

HEUTAGOGY FOR TEACHING ACADEMIC WRITING IN ISLAMIC HIGHER EDUCATION CONTEXTS

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ABSTRACT

The growing attention paid to learner autonomy in higher education has led to interest in alternative pedagogical frameworks like heutagogy, which advocates for self-determined learning and the development of reflective capability. Nonetheless, actual studies investigating the implementation of heutagogy in academic writing training are limited, especially within the Islamic higher education context. This study examines the comprehension and application of heutagogical principles in academic writing training at a state Islamic higher education institution in eastern Indonesia. A qualitative case study design was utilized, with data gathered through semi-structured interviews with four lecturers and twenty-four undergraduate students, classroom observations, and document analysis over six months. Thematic analysis identified five interrelated themes: diverse interpretations of heutagogy, conflicts between institutional traditions and pedagogical innovation, inconsistent student readiness for self-determined learning, the impact of instructor agency and professional experience, and the contribution of digital technologies to facilitating autonomous writing practices. The findings indicate that although a heutagogical approach promotes reflective learning and learner autonomy, its application is influenced by institutional norms, students' previous educational experiences, and lecturers' pedagogical beliefs. The research illustrates the impact of culturally rooted principles and institutional customs on the implementation of learner-centered pedagogies in Islamic higher education, emphasizing the necessity for pedagogical scaffolding and professional development to foster learner autonomy in academic writing instruction.

Keywords: Academic Writing, Heutagogy, Learner Autonomy, Islamic Higher Education, Self-Determined Learning

INTRODUCTION

Academic writing is an essential element of higher education, functioning as the primary medium by which students develop knowledge, exhibit discipline and comprehension, and engage in scholarly discourse. Nonetheless, some university students continue to deal with considerable difficulties in developing proficient academic writing skills. These challenges frequently include a lack of exposure to academic discourse guidelines, difficulties in structuring complex arguments, and insufficient involvement with critical thinking processes. Studies on academic literacy indicate that writing in higher education surpasses mere technical skill; it is a socially contextualized practice influenced by academic expectations and institutional cultures (Lea & Street, 1998). In English as a Foreign Language (EFL)

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circumstances, writing is regarded as one of the most challenging language skills, necessitating learners to plan, organize, and modify ideas through complex cognitive processes (Tupalessy et al., 2024).

Despite the significance of academic writing, pedagogical approaches in numerous higher education settings predominantly remain teacher-centered, prioritizing the dissemination of knowledge and compliance with standard practices. In these circumstances, students are frequently required to follow rigid writing guidelines instead of actively participating in inquiry, reflection, and autonomous knowledge creation. Wingate (2015) contends that conventional methodologies often neglect the epistemological aspects of academic writing, causing students to focus on surface elements like language and organization instead of engaging more profoundly with concepts and arguments. Consequently, students may develop a reliance on specific instructions and patterns, thereby hindering their critical thinking, creativity, and autonomy as learners. These constraints have stimulated growing interest in alternative teaching approaches that promote more active and self-determined learning.

A pedagogical framework that has attracted increasing attention in modern educational discourse is heutagogy, or self-determined learning. Heutagogy, first developed by Hase and Kenyon (2000), builds upon andragogy by highlighting learner autonomy, capability development, and continuous improvement. In contrast to conventional pedagogical approaches that prioritize the instructor in the instructional process, heutagogy empowers learners as proactive agents responsible for determining learning objectives, choosing resources, and assessing their own progress. This learner-centered methodology fosters autonomy, adaptability, and critical thinking, which are vital skills in the rapidly evolving educational environment (Newfield, 2025; Singh & Sisodia, 2024).

The theoretical foundations of heutagogy are intimately linked to the concepts of self-directed and self-regulated learning. Zimmerman's (2000) theory of self-regulated learning underscores the significance of metacognitive strategies, goal setting, and reflective practice in enabling learners to control their own learning processes. Likewise, Bandura's (1997) social cognitive theory emphasizes the significance of self-efficacy in influencing learners' motivation and performance. These theoretical approaches correspond with heutagogical concepts by highlighting learner autonomy, reflective practice, and capability development. In technology-enhanced learning environments, these principles are more pertinent as digital platforms facilitate flexible learning pathways and empower students to assume greater control over their learning experiences (Gillaspy & Vasilica, 2021).

Recent empirical studies demonstrated the efficacy of heutagogical approaches in facilitating significant learning outcomes. Research indicates that heutagogical learning environments promote reflective learning, self-regulation, and metacognitive awareness in students. Experimental investigations further reveal that learners exposed to heutagogical instruction demonstrate improved learning outcomes, greater independence, and stronger engagement with learning activities compared to those taught by conventional approaches (Setyoningrum, 2025). Moreover, bibliometric analyses indicate a rapidly increasing corpus of research on heutagogy across several disciplines, underscoring its significance in promoting learner autonomy and lifelong learning in modern higher education (Kardiyem et al., 2025).

The integration of heutagogical principles may be influenced by the cultural and institutional contexts of teaching and learning. Islamic higher education institutions embody a unique educational atmosphere where academic instruction is frequently integrated with religious principles, institutional customs, and hierarchical teacher-student dynamics. Although Islamic educational philosophy prioritizes lifelong learning, ethical transparency, and intellectual reflection, instructional methodologies in several institutions still reflect conventional teacher-centered approaches. Recent research suggests that heutagogical principles can facilitate the development of reflective and autonomous learners in Islamic educational contexts; their use demands careful alignment with cultural and institutional norms (Yulistiawati et al., 2025).

In the Indonesian higher education setting, initiatives to advance learner-centered approaches have intensified due to broad educational changes prioritizing critical thinking, creativity, and student autonomy. Nonetheless, the execution of such approaches remains inconsistent among organizations. Research on EFL education in Indonesian institutions indicates that cultural norms, hierarchical classroom dynamics, and lecturer-centric teaching practices may affect the implementation of new pedagogies like heutagogy (Friska et al., 2021). Furthermore, studies on the growth of Indonesian EFL teachers underscore the influence of contextual elements such as institutional regulations, cultural values, and professional experiences on teaching practices (Rustandi et al., 2025).

Despite the increasing interest in heutagogy within higher education, empirical studies investigating its application in academic writing instruction are scarce, especially in Islamic higher education contexts where institutional traditions and cultural values may affect the adoption of learner-centered pedagogies. This study investigates the application of heutagogical principles in academic writing teaching at an Islamic higher education institution in Indonesia. The study specifically seeks to analyze how lecturers and students perceive self-determined learning in academic writing, identify the challenges and opportunities linked to the implementation of heutagogical approaches, and explore how these practices may foster learner autonomy in academic writing courses.

METHODS

This research employed a qualitative case study methodology to examine the comprehension and implementation of heutagogical principles in academic writing instruction within an Islamic higher education context. A case study methodology was chosen due to the research's concentration on a singular institutional environment, aiming to thoroughly investigate pedagogical practices, student experiences, and contextual factors. Qualitative case studies enable researchers to analyze intricate educational phenomena inside their actual contexts, rendering them especially appropriate for exploring instructional practices and learner experiences in higher education settings (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

The study was carried out in a public Islamic higher education institution in eastern Indonesia that provides undergraduate programs in English language education, with academic writing as a fundamental aspect of the curriculum. The institution embodies a learning environment where conventional educational methods engage with innovative learner-centered pedagogies. This environment offers a pertinent context for analyzing the interpretation and implementation of heutagogical concepts, specifically learner autonomy, reflective learning, and self-determined learning, within academic writing teaching.

The study recruited 28 participants, comprising four lecturers of academic writing courses and 24 undergraduate students in the English Language Education program. Participants were chosen by purposive sampling to guarantee the inclusion of individuals with direct experience in academic writing instruction in the study. The lecturer participants possessed three to fifteen years of teaching experience and held postgraduate degrees in English education, applied linguistics, or similar disciplines. The student participants were in their second or third year of study and had completed a minimum of one academic writing course. The participants exhibited diverse educational experiences, encompassing students from both urban and rural regions, thus offering a range of viewpoints on learner autonomy and writing practices.

Data were gathered over a six-month duration employing three qualitative methodologies: semi-structured interviews, classroom observations, and document analysis. Semi-structured interviews were performed with all lecturer participants and a selection of student participants to investigate their perspectives on learner autonomy, experiences in academic writing instruction, and opinions on the application of heutagogical approaches. Each lecturer engaged in two interview sessions, each lasting around 60 to 90 minutes, whereas student interviews concentrated on their experiences with writing assignments,

autonomous learning, and classroom participation. All interviews were audio-recorded with the participants' consent and subsequently transcribed for analysis.

Alongside interviews, six classroom observation sessions were undertaken to analyze how teaching methodologies and student interactions embodied heutagogical principles. The classes seen were conducted by the lecturer participants engaged in the study. Observations concentrated on pedagogical approaches, classroom interaction dynamics, feedback methodologies, and avenues for student autonomy in writing tasks. Field notes were recorded during each session to document descriptive reports of classroom occurrences and reflective observations on the incorporation of learner-centered approaches. In addition to the interview and observation data, an analysis of documents was performed on instructional materials, encompassing course syllabi, lesson plans, writing assignment rules, and selected anonymised student writing samples. The materials were examined to assess the extent of integration of heutagogical principles, including learner autonomy, reflective learning activities, and flexible learning pathways, within the academic writing curriculum.

The gathered data were examined by thematic analysis in accordance with the six-step methodology established by Braun and Clarke (2006), which encompasses familiarization with the data, generation of initial codes, identification of themes, review of themes, definition of themes, and compilation of the final report. A hybrid coding methodology was employed, wherein deductive codes were initially extracted from fundamental concepts in heutagogical theory, including learner autonomy, capability development, and reflective learning, while supplementary inductive codes arose from participants' narratives and observed classroom practices. The coding procedure was aided by NVivo software to enable systematic organizing and comparison of interview transcripts, observational notes, and document data.

Several strategies were employed to guarantee the reliability and validity of the results. Data triangulation was accomplished by contrasting information from interviews, classroom observations, and document analysis. Member verification involved disseminating summaries of interview interpretations to chosen participants to validate the precision of the researchers' analyses. An audit trail recording coding decisions and analytical techniques was preserved to improve the transparency and reliability of the analysis. Ethical approval for the project was acquired from the appropriate institutional review board, and informed consent was obtained from all participants before data collection commenced. Participants' identities were safeguarded by employing anonymized codes (e.g., L1–L4 for lecturers and S1–S24 for students), and all data were handled with confidentiality during the research process.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The thematic analysis of interviews, classroom observations, and instructional papers produced five interrelated themes that demonstrate the comprehension and use of heutagogical ideas in academic writing teaching. These themes highlight the complex relationship among educational innovation, institutional frameworks, learner readiness, and the socio-cultural setting of Islamic higher education. The results are analyzed in conjunction with pertinent literature to emphasize both alignments with prior research and contextual discoveries arising from the current situation.

Varied Understandings of Heutagogy in Writing Instruction

A significant finding refers to the diverse interpretations of self-determined learning in academic writing training by lecturers and students. Although lecturers always recognized the significance of student liberty, their interpretations varied markedly. Two lecturers exhibited a profound comprehension of heutagogy as a learning paradigm that prioritizes capability development, reflective inquiry, and learner autonomy in the educational process. Conversely, other lecturers often construed autonomy more restrictively, viewing it as students accomplishing tasks independently without ongoing teacher supervision.

Excerpt 1

L1: "Students should be the ones designing their learning paths. But when it comes to writing, most still wait for models or structures. It's hard for them to see writing as a personal inquiry rather than just another task to complete."

(Interview transcript, May 2024)

This assertion underscores a fundamental obstacle in applying heutagogical principles in academic writing courses. Despite encouragement for students to assume responsibility for their learning, many continue to depend significantly on formal instruction and established frameworks. This dependence indicates students' previous educational experiences in teacher-centered settings, where writing instruction predominantly focuses on the copying of established formats rather than on exploratory or reflective research.

From a heutagogical standpoint, writing exceeds a basic technical task; it is a reflective and iterative process that fosters the development of learners' intellectual voice and critical thinking skills. However, when students are accustomed to highly regulated teaching methods, they may initially view open-ended writing assignments as ambiguous or precarious. Consequently, students may favor explicitly outlined models and sequential instructions, even in the presence of opportunity for independence.

Likewise, numerous students perceived autonomy solely as independent work instead of participating in more profound reflective learning processes.

Excerpt 2

S12: "I feel more comfortable when the lecturer gives us examples and tells us how to write step-by-step. If we have to decide by ourselves, I'm afraid I'll make mistakes."

(Interview transcript, May 2024)

This assertion indicates that autonomy in writing education may be regarded as a source of ambiguity for certain students. The worry of committing errors could discourage students from innovating ideas or investigating their personal writing techniques. In these instances, learners may favor structured guidance as it establishes explicit expectations and mitigates the perceived risks linked to autonomous decision-making.

These viewpoints suggest that the notion of self-determined learning is only partially comprehended by both instructors and learners. In several cases, autonomy was predominantly understood as procedural independence, exemplified by the ability to do tasks without direct teacher oversight, rather than as a process of cultivating reflective capabilities. In a heutagogical framework, autonomy entails more than mere freedom; it includes learners' capacity to establish learning objectives, assess their advancement, and modify their techniques through continuous reflection.

This finding corresponds with studies indicating that heutagogy demands a fundamental transition from competence-based instruction to capability building, wherein learners actively construct their own learning trajectories and cultivate the ability to apply information in novel contexts (Hase & Kenyon, 2000). Blaschke (2012) similarly underscores that heutagogical learning environments promote self-reflection, critical inquiry, and collaborative knowledge building, rather than just replicating existing academic traditions.

Without explicit pedagogical modelling and scaffolding, students may encounter difficulties in shifting from structured instruction to more autonomous learning practices. Lecturers thus play a crucial role in progressively implementing reflective learning activities, such as journal writing, peer feedback sessions, and iterative drafting procedures, that assist students in cultivating confidence in overseeing their own learning processes.

These findings indicate that the implementation of heutagogical approaches in academic writing necessitates both conceptual clarity and pedagogical support. Establishing a mutual

comprehension of learner autonomy between lecturers and students is essential for promoting reflective and self-determined writing habits in higher education settings.

Tensions Between Institutional Tradition and Pedagogical Innovation

Another theme identified in the data refers to the conflict between institutional traditions and the adoption of learner-centered pedagogies. Lecturers established institutional expectations that prioritize regulated writing formats, established assessment standards, and hierarchical teaching frameworks. These institutional methods frequently reflect persistent academic standards that emphasize regulated writing formats and instructor-led teaching.

Excerpt 3

L3: "When I asked students to write reflective journals instead of structured essays, the department questioned whether that was still considered academic writing."

(Interview transcript, June 2024)

This statement underscores the institutional drive to maintain traditional academic writing paradigms, which may constrain educational innovation. Despite lecturers' intention in incorporating more reflective and learner-centered writing processes, institutional expectations concerning academic standards occasionally limited the degree to which these innovations could be executed. Reflective writing activities, frequently employed to enhance metacognitive awareness and learner autonomy, were sometimes regarded as less academically demanding than conventional essay-based tasks.

These data indicate that academic writing instruction in higher education is influenced by both pedagogical ideologies and institutional standards of genuine academic writing. Consequently, lecturers striving to adopt heutagogical approaches frequently had to balance the promotion of student independence with the fulfillment of institutional requirements for standardized academic writing.

Students also acknowledged the conflict between autonomy and institutional expectations.

Excerpt 4

S3: "Sometimes when the lecturer gives us too much freedom, many of us get confused. We are not sure what the expectations are."

(Interview transcript, June 2024)

The previous example note highlights a significant problem related to the implementation of student-centered approaches. Heutagogical approaches prioritize flexibility and learner autonomy; nonetheless, students familiar with organized learning environments may initially feel anxious when confronted with open-ended activities. In the absence of clearly delineated expectations or guidelines, heightened autonomy may result in confusion instead of empowerment.

The findings indicate that effective implementation of heutagogical learning requires a careful balance between flexibility and structure. In academic writing teaching, achieving this balance may necessitate the provision of explicit evaluation criteria, organized writing norms, and incremental learning tasks that progressively foster student autonomy. These scaffolding tactics assist students in transitioning to more self-determined environments while preserving clarity on academic expectations.

The tension observed in this study reflects wider debates in higher education concerning the incorporation of innovative teaching methods within conventional academic frameworks. Prior studies have indicated that universities frequently encounter difficulties in harmonizing

established academic traditions with new learner-centered pedagogies that prioritize autonomy, reflection, and collaborative learning (Wingate, 2015).

Recent research indicates that efforts to implement novel writing pedagogies often lead to hybrid instructional models that merge traditional teacher-centered approaches with student-centered practices (Friska et al., 2021). In hybrid methodologies, educators may integrate reflective writing, peer evaluation, and topic adaptability while preserving rigid assessment frameworks to conform to institutional standards.

In the context of heutagogical learning, these hybrid practices can function as transitional solutions enabling institutions to progressively incorporate more flexible learning methodologies while maintaining established academic standards. Ultimately, these strategies may integrate institutional traditions with instructional innovation, allowing lecturers to promote learner choice while upholding the academic standards required in higher education.

The findings indicate that institutional culture significantly influences the interpretation and implementation of heutagogical principles in academic writing programs. Although educators may be inclined to implement a more student-centered approach, institutional policies and evaluation frameworks frequently dictate the extent of pedagogical flexibility permissible in practice.

Student Readiness for Self-Determined Learning

A third theme pertains to the various levels of student readiness for self-determined learning. Students' readiness seemed to be influenced by multiple interconnected elements, including their previous learning experiences, digital literacy, and socio-cultural learning backgrounds. These factors affected students' confidence in responding to open-ended writing tasks and their efficacy in managing autonomous learning activities in the classroom.

Students with prior exposure to project-based or collaborative learning environments exhibited increased comfort with independent writing assignments. These students demonstrated a greater inclination to pursue personal interests, autonomously choose writing themes, and participate in reflective learning processes.

Excerpt 5

S7: "I like it when we can choose our own topics because I can write about something I care about. But sometimes I still feel unsure if my writing is correct."

(Interview transcript, May 2024)

This statement suggests that while students appreciate the opportunity to exercise autonomy, they may still experience uncertainty about their academic writing abilities. The freedom to choose topics allowed students to connect writing tasks with personal interests, which increased engagement and motivation. However, the uncertainty expressed by the participant also indicates that autonomous learning requires not only freedom of choice but also adequate support mechanisms such as feedback, guidance, and opportunities for reflection.

In contrast, students from traditional educational backgrounds demonstrated increased confusion when prompted to make autonomous learning decisions.

Excerpt 6

S10: "I'm not used to choosing my own topic. In my previous school, we always followed what the teacher instructed."

(Interview transcript, May 2024)

This extract emphasizes the impact of prior learning experiences on learners' readiness for self-determination. Students trained in teacher-centered situations frequently anticipated explicit instructions and organized assignments. When faced with open-ended writing tasks,

these students initially encountered perplexity or hesitation due to their unfamiliarity with the obligation to determine their own learning directions.

These disparities indicate that readiness for heutagogical learning is not uniformly distributed among students. Some students are competent at exercising autonomy in their academic activities, while others need continuous assistance to cultivate the metacognitive and self-regulatory competencies essential for self-determination. In writing classes, this transition may entail organized scaffolding techniques, including directed topic selection, reflective diaries, and gradual writing tasks that gradually enhance student agency.

This finding corresponds with studies on self-regulated learning, indicating that learner autonomy evolves incrementally through the processes of planning, monitoring, and assessing one's own educational activities (Zimmerman, 2000). In learning environments traditionally characterized by teacher-centered instruction, students might need further pedagogical assistance prior to effectively participating in self-determined practices.

Recent studies underscore the significance of scaffolding and instructional guidance in fostering learner autonomy within heutagogical learning contexts. Singh and Sisodia (2024) suggest that although heutagogy prioritizes learner autonomy, the shift to self-determination must be meticulously guided through organized learning activities that assist students in progressively taking charge of their educational choices. In this context, lecturers are pivotal in creating learning settings that harmonize autonomy with suitable amounts of guidance.

In the context of academic writing teaching, this scaffolding may encompass the supply of explicit writing structures, formative feedback, and chances for reflective learning that assist students in cultivating confidence in their writing skills. Ultimately, these tactics may facilitate student autonomy, enabling them to engage more actively in directing their own learning.

The findings suggest that the effective implementation of heutagogical writing instruction relies on both instructional design and students' readiness to take increased responsibility for their learning processes. Facilitating this transition necessitates focused teaching practices that foster learners' confidence, metacognitive awareness, and self-regulated learning abilities.

Instructor Agency and Professional Background

The use of heutagogical principles was significantly shaped by lecturers' pedagogical beliefs, teaching experiences, and professional histories. Lecturers with previous experience in international academic settings or knowledge of learner-centered pedagogies had better ease in enabling open-ended learning activities that promoted student accountability for their writing progress. Their pedagogical methods indicated a transition from conventional knowledge dissemination to a facilitative role, wherein students were motivated to investigate subjects, establish learning objectives, and participate in reflective writing activities.

Excerpt 7

L1: "When I studied abroad, students were encouraged to explore their own interests in writing. I try to bring that approach into my classroom."

(Interview transcript, June 2024)

The previously mentioned response demonstrates how international academic exposure might influence lecturers' pedagogical viewpoints. Educators who encountered educational frameworks prioritizing autonomy and inquiry-based learning were more inclined to implement adaptable teaching methodologies. In these classrooms, writing assignments were frequently crafted to promote investigation, critical reflection, and autonomous learning, which are fundamental tenets of heutagogical pedagogy.

Conversely, lecturers whose professional training was predominantly based on traditional teacher-centered instruction exhibited increased reluctance in executing learner-directed activities.

Excerpt 8

L2: "I support student-centered learning, but sometimes I worry that students may not meet the course objectives if the tasks are too open."

(Interview transcript, June 2024)

The situation illustrates a common problem with the execution of learner-centered approaches. Heutagogy fosters self-determined learning and empowers students to assume responsibility for their academic directions; nevertheless, lecturers may still perceive a duty to ensure that established curricular objectives are met. Consequently, certain lecturers choose to provide structured supervision in writing assignments to reconcile student autonomy with curriculum accountability.

The distinct points of view illustrate that teacher agency is essential in influencing educational innovation. The implementation of heutagogical methods is influenced not just by institutional policies or curriculum frameworks but also by the beliefs, teaching philosophies, and professional experiences of individual lecturers. In this regard, lecturers serve as pedagogical guards who interpret and modify learner-centered principles within their own instructional environments.

This finding corresponds with studies highlighting the changing function of educators in heutagogical learning contexts. Instructors are expected to serve as facilitators, mentors, and architects of learning experiences that promote learner autonomy and reflective learning, rather than merely transmitting knowledge (Blaschke et al., 2019). In this context, lecturers assist students in cultivating self-regulated learning skills, prompting them to design, monitor, and assess their own learning processes.

Moreover, research on self-regulated learning indicates that educators are pivotal in facilitating learners' autonomy during the shift from teacher-led to self-determined learning contexts (Zimmerman, 2002). In writing classrooms, this scaffolding may encompass structured feedback, reflective writing assignments, and chances for peer collaboration, which progressively assist students in attaining increasing autonomy in directing their writing processes.

The results underscore the significance of professional development and pedagogical training in facilitating the adoption of novel teaching methodologies. Prior research indicates that educators who undergo specialized professional development in learner-centered pedagogies are more inclined to adopt flexible teaching practices and foster learner autonomy in their classrooms (Gillaspy & Vasilica, 2021). In the absence of sufficient institutional support and professional development opportunities, lecturers may struggle to apply heutagogical approaches effectively, especially in environments where traditional teacher-centered instruction prevails.

The findings suggest that the effective execution of heutagogical academic writing instruction relies on both curricular design and the lecturers' pedagogical readiness and desire to embrace facilitative teaching roles. Enhancing instructors' professional development opportunities may be a crucial measure in promoting more autonomous and reflective learning environments in academic writing programs.

Technology Integration and Digital Tools in Supporting Autonomous Writing

The final theme addresses the role of digital technologies in promoting heutagogical learning environments. Both lecturers and students indicated that digital platforms facilitated collaborative writing, peer feedback, and continuous revision processes, which promoted greater student engagement in the writing process.

Excerpt 9

S8: "Using Google Docs helps us see comments from friends and lecturers quickly. I can revise my writing many times."

(Interview transcript, May 2024)

Digital tools emerged to facilitate learner autonomy by allowing students to autonomously revise and enhance their work. Respondents articulated how online platforms and digital resources facilitated the exploration of ideas, the revision of drafts, and more active engagement with feedback. However, disparities in technological access created challenges for some students.

Excerpt 10

S14: "I only have my phone, and sometimes the internet connection is not stable. It is difficult to search references or revise my writing online."

(Interview transcript, May 2024)

These findings underscore the dual function of digital tools in heutagogical learning contexts. Technology may increase learner autonomy by facilitating flexible learning routes, promoting peer cooperation, and supporting independent revision processes. Conversely, unequal access to technical resources may hinder the efficacy of technology-enhanced learning.

Participants and classroom observations indicated observed enhancements in writing clarity, creativity, and audience awareness after reflective writing cycles; these enhancements were not formally evaluated using standardized writing evaluations.

Recent studies underscore the increasing significance of artificial intelligence and digital technologies in facilitating autonomous learning. Research on AI-assisted paraphrasing tools demonstrates that these technologies can aid students in cultivating paraphrasing skills, comprehending academic language structures, and enhancing confidence in academic writing when utilized as pedagogical support rather than as shortcuts (Herda et al., 2025). These tools offer prompt feedback, enabling learners to explore sentence patterns and individually refine their work.

Recent research on technology-enhanced heutagogical learning settings underscores the significance of digital platforms, mobile learning applications, and AI-supported tools in fostering learner autonomy, metacognitive awareness, and reflective learning processes in language instruction. Heutagogical approaches backed by technology empower learners to assume increased responsibility for their education by choosing suitable resources, tracking their advancement, and participating in collaborative online learning communities (Mukuka & Tatira, 2025). In digital and multilingual learning environments, learners can enhance their linguistic ability and metacognitive awareness by actively engaging with various digital resources.

Nevertheless, studies suggest that technology-facilitated autonomy necessitates meticulous pedagogical supervision. Digital inequality, disparate degrees of learner readiness, and insufficient technology infrastructure may obstruct the effective execution of self-determined learning if not properly handled. Consequently, lecturers are pivotal in promoting reflective learning methods and directing students in the appropriate use of digital resources.

The findings indicate that technology-enhanced writing environments serve as scaffolding mechanisms that facilitate heutagogical learning by fostering learner autonomy, reflective writing practices, and collaborative knowledge production.

CONCLUSION

This study examined the comprehension and application of heutagogical principles in academic writing training within an Islamic higher education framework. The data indicate that whereas lecturers and students broadly acknowledge the significance of learner autonomy, their perceptions of self-determined learning differ significantly. Certain lecturers defined heutagogy as a transformative methodology that promotes reflective inquiry and learner autonomy, while others linked autonomy chiefly to the execution of tasks independently. Students exhibited varying levels of readiness for self-determined learning, as those familiar

with organized, teacher-centered training displayed hesitation when faced with open-ended writing assignments. These findings underscore that the use of heutagogical approaches in academic writing classrooms is influenced by pedagogical attitudes and students' previous educational experiences.

The research also revealed multiple conflicts between institutional traditions and educational innovation. Institutional expectations concerning standardized writing forms, hierarchical instructional structures, and established assessment criteria frequently affected the implementation of learner-centered approaches. Consequently, professors often maintained a precarious equilibrium between fostering student independence and adhering to institutional academic requirements. Heutagogical approaches are frequently manifested in hybrid formats that integrate traditional instruction with reflective learning, topic flexibility, and collaborative writing exercises.

The application of heutagogical learning in Islamic higher education also embodies wider cultural and educational principles. Islamic educational traditions prioritize the pursuit of knowledge, reflective learning, and ethical accountability, which correspond with heutagogical ideas that advocate for learner autonomy and self-determined exploration. Nonetheless, institutional norms and hierarchical teacher-student interactions may affect the implementation of autonomy in classroom activities. Grasping this cultural factor is essential for modifying heutagogical methods to honor institutional traditions while fostering more participative and reflective learning settings.

These findings indicate multiple implications for policy and practice. Institutions aiming to advance learner-centered pedagogies may find it advantageous to offer professional development opportunities that assist lecturers in incorporating heutagogical tactics into academic writing training. Structured scaffolding strategies, such as reflective writing assignments, directed topic selection, and collaborative feedback, can assist students in progressively cultivating the self-regulated learning skills essential for autonomous learning. Future research may investigate the long-term effects of heutagogical methods on students' academic writing progression and assess the role of digital technology and AI-assisted learning tools in facilitating self-determined learning across various higher education settings.

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