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Heutagogy in Indonesian Higher Education: Cultural Challenges and Opportunities in Online EFL Learning

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A B S T R A C T

This study highlights the importance of the application of heutagogy in online EFL learning in higher education, which is still rarely studied in the Indonesian context. There is a gap between heutagogy theories that emphasize learning autonomy and EFL teaching and learning that tend to be lecturer-centric. This study aims to analyze cultural challenges and opportunities in the application of heutagogy from the perspective of lecturers and students. Using a qualitative approach, data were collected through semi-structured interviews with participants from Universitas Pamulang and analyzed using thematic analysis. The results of the study show that there are cultural barriers such as lecturer-centered learning, a hierarchical educational structure, cultural views related to respect and obedience to lecturers, and language proficiency barriers. However, opportunities were also found in the form of increased autonomy, engagement, communication, collaboration, critical thinking skills, and fostering a lifelong learning mindset. This study concludes that heutagogy has the potential to enrich EFL pedagogy in Indonesia with the need for contextual implementation strategies and sustainable lecturer capacity development.

Keywords: Heutagogy, Online EFL Learning, learning autonomy, engagement, higher education.

INTRODUCTION

Heutagogy, with its emphasis on self-determined learning, critical thinking, and learner autonomy, has gained increasing recognition as a relevant pedagogical paradigm in contemporary education. Positioned as a learner-centered approach, it has been acknowledged in recent scholarship (Li, 2023; Lock et al., 2021; Nyamboga, 2024) for its capacity to cultivate independent learning competencies and to prepare students for the demands of lifelong learning. Within the Indonesian higher education context, the integration of heutagogical principles into English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teaching and learning has been identified as a particularly promising avenue. As highlighted by Pan, the adoption of such practices not only enhances students' linguistic proficiency but also strengthens their ability to assume greater responsibility for their own learning processes, thereby fostering autonomy and adaptability in academic and professional settings (Pan, 2023). In line with this view, various studies highlight the pedagogical advantages of online learning, particularly its ability to facilitate a personalized and collaborative learning experience (Gillaspy & Vasilica, 2021; Sandeman, 2024). However, the integration of *the heutagogy* approach in the context of higher education in Indonesia still faces considerable challenges. Typical cultural dynamics in Indonesia play an important role in shaping the application and effectiveness of heutagogy in the teaching of English as a foreign language (EFL) (Halim et al., 2023; Yassi et al., 2023). These considerations underscore the importance of situating heutagogical

practices within the broader sociocultural landscape in order to ensure their sustainability and impact.

Culture plays a fundamental role in shaping educational practices, as it reflects the values, beliefs, customs, and social norms of a community (Gillaspy & Vasilica, 2021). This cultural framework directly influences how learners engage with knowledge and interact within classroom settings. In this context, understanding cultural challenges and opportunities is significant in implementing *heutagogy*, especially in learning English as a foreign language (EFL) in Indonesian higher education. Various studies have examined how cultural factors influence the implementation of student-centered learning approaches such as *heutagogy*, as well as providing valuable insights into classroom dynamics in Indonesia (Halim et al., 2023; Handayani et al., 2021). These studies identify cultural barriers that can reduce the effectiveness of heutagogy implementation, while highlighting areas that have potential for development. This view is further enriched by studies that examine the influence of traditional learning practices and education policies on higher education in Indonesia (Budiarto et al., 2023; Rusli et al., 2020). Collectively, this body of literature underscores the importance of situating heutagogy within its cultural context to ensure its meaningful integration and long-term impact.

Although previous studies have provided valuable insights, there is still a significant gap in the literature regarding the specific opportunities and challenges of integrating heutagogy into Indonesian higher education, especially in relation to online EFL learning. This gap is particularly significant, as it provides an opportunity to examine the potential opportunities that both students and lecturers may derive from the adoption of student-centered learning approaches. However, alongside these opportunities, it is equally important to acknowledge the presence of technological barriers that may hinder their successful implementation. Challenges such as unequal access to digital resources, disparities in technological literacy, and limited reliability of internet connectivity continue to pose critical obstacles to the application of heutagogical practices in EFL learning (Fathali et al., 2024; Rinekso et al., 2021). Careful attention to these challenges is therefore imperative to ensure that heutagogy can be implemented in ways that are both meaningful and sustainable within the Indonesian higher education context.

The integration of a heutagogical framework within online EFL learning in the Indonesian higher education context presents considerable pedagogical advantages. These include the potential for marked improvements in language acquisition and the cultivation of learner autonomy. This pedagogical synergy effectively responds to the demands of modern education by fostering learning independence and critical thinking skills (Ardi, 2017; Dewantara & Tantri, 2022; Yosintha & Yunianti, 2021). Empirical evidence indicates that applying heutagogy to online language learning environments empowers students to define their own learning objectives and assume ownership of their educational outcomes (Blaschke, 2021; Gillaspy & Vasilica, 2021). This increased sense of ownership has been shown to strengthen learners' motivation and engagement. Furthermore, the emphasis on self-direction supports the enhancement of critical thinking, as students are encouraged to analyze information, reflect on their learning, and critically evaluate their outcomes (Chukwunemerem, 2023; Elderson-Van Duin et al., 2023; Hamdan et al., 2021).

Furthermore, heutagogical methods demonstrably enhance language proficiency. By engaging with linguistic materials through self-determined learning, students can more effectively practice communicative skills and consolidate their grasp of grammatical and lexical systems (Wei, 2023). A principal advantage of this approach is its cultivation of lifelong learning competencies, equipping students to adapt to evolving contexts and pursue knowledge autonomously beyond the formal curriculum. Nevertheless, the theoretical and practical application of heutagogy within mobile learning is not without its critiques. Scholarly discourse underscores potential limitations, with several authorities advocating for a hybrid pedagogical model. This model strategically blends self-determined learning with necessary instructional scaffolding to ensure robust and comprehensive outcomes (Gillaspy & Vasilica, 2021; Li, 2023) Additional pragmatic challenges, such as the pervasive digital divide and the

inherent risk of digital distractions, necessitate deliberate mitigation strategies for successful implementation (Lourdu Vesna, 2025; Pérez-Juárez et al., 2023).

Advancing effective educational practices in Indonesian higher education, particularly in the context of online EFL learning, requires a comprehensive understanding of students' perspectives. This study seeks to critically analyze learners' perceptions of the opportunities and challenges associated with the application of heutagogy. The investigation is grounded in a systematic review of literature that examines students' experiences, attitudes, and responses to heutagogical approaches in online EFL settings (Heikkinen et al., 2023; Lee et al., 2019). By synthesizing these studies, the research identifies recurring themes and patterns, providing valuable insights into both the potential opportunities and the barriers faced by learners in adopting this learner-centered paradigm. The review of existing literature reveals that students encounter multiple challenges in adopting heutagogical approaches. A primary difficulty lies in the self-directed nature of heutagogy, as some learners struggle with goal-setting, time management, and maintaining motivation in the absence of consistent teacher guidance (Zhu, 2021). Technological constraints, including limited access to digital devices and unstable internet connectivity, further reduce the effectiveness of online learning (Zhu, 2021). Cultural dimensions also play a critical role, as traditional pedagogical practices and hierarchical classroom structures often impede the role shifts required by heutagogy (Halim et al., 2023). Despite these barriers, students acknowledge notable opportunities of heutagogical approaches in online EFL contexts, particularly in terms of enhanced autonomy and self-regulation, with many valuing the opportunity to adapt learning processes to their individual needs (Hazaea & Alzubi, 2018).

Heutagogy repositions learners as active agents in their educational journey, a shift facilitated by the inherent flexibility of mobile learning platforms that accommodate diverse student schedules. Furthermore, this approach fosters the development of collaborative and communicative competencies through engagement in digitally mediated, interactive tasks (Cherbonnier et al., 2025). This study, therefore, aims to investigate student perceptions regarding both the advantages and obstacles of heutagogy within online EFL learning in Universitas Pamulang. By systematically identifying these factors, the research aims to inform the development of more responsive pedagogical strategies that align with learner expectations, thereby potentially enhancing educational outcomes. The investigation is guided by these research questions: (1). What cultural factors impede the implementation of heutagogy in online EFL learning at Universitas Pamulang? (2). What pedagogical opportunities can be identified from the implementation of the heutagogy in online EFL learning? (3). How do students perceive the challenges and opportunities of heutagogy in online EFL learning?
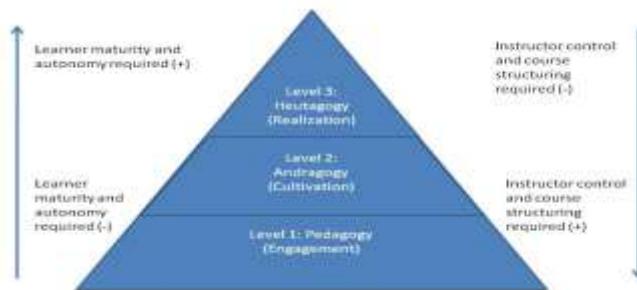

Figure 1. Progression from pedagogy to andragogy then to heutagogy (Blaschke, 2012, p. 60, based on Canning, 2010, p. 63)**.**

METHOD

This study adopted a qualitative research design to examine the challenges and opportunities of integrating heutagogy into online English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learning in higher education setting, namely Universitas Pamulang. Data were collected

primarily through semi-structured interviews involving three lecturers and ten accounting students at Universitas Pamulang. Participants were purposively selected based on their direct involvement and experience with online EFL learning and heutagogical practices. Interviews were conducted either face-to-face or through online platforms, depending on participant preference, and all sessions were audio-recorded with prior consent to ensure data accuracy. Complementary field notes were also taken to capture non-verbal cues and contextual details. Ethical procedures were rigorously followed, including the acquisition of informed consent to safeguard participant rights and confidentiality. This methodological approach was designed to generate an in-depth understanding of the complexities surrounding the implementation of heutagogy in online EFL classrooms and its broader implications for Indonesian higher education.

Instrument

This study employed a systematic thematic analysis, guided by the methodological framework of (Braun & Clarke, 2019), to interpret data collected from semi-structured interviews. The procedural sequence began with the verbatim transcription of audio recordings. These textual transcripts, alongside supplementary documentary materials, were systematically organized using the NVivo software platform, which provided an instrumental foundation for subsequent coding and data structuring. A hybrid analytical strategy, integrating both deductive and inductive reasoning, informed the coding process. This involved initially assigning descriptive codes to discrete data segments, which were then aggregated into broader thematic categories. These emergent categories underwent rigorous scrutiny to identify salient interrelationships, connections, and recurrent patterns. The utilization of NVivo's matrix coding query functions was pivotal during this phase, enabling a sophisticated and multi-faceted exploration of the dataset and thereby enriching the interpretive depth of the analytical outcomes.

Data Analysis

The analytical process was guided explicitly by the study's research questions and contextualized within the relevant academic literature. To validate the identified themes, representative verbatim excerpts from the interview data were integrated, providing empirical substantiation for the derived conclusions. This qualitative investigation, which drew upon data from semi-structured interviews with four lecturers and ten students at two Indonesian universities, leveraged NVivo software to support a rigorous analytical procedure. This methodology involved sequential stages of coding, thematic categorization, systematic data exploration, and interpretive analysis, with triangulation employed to bolster the validity and depth of the findings.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

RQ 1: What cultural factors impede the implementation of heutagogy in online EFL learning at Pamulang University?

The first research question investigated the cultural factors that hinder the successful implementation of heutagogy in online EFL learning within the Indonesian higher education context. A thematic analysis of semi-structured interviews with three lecturers and ten students from Pamulang University identified several significant cultural impediments. A primary inhibiting factor was the prevalence of deeply entrenched, teacher-centered pedagogies and traditional learning methods. For instance, a lecturer (L1) noted,

> *"In our educational system, the teacher is regarded as one of the main sources of knowledge, and students only receive information passively."* (L1)

For lecturers who attempted to implement heutagogical concepts to promote autonomy among learners and self-directed learning, the dominant cultural norms were also found to represent a major obstacle. Student opinions supported this challenge, with one participant stating,

> *"We are accustomed to being instructed on what to learn and how to learn it, which makes it difficult to cultivate the capacity for self-directed learning."* (S7)

Furthermore, another cultural factor identified is the hierarchical nature of the education system in Indonesia. Lecturers stated that the existence of traditional authority dynamics between teachers and students can inhibit students' willingness to take responsibility for their own learning process. As explained by one lecturer,

> *"Students often exhibit reluctance to voice their perspectives openly, primarily due to an apprehension of being perceived."* (L3)

The comment above refers to a hierarchical structure that limits opportunities for active participation, critical thinking, and independent learning, which are important aspects in heutagogy. Furthermore, cultural assumptions surrounding respect also hinder the implementation of heutagogy. The lecturers stated that students tend to be reluctant to engage in open discussions or ask questions about things they do not understand to their lecturers due to a culture that emphasizes respect for authority figures. Another lecturer shared,

> *"Students often hesitate to ask their lecturers openly because it is considered impolite. They are more inclined to follow what the lecturer asks and choose to avoid conflict."* (L2)

The comment above shows a cultural standard that limits students' ability to participate actively in self-directed learning or to speak freely and fully. In the implementation of heutagogy, language ability is also a significant cultural problem. Because English is a foreign language in Indonesia, many students and even some lecturers face difficulties. Ideally, this linguistic barrier directly impacts learner confidence, which is a foundation for successful engagement in the communicative and autonomous activities central to heutagogy. As stated by student 2 and student 8,

> *"I feel ashamed and lack the confidence to explore learning materials because I am worried about making mistakes in English."* (S2 & S8)

In summary, the thematic analysis reveals that certain cultural factors can hinder the implementation of heutagogy in online English learning at universities, in this case, Universitas Pamulang. These factors include the dominance of lecturer-centered learning, a hierarchical educational structure, cultural views related to respect and obedience to lecturers, as well as challenges in language proficiency barriers. The statements conveyed by the students illustrate these cultural barriers, highlighting the importance for educators and policymakers to address these challenges to create an environment conducive to the effective implementation of heutagogy.

RQ 2: What pedagogical opportunities can be identified from the implementation of the heutagogy in online EFL learning?

The complex themes found in the table below show the pedagogical oppotunities of implementing heutagogy in online EFL learning at universities, specifically Universitas Pamulang. The themes generated from the statements obtained during the interviews are summarized in the table below,

Table 1. The Pedagogical Opportunities of Heutagogy in Online EFL Learning

Themes	Description
Strengthening Learning Autonomy	The implementation of heutagogy provided students with greater autonomy in their learning. They were able to select topics, set goals, and decide how to complete assignments. This autonomy fostered independence, critical thinking, and decision-making skills in students.
Enhancing Learning Engagement	Participants consistently reported increased student engagement after implementing heutagogical principles into the online EFL learning and learning experience. Students actively participated in activities, asked questions, and showed interest in the learning materials.
Improving Communication	Online EFL Learning combined with a heutagogy approach has succeeded in improving students' communication skills. They participate in discussions through online platforms, practice expressing opinions in English, and are able to develop effective ways of communicating. This improvement in communication skills has a positive impact on their overall language proficiency and learning experience.

Themes	Description
Increasing Collaboration	Participants observed collaborative efforts in online EFL learning that applied heutagogical principles. Students had the opportunity to collaborate on various projects, share ideas, and learn from the varied perspectives of their classmates. This collaborative climate facilitated the development of teamwork skills and enhanced the learning experience holistically.
Embedding Critical Thinking	The implementation of heutagogy in online EFL learning has cultivated critical thinking skills among students. They were trained to think critically, analyze various information independently, and evaluate different perspectives. This helped improve their ability to solve problems, implement knowledge in real life, and enhance their understanding of English.
Fostering a Lifelong Learning Mindset	The integration of heutagogy within the online EFL learning has fostered a lifelong learning mindset among students. Participants observed that students began to show a great curiosity for continuous learning outside the classroom environment. They began to search for various additional information, engaged in self-directed learning, and showed a great interest in self-development and improving their English skills.

The interview revealed that the implementation of the heutagogical approach successfully created a more participative learning atmosphere. In addition, the implementation of this approach also encouraged the improvement of learning autonomy among students. As explained by one of the lecturers,

> *"The implementation of heutagogy provides students with greater control over their learning. They have freedom to choose learning materials, set targets, and determine strategies for completing their assignments. This strengthens their capability to manage the learning process independently."* (L2)

Integrating heutagogy in online EFL learning in higher education provides several significant opportunities, as supported by participant statements and the complex themes that have been successfully summarized. The participants revealed an increase in student engagement, as expressed by one lecturer,

> *"I see a quite significant increase in terms of student engagement when we implement heutagogy. The students participated actively, asked various questions, and showed high interest in the topics being studied."* (L3)

Heutagogy supports collaboration and sharing diverse viewpoints. Improved communication skills are another positive outcome, as stated by one student:

> *"The use of online platforms to discuss allows us to practice expressing ourselves in English. We become more confident in communicating."* (S1)

This independence fosters critical thinking skills, decision-making, and self-directed learning abilities. The participants also highlighted the advantages of collaborative learning enabled by online EFL learning with a heutagogical approach. One student revealed,

> *"Online EFL learning that integrates the principles of heutagogy facilitates students to collaborate on projects and exchange ideas. This interaction allows them to gain knowledge from their peers and improve their teamwork skills."* (S4)

The implementation of heutagogy in EFL online learning contributes to the improvement of students' collaboration skills. In addition, heutagogy also hones critical thinking skills among students. A lecturer observed,

> *"Heutagogy helps students to think critically and analyze information independently. They learn to evaluate different points of view and apply their knowledge in real life."* (L1)

These findings indicate that the heutagogical approach successfully develops analytical thinking, problem-solving skills, and the application of knowledge in practical contexts. Lastly, the implementation of heutagogy in online EFL learning also fosters a lifelong learning mentality. One lecturer stated,

> *"I observed that students began to develop a curiosity that went beyond simply passing exams. They actively seek out additional learning materials, engage in independent study, and show a genuine interest in sustainable self-development."* (L2)

The heutagogical approach fosters a lifelong learning and a proactive attitude toward personal development. Overall, the thematic analysis presented in the table, strengthened by direct quotes from participants, proves the effectiveness of implementing heutagogy in online EFL learning in universities. These opportunities include increased learning participation, strengthened independence, increased collaboration, developed critical thinking skills, and cultivated a lifelong learning attitude among students.

RQ 3: How do students perceive the challenges and opportunities of heutagogy in online EFL learning?

Students' perspectives on the challenges and opportunities of applying heutagogy in online EFL learning in higher education can provide deep insights into their learning processes and experiences in facing these challenges. When students undergo technology-supported language learning, it is very important to understand their perspectives on the challenges they face and the opportunities they gain. This perspective highlights challenges related to limited access to technology and discipline in time management, as well as opportunities that include flexibility, personalization, motivation, engagement, and opportunities for collaboration.

The students' perspectives on the challenges and opportunities of heutagogy in online EFL learning in higher education can be summarized as follows. Two students expressed concerns about limited technological access.

> *"Not all students have smartphones or laptops that can be used to access online materials consistently."* (S1 & S3).

It shows the problem of technological resource inequality. In addition, students also realize the importance of self-discipline and good time management when taking online English lessons. Another student also stated the importance of discipline and good time management skills, saying,

> *"Managing an independent learning requires considerable personal discipline and masterful time management capabilities."* (S9).

Nevertheless, students also revealed various advantages of applying the heutagogy approach in online EFL learning. Students appreciate the flexibility and convenience provided by learning using mobile devices. As one student explained,

> *"Online EFL learning allows us to adjust the learning pace to our personal needs, so it can be tailored to our busy daily schedules."* (S10)

The individually tailored learning experience through the heutagogical approach received positive appreciation. Another student shared his thoughts by stating,

> *"The freedom to choose topics and to decide on learning targets allows me to focus on the most relevant areas for my own."* (S6)

In addition, the students emphasized the opportunities for collaboration created through online EFL learning that implements the principles of heutagogy. As one student explained,

> *"Through group projects on online platforms, we can work collaboratively and enrich our perspective from various sources."* (S5)

The various challenges and advantages expressed by students emphasize the necessity of addressing the technology gap and improving time management and self-discipline. Meanwhile, the aspects of flexibility, individual adaptation, and collaboration in the heutagogical approach are in line with the expected outcomes of an interactive, student-centered learning environment. These perspectives provide meaningful insights, reinforced by direct quotes, for educators and policymakers in their endeavors to refine the online EFL learning experience in higher education.

Discussion

This study identifies specific cultural factors that hinder the implementation of the heutagogical approach in online EFL learning in Universitas Pamulang. These findings are in line with previous studies on the obstacles to implementing pedagogy in educational contexts with similar cultural characteristics. This study reveals that the dominance of the lecturer-

centered learning paradigm and traditional learning methods are the main obstacles. These results reinforce previous research confirming the prevalence of teacher-centered approaches in the Indonesian education system (Rusli et al., 2020). The position of teachers as the only source of knowledge and the passive role of students in receiving information hinder the implementation of heutagogical principles that emphasize independence and self-directed learning. The hierarchical structure of the Indonesian education system has also proven to be a significant obstacle. These findings are in line with previous research on the relationship between teachers and students in the classrooms (Halim et al., 2023).
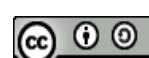
The hierarchical structure limits space for active participation, critical reasoning, and self-directed learning, which are essential elements in heutagogy. Cultural expectations related to respect and politeness, often referred to as the concept of "saving face", prove to hinder the implementation of this approach. This finding is consistent with previous studies on the cultural norms of Indonesian society that emphasize respect for authority figures (Halim et al., 2023). The apprehension about openly questioning the teacher's opinions and the tendency to choose conformity over conflict restrict students' abilities in self-directed learning and the free expression of opinions. Constraints in language ability, particularly in English, were also identified as a significant cultural challenge in implementing heutagogy. This result is supported by previous research that revealed the limitations of Indonesian students' English proficiency (Yosintha & Yunianti, 2021). The lack of English language learning support, limited resources, and insufficient exposure to authentic English use further exacerbate students' difficulties in conducting self-directed learning activities and expressing thoughts effectively.

These findings affirm the close interconnection between cultural factors and their influence on the implementation of the heutagogical approach in online EFL learning. The results of this study are in line with previous studies, which further strengthen the evidence regarding the complexity of challenges faced by educators in Indonesian higher education. Understanding and addressing these cultural factors is a key element in formulating effective strategies to encourage learner autonomy, self-directed learning, critical thinking, and the successful integration of mobile technology in EFL education. Further research can examine potential interventions and strategies to overcome these cultural barriers and facilitate the implementation of heutagogy in the Indonesian higher education environment. In addition, exploring the perspectives of administration, policymakers, and other stakeholders in the education system can provide a comprehensive understanding of the cultural dynamics that influence educational practices.

Findings on the opportunities of implementing heutagogy in online EFL learning in Indonesian higher education are consistent with previous research in similar contexts. The identified advantages, such as increased learning participation, strengthened independence, stimulated collaboration, improved communication skills, developed critical thinking, and the formation of lifelong learning attitudes, align with previous study findings on learner-centered approaches and technology integration in language education. Previous research has confirmed that student-centered approaches like heutagogy can increase student engagement. Empirical studies show that students become more motivated and actively involved when they have a role in the learning process and feel empowered to make choices (Gillaspy & Vasilica, 2021). The results of this study support these claims, where participants reported increased student engagement when heutagogical principles were integrated into online EFL learning. The strengthening of autonomy through heutagogy aligns with previous research on learning independence in language education. Various studies emphasize the importance of empowering students to take ownership of their learning and make decisions about their educational journey (Blaschke, 2021). By allowing students to choose topics, set goals, and complete tasks independently, heutagogy encourages independence and develops skills essential for lifelong learning.

The promotion of collaboration in online EFL learning that applies heutagogical principles is in line with previous research findings on the opportunities of collaborative learning. Collaborative learning has been proven to be able to improve critical thinking skills,

problem-solving abilities, and intercultural competence (Halim et al., 2023). The results of this study indicate that the heutagogical approach encourages cooperation, allowing learners to gain insights from diverse perspectives, hone teamwork skills, and form a mutually supportive learning community.

The improvement of communication skills through online EFL learning with heutagogy is consistent with previous research on the use of technology in language learning. Technology-based language learning has opened up opportunities for communication practice, authentic language use, and increased language proficiency (Pershukova et al., 2020). The findings of this study indicate that the integration of heutagogy in online EFL learning strengthens students' communication competence, which has a positive impact on their language skills. The development of critical thinking skills through heutagogy is in line with previous research that emphasizes the importance of critical thinking skills in language education. Critical thinking is closely related to higher-order cognitive abilities such as analysis, evaluation, and problem-solving (Chukwunemerem, 2023). By encouraging students to think critically, analyze information independently, and evaluate different perspectives, heutagogy develops these essential competencies. The cultivation of a lifelong learning mindset through heutagogy aligns with previous studies on learner-centered approaches and the development of sustainable learning. Various studies have emphasized the importance of fostering a love of learning and a proactive attitude towards self-development (Cherbonnier et al., 2025). The results of this study show that heutagogy encourages students to engage in self-directed learning, seek additional resources, and show a genuine interest in continuous improvement.

In conclusion, the results of this study strengthen and expand previous findings on learner-centered approaches, technology integration, and the opportunities of heutagogy in language learning. These findings underscore the potential of implementing heutagogy in online EFL learning to enhance student engagement, independence, collaboration, and critical thinking, while also fostering a lifelong learning mindset among students in Indonesian higher education. The contribution of these findings enriches the growing body of literature on innovative learning practices that support student-centered learning, technology adoption, and the development of 21st-century skills in the context of language education.

CONCLUSIONS

This study was designed to examine cultural constraints in the implementation of the heutagogical approach in online EFL learning in the higher education environment, while also outlining the opportunities of integrating this approach. This investigation successfully mapped a number of key challenges stemming from cultural aspects, including the strong teacher-oriented learning paradigm, a hierarchical education system, social values that prioritize attitudes of respect and obedience, and low levels of language proficiency. These various factors were proven to hinder the effective implementation of heutagogical principles, which are actually the foundation for developing learning independence and autonomous learning. The distinctiveness of this research lies in its emphasis on specific cultural factors in the Indonesian higher education context and their impact on the implementation of heutagogy in online EFL learning. Through the identification of these constraints, this study provides an important contribution to the broader discourse on educational challenges in similar cultural settings. This study reveals various positive impacts of integrating the heutagogical approach in online EFL learning. The identified opportunities include increased learning participation, strengthened learner independence, stimulated collaboration, improved communication competence, developed critical thinking skills, and the cultivation of a lifelong learning mindset. These findings are not only aligned with the research objectives and hypotheses but also confirm the positive impact of heutagogy in the context of higher education. The significance of this research extends to practical implications for educators and policymakers. Understanding and addressing the identified cultural challenges can form the basis for developing pedagogical strategies that are more aligned with the demands of 21st-century

education. Future research needs to focus on designing interventions to overcome these cultural barriers, thereby facilitating the effective implementation of heutagogy in Indonesian higher education. In addition, exploring the perspectives of administrators and other key stakeholders will provide a more comprehensive view of the cultural dynamics influencing educational practices. Investigation of the long-term effects of heutagogy on students' language proficiency and overall academic performance in the context of online EFL is also recommended to gain deeper insights into its impact.

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