qualitative interview data further strengthens the conclusion that flipped-STAD not only improved students' language competence but also positively influenced their perceptions of language learning. These insights highlight the need for institutional support, curriculum alignment, and ongoing professional development to sustain pedagogical innovation in Islamic EFL classrooms (Lestari, 2025; Peters & Fàbregues, 2024).

Students' Perceptions of Flipped-STAD Learning in Fostering EFL Learners' Pragmatic Competence

To explore students' perceptions of the flipped-STAD learning model in fostering pragmatic competence, semi-structured interviews were conducted with eight participants from the experimental group. The qualitative data were analysed thematically, generating key themes and sub-themes that reflect the students' experiences and evaluations of the learning process (see Table 4).

Table 4. Summary of semi-structured interview findings

Theme	Sub-theme	Description
Positive Attitudes Toward Flipped-STAD Learning	Willingness to adopt a new learning approach	Students expressed enthusiasm in experiencing an innovative method that combined a flipped classroom and collaborative learning through STAD.
	Increased motivation and engagement	The majority found the method engaging and enjoyable, noting that learning through flipped-STAD was more interesting than traditional classes.
	Enjoyment in learning through real-life language contexts	Students appreciated pragmatic tasks that reflected authentic language use in social situations.
Perceived Improvement in Pragmatic Competence	Increased awareness of language use in social interactions	Learners reported becoming more aware of using English appropriately in different contexts (e.g., making requests, refusing politely, expressing thanks).

Theme	Sub-theme	Description
Benefits of Flipped Learning for Independent Study	Enhanced ability to communicate appropriately	Several participants felt more confident and competent in expressing themselves during role-plays and group tasks.
	Encouragement of self-directed learning	Students reported that they took on greater responsibility for class preparation by utilising video materials and online resources.
	Flexibility in accessing learning materials	The flipped format allowed them to review materials at their own pace, which helped them understand pragmatic expressions better.
	Better preparation for in-class interaction	Learners felt more ready to participate in team discussions and perform tasks after reviewing materials before class.
Collaboration and Peer Learning in STAD Activities	Peer support in pragmatic tasks	Students highlighted that team members supported each other in understanding and practicing pragmatic functions.
	Confidence through teamwork	Working in groups helped shy or less proficient students gain confidence through modelling and encouragement.
	Productive discussions for mutual learning	Learners valued the role of peer feedback in refining their language use in group tasks.

The findings from the qualitative phase, which involved semi-structured interviews with eight students in the experimental group, revealed overall positive perceptions of the flipped-STAD learning model in fostering pragmatic competence, especially in pragmalinguistic skills related to making requests and refusals. The data yielded five major themes: (1) students' attitudes toward flipped-STAD learning, (2) perceived improvement in pragmatic competence, (3) the role of flipped learning in supporting autonomy, and (4) the impact of STAD on collaboration and teamwork. The students shared their evaluative experiences, highlighting how the method supported their engagement, language development, and confidence.

Regarding students' attitudes, many expressed curiosity and enjoyment toward the flipped-STAD approach. One student shared,

> *"At first, I thought it would be difficult and unfamiliar, but after trying the pre-class videos and discussions, enjoyed it. It helped me understand the topic before class."* (S1, S8)

Another student added,

> *"I like watching videos at home and doing group tasks in class. It's more active, not boring like a regular lecture."* (S2, S6)

Regarding pragmatic competence, students felt they had more exposure to real-world language use. As one student put it,

> *"I learned how to refuse politely and how to express thanks appropriately. We practised real situations like talking to a teacher or making a request."* (S1, S5, S7)

Flipped learning also encouraged student autonomy and preparation. Several students emphasised the flexibility of accessing pre-class materials. One student reflected,

> *"I watched the video before class and took notes. It helped me feel more ready to speak with my classmates."* Another student said, *"Sometimes I watched the materials twice, especially when I didn't understand certain expressions. It made me feel more confident."* (S4, S6)

In addition, STAD-based group work provided a safe space for collaboration and peer support. A student shared,

> *"Working in teams helped me improve. When I didn't know how to say something, my friend helped me. The next time, I could do it by myself."* (S5, S7)

Another stated,

> *"My group was very supportive. We gave each other feedback during role plays. It made learning more enjoyable."* (S1, S6)

The flipped-STAD model was largely perceived by students as effective and well-suited to their English learning objectives. They appreciated how the model aligned with their values as learners in an Islamic higher education setting, emphasising respect, cooperation, and responsibility. As one student concluded,

"This method not only improved my English, but also taught me to respect time, be responsible, and support others." (S3, S7)

Another student added,

"I hope more classes use this kind of learning. It helps us become better at English and also better students." (S2, S8)

The participants' reflections suggest that flipped-STAD learning provided meaningful, culturally relevant, and pedagogically effective experiences for enhancing pragmatic competence in an EFL context.

The qualitative findings of this study provided more profound insights into students' experiences with the flipped-STAD model, complementing the statistical evidence of its effectiveness in improving pragmatic competence. Students in the experimental group expressed positive attitudes toward this learning method, reporting that flipped-STAD made classroom learning more engaging, meaningful, and contextually relevant. Many highlighted the benefits of preparing with pre-class materials and engaging in structured team discussions and role-plays. Their perceptions in line with the findings of Haghighi et al. (2019) and Hazaymeh and Altakhaineh (2019), who found that flipped instruction enables more meaningful use of class time and allows for practising speech acts in social contexts. The combination of autonomous pre-class learning and cooperative in-class tasks supported deeper pragmatic awareness and production, reinforcing the idea that pedagogical designs that simulate real-world interaction are essential for developing EFL learners' pragmatic competence (Makruf et al., 2021; Li et al., 2025).

Notably, the flipped-STAD model also appeared to foster self-directed learning and personal accountability among students, which are critical competencies in higher education. Several interviewees shared how pre-class video viewing and task preparation increased their responsibility and reduced anxiety in team activities. This finding is consistent with Alfurqan et al. (2024), who argue that flipped classrooms empower pre-service teachers to become more self-regulated learners by encouraging flexible access to materials and proactive knowledge building. Similarly, Romanyshyn and Freiuk (2024) emphasis that flipped pedagogy enhances learner autonomy and communicative competence by

promoting ownership of learning. In the context of Islamic universities, where education often integrates values of discipline, reflection, and peer cooperation, flipped-STAD aligns well with these broader educational aims. Students also appreciated for the respectful and collaborative nature of team learning, which resonates with the Islamic educational ethos of mutual support and collective improvement. These findings indicated that flipped-STAD supports language development while also cultivating learner traits that align with faith-based higher education objectives.

Nevertheless, the qualitative data also point to considerations that must inform future implementation. While students generally responded positively, several reported initial confusion and time-management challenges related to pre-class preparation. These concerns are similar to those raised by Jamshed et al. (2024), who noted that flipped learning might be challenging for students who are unaccustomed to managing their learning outside the classroom. Zainuddin (2017) similarly found that the success of flipped learning in Indonesian EFL contexts often depends on learners' digital literacy and institutional support. In this study, participants overcame initial barriers through team collaboration and encouragement, suggesting that the STAD component is critical in supporting learners who may otherwise struggle with the demands of flipped learning. Therefore, while flipped-STAD shows strong promise, its success depends on adequate scaffolding, orientation, and the teacher's ability to manage group dynamics effectively. As emphasised by Peters and Fàbregues (2024) and Lestari (2025), the successful integration of technology-enhanced pedagogies in language education requires thoughtful instructional design, alignment with learners' needs, and a commitment from institutions.

CONCLUSION

This study significantly advances sociocultural and cooperative learning theories in applied linguistics. The findings derived from ANCOVA provide empirical evidence that the Flipped-STAD model effectively enhances the pragmatic competence of EFL learners. This result illustrates how sociocultural principles—facilitated through self-paced flipped learning and socially mediated STAD interactions—foster

the internalisation of pragmatic norms within a Zone of Proximal Development. Moreover, it emphasises that cooperative learning provides authentic, collaborative environments for practising pragmatic functions and receiving constructive peer feedback. By integrating these theories, the study offers a robust framework for designing effective learning environments that bridge individual learning with social interaction, thereby cultivating pragmatic competence in EFL contexts. Descriptive data indicated that the experimental group experienced greater gains with less variability, thereby reinforcing both the model's effectiveness and equitable student outcomes. These findings further corroborated by qualitative data obtained from semi-structured interviews, in which students described the flipped-STAD model as engaging, motivating, and effective in developing their pragmatic competence. Participants valued the opportunity to engage in independent preparation, collaborate in teams, and receive peer feedback—elements that resonate closely with Islamic educational values such as discipline, cooperation, and mutual respect. The integration of flipped learning with STAD appears particularly well-suited to the Islamic university context, as it nurtures academic competence and ethical learner behaviour. Collectively, the findings support the adoption of flipped-STAD learning as a promising strategy for enhancing pragmatic competence in EFL classrooms within faith-based institutions.

Despite its promising outcomes, this research is not without limitations. The sample size was relatively small and restricted to a single Islamic university, which may limit the generalisability of the findings to broader populations or other educational settings. Additionally, the study focused solely on short-term learning outcomes without examining long-term retention or transfer of pragmatic competence beyond the classroom setting. From a methodological perspective, while the mixed-methods design facilitated rich interpretation, the qualitative phase involved only eight participants, which, although insightful, may not fully capture the diversity of student experiences. Future research should consider expanding the sample size and involving multiple institutions to strengthen the external validity of the findings. This study addresses unique contexts within Islamic higher education in Indonesia by focusing on EFL learners within this setting. The success of the Flipped-STAD

model, particularly in enhancing politeness strategies in request and refusals, aligns with communal values frequently found in Indonesian Islamic culture. The findings are partially transferable; while the core model holds wide applicability, its specific positive reception and pragmatic nuances may necessitate cultural adaptations in diverse educational or cultural settings.

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APPENDIX

Appendix A (Sample of pre-test and post-test question – Discourse Completion Test)

Situation 1

The clock is pointed at 10 AM. You are still working with your school project that should be submitted tomorrow morning. A new neighbour whose age is about you is playing music very loudly and you are disturbed since you cannot concentrate on your project. You want him to lower down the music volume. **What would you say?**

_____
_____

Situation 2

You are having a dinner at a restaurant with your family. You realize that you are out of water. At the same time, you see a waiter passes in front of your table and you want the waiter to give you more water. **What will you say?**

_____
_____

The complete DCT is available upon request

Appendix B (Interview protocol)

1. What are your thoughts on the application of Flipped-integrated STAD learning in your class?
2. How was your learning experience in English class this semester? Describe it and share your opinion.
3. Do you like the way your instructor teaches you using this method? Which was your favourite part? Explain in detail.
4. What do you think about the tasks and activities in the Flipped-STAD integrated learning? Please explain.
5. Can you describe how you worked with your teammates as well as built relationship during the learning process?
6. Were your teammates helpful while you were working together? Please explain to what extent they were helpful.
7. What problems/challenges did you encounter while learning under the Flipped-integrated STAD approach?