

**Original Research**

## Effect of Teaching Through Critical Pedagogy Principles (CPP) on Advanced EFL Learners' Writing Motivation and their Attitudes Towards CPP Inclusion in Writing

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### Abstract

Writing skill plays an important role in successful communication. The poor writing skill of EFL learners is a significant challenge that necessitates transformative frameworks like Critical Pedagogy Principles (CPP) to develop writing motivation and foster positive attitudes. This study examined how teaching via CPP influences Iranian EFL learners' writing motivation and their attitudes towards the inclusion of CPP in writing instruction. Following a mixed-methods single-cohort post-test design, 30 advanced Iranian EFL learners were selected as participants. They undertook a twenty-eight-day course focused on collaborative learning, critical thinking, and democratic participation in writing. Throughout it, participants actively discussed and analyzed social issues, creating an environment that fostered critical reflection and creativity. Then, to evaluate different dimensions of writing motivation, including passion for writing, commitment to improvement, academic motivation, career aspirations, and recognition, a Writing Motivation Questionnaire (WMQ) was used. Subsequently, open-ended interviews were administered to gain deeper insights into learners' attitudes towards the inclusion of CPP in writing instruction. Statistical and thematic analyses of questionnaire data indicated that integrating CPP into writing instruction can significantly enhance enthusiasm, commitment, engagement, and confirmation. Moreover, thematic analysis of interview data disclosed learners' critical consciousness, critical writing skills, engagement with real-world issues, development of personal voice, appreciation of collaborative writing, improvement in writing quality, and critical awareness of educational materials. This research highlights the potential benefits of CPP in writing, which can create a more collaborative and engaging writing environment, ultimately leading to enhanced academic writing among students.

**Keywords:** Attitudes, Critical Pedagogy, Critical Pedagogy Principles, Writing, Writing Motivation

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## **1. Introduction**

In the current world, successful communication in English is indispensable for academic and professional purposes. As English continues to be the lingua franca, the ability to write efficiently is of paramount importance in this language, particularly in EFL contexts. However, numerous EFL learners appear to face challenges in writing skills, which are vital for negotiating ideas and participating in meaningful discourse (Yulandari & Alfarisi, 2025). Traditional language education often falls short of empowering students, leading to disengagement and low motivation. This is due to the repetitive, boring, unenjoyable, and demotivating nature of it (Li, 2022). This necessitates groundbreaking pedagogical models such as Critical Pedagogy (CP), Dialogic Teaching Framework, and Strategy-Focused Instructional Frameworks. These models boost writing capabilities and promote critical engagement. One such system is CP, which has at its heart critical thinking, problem-solving, and collaboration (Henson, 2019). As Ad McLaren (2020) puts it, CP functions as a pedagogical approach that helps students build a more impartial and equitable world. Furthermore, Sağiroğlu (2013) believes CP is an alternative model that fosters critical awareness of societal issues and realities. Additionally, CP promotes social agency and helps learners to address problematic issues in education (Ad McLaren, 2020; Sağiroğlu, 2013).

As far as it is concerned, CPP, although prior research has investigated its effect on many aspects of language learning, particular skills like writing are still less explored. Writing plays a critical role in expressing thoughts and feelings. Moreover, it enables learners to think critically, as inspired by CPP. Mazdaee and Maftoon (2012) note that critical thinking is fundamental to CP and enhances writers' abilities to reflect on ideas, create, and organize texts into socially acceptable discourses. Alternatively, EFL learners' attitudes involve cognitive, affective, and behavioral facets that considerably stimulate motivation and quality performance, especially in language skills (Latifah et al., 2024). Writing motivation, as a subset of general motivation, heavily hinges upon learners' willingness to get involved in writing activities that are mostly influenced by self-efficacy and feedback (Graham et al., 2020). Therefore, incorporating CPP into teaching writing significantly affects writing motivation. At the same time, such a framework authorizes learners to navigate daily issues, view them critically, and solve them (Mazdaee &

Maftoon, 2012). Learners can transform their educational ideas when they are critically empowered and equipped to write (Anggraeny & Khongput, 2022; Dutra, 2025).

Numerous studies, such as those by Mazdaee and Maftoon (2012), Mohammadi et al. (2014), and Vasheghani Farahani and Pahlevansadegh (2019), highlight Iranian students' weak writing skills. As they asserted, EFL writing suffers from full-fledged toolkits like CPP. This is because such a framework enables innovation, criticality, and creativity. However, the integration of CPP into writing education remains underexplored, particularly in terms of its impact on writing improvement and attitudes towards it. Therefore, this gap necessitates the investigation and incorporation of CPP into Iranian EFL writing education to boost writing skills and motivation among Iranian EFL learners. Given the value of writing as a dynamic and productive skill and the probable relationship between CPP and writing improvement, further research is needed to investigate EFL learners' writing motivation, inspired by CPP, and their attitudes towards it. Addressing this gap can provide valuable insights for EFL language learners, EFL teachers, and curriculum developers.

The significance of the study lies in its exploration of CPP facets in relation to controversial constructs of writing and motivation within the Iranian EFL context. Primarily, it addresses the challenges of Iranian EFL learners in writing proficiency by examining innovative instructional approaches, such as CP. Second, it studies the unexplored function of CPP in improving writing motivation, a key factor in affecting learners' writing performance. Third, the study takes into account and prioritizes the attitudes of EFL learners regarding the integration of CPP into EFL writing pedagogy. Lastly, the results offer practical implications for curriculum developers and teachers to empower learners by placing them at the center of instruction and promoting their skill development enriched with critical thinking.

In line with the problem stated, this study aims to examine the effect of teaching through CPP on Iranian EFL learners' writing motivation and to investigate their attitudes toward the incorporation of CPP in writing. Specifically, the study seeks to determine if integrating CPP improves learners' motivation to participate in writing and critical writing tasks, as well as their perception of the relevance of CPP in writing instruction. Finally, by obtaining the attitudes of advanced EFL learners toward CPP-induced writing, the study seeks to present insights that can inform efficient, learner-focused, and socially critical writing education.

## **2. Literature Review**

This section contextualizes the present study within the most relevant existing literature. Accordingly, key literature pertinent to CP and its application in EFL writing is reviewed, drawing on motivational factors and attitudes toward it. In doing so, the principal approaches of CPP and their roles in EFL contexts are also discussed. Additionally, the review addresses the connection between writing motivation and writing performance, highlighting how CP can improve both cognitive and affective dimensions of writing. Lastly, the review delves into and critically evaluates existing experimental and descriptive studies on the effects of CP and CPP on writing skills, determining the gaps to be filled in the current study.

### **2.1. Theoretical Background**

This section deals with the theoretical framework. It concentrates on the nature of CP and its underlying principles, emphasizing their connection with EFL writing education. Further, this section examines how learners' attitudes toward CPP and writing motivation work together to influence writing performance and motivation in EFL language learning contexts.

#### **2.1.1. CP and CPP**

Critical pedagogy (CP) is a philosophy of education that emphasizes empowering learners to question and transform oppressive structures in society; additionally, it is a political process that aims to promote social justice and democracy through education (Kos, 2025). It is student-centered, respecting learners' attitudes, beliefs, and traditions (Dutra, 2025). At the heart of CP is a set of key principles that guide its implementation in various educational contexts. CP encourages open expression and the consideration of multiple viewpoints, and it employs dialogic education, making classrooms democratic public spheres for critical dialogue (Piosang, 2018).

Additionally, CP promotes the use of authentic materials and avoids marginalization, shifting the assumed roles of teachers and students (Aliakbari & Faraji, 2011). The ultimate goals of CP are the development of critical consciousness, empowerment, and social transformation (Aliakbari & Faraji, 2011). Researchers have proposed various taxonomies of CP principles that guide classroom practices and interactions. These include Freire's (1996) ten values, Aliakbari and Faraji's (2011) principles of problem-posing education and transformative education, Borg and Mayo's (2006), and Piosang's (2018) six principles, such as CP as a political process and a student-centered approach.

Integrating these principles in EFL contexts is crucial for empowering learners and promoting critical engagement with language and society.

Views of Borg and Mayo's (2006), though they emerge from different cultural contexts, converge on the transformative nature and potential of pedagogy to empower marginalized voices and challenge unfair social systems. Both seem to revolve around critical consciousness via dialogue and problem-solving, the instrumental function of pedagogy, and community-oriented frameworks. However, both offer groundbreaking principles; their frameworks are context-specific and rely heavily on critical consciousness and social transformation. Additionally, they seem to have less practical effectiveness in modern contexts.

Aliakbari and Faraji's (2011) and Piosnag's (2018) systems both view CP as political and student-centered, focusing on authentic learning, dialogue, and cooperation. However, they are idealized and constrained by cultural and institutional factors. Besides, both lack guidance on tailoring them to the motivation and readiness of learners.

### **2.1.2.Educational Stakeholders' Attitudes Toward CPP**

As has been noted before, attitudes of EFL learners are important in considering CPP in language pedagogy. If learners and teachers demonstrate positive perceptions of CPP, educational authorities may consider evaluating the integration of CPP into policy making, material development, and lesson planning. A pedagogy that involves CP can, to a great extent, enlighten educational practice. Richardson (1996) contends that attitudes and beliefs are crucial concepts for comprehending teachers' thought processes, classroom practices, change, and learning to teach. Given the pivotal role of perceptions and beliefs in understanding the complexities of education, researchers need to consider the difficulties, needs, problems, developments, and revisions in education (Graham et al., 2020).

Several studies (Acharya et al., 2020; Anggraeny & Khongput, 2022; Sarani et al., 2014) have explored perceptions toward CP in diverse educational settings. Acharya et al. (2020) found that master-level students held positive attitudes toward incorporating CPP in the curriculum, believing it should promote democratic learning and dialogue to meet students' needs. Anggraeny and Khongput (2022) studied how Indonesian teachers perceived and incorporated critical thinking concepts in English language classrooms, finding *that they used various strategies* to encourage students' critical thinking and viewed skills, dispositions, and knowledge as key attributes.

Regarding EFL learners' attitudes toward CPP in L2 writing, research suggests that when instruction is grounded in CPP, learners may perceive the content as more relevant, which enhances their motivation and engagement (Vandrick, 2014). However, learners may face challenges in balancing language proficiency with critical thinking. Learners' cultural and educational

backgrounds can also influence their attitudes toward CPP. While Aliakbari and Faraji (2011) found that CP fosters a sense of belonging and support, Kubota (2013) noted the need for further research to adapt CP to EFL writing contexts.

As far as CP is constructive in pedagogy, it is largely context-dependent. Its implementation hinges upon the higher-level political and social norms, the execution of which is in the hands of governments. Some societies allow critical thinking and pedagogy, while some may ban or limit it. Iranian education appears to be dogmatic in its approach to innovation and the revitalization of traditional programs.

### **2.1.3. Writing Skill, CPP, and Motivation**

Writing is a fundamental skill in EFL and academic contexts (Qoyyimah et al., 2021), necessitating high writing motivation and positive attitudes; however, this is not always dependent on motivation. Writing motivation reveals the interests and desires of learners to write. Additionally, Ülper and Çeliktürk Sezgin (2019) claimed that a unified and qualified piece of writing is not possible unless the writer has qualified skills, a necessary knowledge base, and motivational tendencies. Writing motivation and writing performance are highly interrelated since the learners and teachers set goals, navigate the writing environment, and resort to various topics, genres, and skills (Graham et al., 2020). The researchers believe that, although writing and motivation are interrelated, this is not straightforward. In fact, Graham et al. overlooked the cultural and contextual factors. This is because writing performance and motivation are variable and complex. Writing proficiency depends not only on motivation and skills, but also on the way learners can control the complex social and political problems (Graham et al., 2020; Ülper & Çeliktürk Sezgin, 2019).

It has been indicated that critical thinking can enhance motivation. This means that there is a reciprocal relationship between the two. As researchers argue, fostering both motivation and critical thinking can be challenging. Critical thinking helps learners to think openly (Emilia, 2005), formulate problems, assess information, utilize ideas, and draw conclusions. On the other hand, critical thinking is influenced by internal and external motives such as motivation (Berestova et al., 2022).

## **2.2. Empirical Studies**

As has been noted, when L2 writing instruction is grounded in CPP, learners may perceive the content as more relevant to their lives and experiences, enhancing their motivation and engagement

in the writing process. Additionally, CPP also promotes inclusive and equitable learning environments, fostering a sense of belonging and support among EFL learners (Park et al., 2023). Furthermore, CPP emphasizes empowering learners and positioning them as active agents, allowing them to develop critical thinking skills essential for effective writing (Crookes, 2013).

In a study, Zabihi and Ameri-Golestan (2019) investigated the effects of CP on EFL learners' writing quantity and quality and found that CP significantly improved both the quantity and quality of learners' writing. However, although this study serves as a foundation for our research, it does not address motivational factors and attitudes towards CP itself. The researcher believes that this narrow focus limits our understanding of how CPP affects learners' engagement and motivation to participate in instructional programs. In contrast, the present study expands its scope to investigate not only CPP-related motivation but also EFL learners' attitudes toward it, which collectively represents a need for a more comprehensive comprehension of pedagogical practices.

In another study, Mazdaee and Maftoon (2012) explored the effect of CPP on EFL learners' essay writing with a focus on students' empowerment, power relations, and self-perception through a descriptive approach. They found that CPP applications increase learners' agency, writing quality, and shifts in students' identities. This study, which benefits present research, significantly paves the way for designing CPP sessions by clearly proposing the CPP. However, this study did not deal with learners' attitudes toward the inclusion of CPP in writing as well as its motivational aspects, which may provide a more comprehensive understanding of how CPP influences the affective and cognitive dimensions of writing in EFL contexts. Finally, the current study fulfilled the mission of Mazdaee and Maftoon (2012) in a well-documented and robust manner.

In another significant study, Mohammadi et al. (2014) investigated the influence of employing CP on Iranian upper-intermediate female EFL learners' writing skills and self-regulation. Through experimentation, *the completion of a self-regulation questionnaire*, and participation in a paragraph writing course, it was found that CP significantly improved learners' writing skills and conspicuously enhanced their self-regulation abilities. However, while this study found strong experimental evidence that CP escalates writing skill and promotes self-regulation, its narrow focus on paragraph writing did not address the cognitive and affective facets of writing and CP as a long-term learning. Furthermore, the special focus on female upper-intermediate learners restricted the generalizability of the findings across different proficiency levels and mixed-gender contexts. Therefore, these gaps were addressed through motivation analysis, the inclusion of advanced mixed-gender learners, and the examination of attitudes.

Qoyyimah et al. (2022) examined the potential of CP through Genre-Based Pedagogy (GBP) for developing students' writing skills. *Through a descriptive qualitative method, the learners composed argumentative texts. The texts were analyzed using Context Building and Text Modelling phases based on the themes, and it was found that CPP, such as historicity, problem-posing, emancipation, and dialogic, are evident in the students' writings.* Despite the demonstration of the mutuality of CP and GBP, the study focused on skill development and strategies, with less orientation toward acceptance and engagement in writing contexts.

In two relatively similar studies, Sahrgard et al. (2014) and Sarani et al. (2014) investigated Iranian EFL teachers' awareness of critical CPP in EFL classrooms. They indicated that the majority of Iranian EFL instructors are aware of the CPP and its effectiveness, but they rarely apply such methodology in their teaching due to class size, burnout, and the top-down educational system. Anyway, learners' attitudes, skill-based view of CPP, and motivational issues were not taken into account. Addressing these factors could enrich these studies. However, there is a gap, and the present study undertakes to fill it.

In a study, Emilia (2005) showed that adopting a critical genre-based approach can improve students' argumentative skills as well as genre control in writing. However, it paid less attention to the learners' engagement with writing tasks inspired by the inclusion of learners' viewpoints. Besides, Emilia's approach revolved around genre awareness rather than CPP, which focuses on learner empowerment and social critique. In contrast, the present study investigates how teaching through CPP enhances EFL learners' **writing motivation and attitudes** toward CPP inclusion in writing, aspects that Emilia's study did not address fully.

Yang (2020) adapted a CP framework for foreign language writing, which significantly improved learners' confidence and writing agency. Yang (2020) reconceptualizes critical pedagogy for foreign language writing by proposing a framework centered on four interrelated elements: relationship, identity, power, and agency. Implemented in a creative writing classroom, Yang's dialogical approach engages students through collaborative activities that draw on their personal and local knowledge, fostering agentive writing practices. The study highlights how this pedagogy enhances learners' confidence, mastery, and dispositions toward writing by disrupting marginalized identities and promoting a co-constructed learning environment. However, Yang's research is primarily qualitative and observational, focusing on learner identity and agency without employing an experimental design or systematically measuring changes in motivation or



attitudes toward CPP inclusion. This leaves a gap that the present study addresses by experimentally investigating how teaching through CPP affects both EFL learners' writing motivation and their attitudes toward CPP, thereby providing a more comprehensive understanding of CPP's cognitive and affective impacts in diverse EFL contexts.

All in all, the studies by Zabihi and Ameri-Golestan (2019), Mazdaee and Maftoon (2012), Mohammadi et al. (2014), Qoyyimah et al. (2022), Sahrgard et al. (2014), Sarani et al. (2014), Emilia (2005), and Yang (2020) formed the basis of this study, though they were limited in dealing with radical aspects of CP in relation to writing skills. They indicated that integrating CPP into writing instruction not only enhances learners' writing skills but also fosters critical thinking, agency, empowerment, collaboration, self-regulation, self-perception, and social awareness. However, the understanding of dimensions of motivation and perceptions toward CPP and CP remained limited and needs to be explored. Understanding EFL learners' attitudes towards CPP is essential, as their perceptions can influence the effectiveness of its implementation in writing classrooms. Further exploring the relationship between writing motivation and the benefits of CPP could benefit EFL education.

The present research was an attempt to find answers to the following posed research questions:

1. Does teaching through critical pedagogy principles enhance advanced Iranian EFL learners' English writing motivation?
2. What are the attitudes of advanced Iranian EFL learners toward teaching writing through critical pedagogy principles?

### **3. Methodology**

This part portrays the research methodology used to investigate the effect of the CPP-stimulated writing on advanced EFL learners' motivation and attitudes. It covers the design, participants, instruments, the procedure of data collection, and the procedure of data analysis.

#### **3.1. Design and Context of the Study**

This study employed a mixed-methods research approach to investigate the effect of teaching through CPP on Iranian EFL learners' writing motivation and attitudes towards CPP in teaching writing. The research design included both quantitative and qualitative

data collection methods, utilizing one questionnaire and one attitude interview. The quantitative data provided numerical and statistical insights, while the qualitative data offered a deeper understanding of participants' attitudes.

### 3.2. Participants

This paper reports findings from a larger doctoral dissertation examining the effects of teaching through CPP on multiple aspects of EFL learners' writing, including writing motivation, writing development, strategy emergence, and attitudes. Accordingly, this study focuses exclusively on writing motivation and learners' attitudes toward the inclusion of CPP in the writing process, as measured by the Writing Motivation Questionnaire (WMQ) and an attitudes interview in a controlled experiment with 30 participants. Other variables and analyses from the dissertation are not included here due to space and focus considerations, such as writing development and strategy emergence.

The study involved a total of 30 Iranian male and female advanced EFL learners, ranging in age from 18 to 32 years old, who were selected as participants of the study using convenience sampling. They were originally homogenized through the Oxford Placement Test (OPT) as part of the thesis. As the study was composed of qualitative and quantitative phases, all 30 male and female participants completed the quantitative phase, while ten male and female learners participated in the qualitative phase. The participants were selected from the 'Karan and Kaban' English Institute in Bam, Iran. Their native language was Persian.

Regarding ethical considerations, informed consent was obtained from all of the participants. They were provided with enough information about the purpose of the study and their right to withdraw from the study at any time. Moreover, to ensure confidentiality, data were anonymized and information about the participants was removed from the study. Additionally, all the data collected from WMQ and the interview is securely stored. The participants' details are presented in Table 3.1.

**Table 3.1.**

*Participants Specifications*

<b>Total Participants</b>	30
<b>Gender</b>	Male and Female
<b>Age Range</b>	18 to 32 years old
<b>Selection Method</b>	Convenience sampling
<b>Homogenization Test</b>	Oxford Placement Test (OPT)
<b>Quantitative Phase Participants</b>	30 (all participants)
<b>Qualitative Phase Participants</b>	10 (selected from the total)

### 3.3. Instruments

To collect both qualitative and quantitative data, the researchers used two main instruments. One was the Writing Motivation Questionnaire, and the other was the Attitudes Interview. These instruments are introduced and described in the following sections.

#### 3.3.1. Writing Motivation Questionnaire

WMQ was developed to assess students' writing motivation, consisting of 21 items categorized into five main categories: passion for writing, commitment to improvement, academic motivation, career aspirations, and recognition and validation. Created by Cahyono and Rahayu (2020), the WMQ was adapted in terms of wording and content for the study while retaining all 21 items. The questionnaire used a Likert scale from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree) for scoring responses, with higher total scores indicating greater motivation. The reliability of the WMQ was confirmed with a coefficient alpha of 0.95 after piloting.

The WMQ was utilized because of its reliability in quantifying writing motivation among EFL learners. This questionnaire's categories assisted in understanding the complex nature of writing motivation, which was essential for recognizing the factors that influenced learners' writing. In addition, the use of a Likert scale allowed for subtle responses, which facilitated quantification of participants' motivation levels.

#### 3.3.2. Attitudes Interview

To elicit the learners' viewpoints on the effect of CPP on writing, an open-ended written interview, composed of seven items, was utilized. This qualitative method was adopted to capture the complexity and depth of participants' attitudes and experiences inspired by their participation in the CPP course. The interview targeted participants' attitudes *toward* the impact of CPP on their writing. It explored how the course influenced their critical consciousness, motivation for critical writing, engagement with real-world issues, development of personal voice, appreciation for collaborative writing, improvement in writing quality, and critical awareness of educational materials. Through examining these dimensions, the interview provided **helpful data** that enhanced the quantitative data gathered through the WMQ. The interview items were inspired by Sodmand Afshar and Donyaie's (2019) Critical Pedagogy Questionnaire, ensuring that the questions were used in established research and allowed for flexibility of responses.

### 3.4. Data Collection Procedure

This study focused, specifically, on assessing writing motivation and learners' attitudes towards the inclusion of CPP in the writing process. To do this, the initial stages of data collection, including homogenization, randomization, piloting, selection of instruments, and treatments, were completed in the main study, i.e., the doctoral dissertation. The treatment involved a four-week instructional program based on CPP in the main study. To begin instructing participants to become aware of CPP, to learn to write critically, and to write creatively, the researchers synthesized Freire's (1967) ten values of CP model, i.e. Participatory, Situated, Critical, Democratic, Dialogic, Desocialization, Multicultural, Research-Oriented, Activist, and Affective Learning into two overarching principles that served as guiding principles for the implementation of CPP in the study inspired by Mazdaee and Maftoon (2012).

The two main synthetic principles were, first, establishing equitable and productive power relations, which involved student participation in the learning process, student initiation of negotiations of their learning requirements, teacher encouragement of students to express differing points of view with one another and the teacher, and teacher facilitation of student practice and exercise of critical thinking. Second, fostering critical thinking in students was achieved through encouraging them to adopt an evaluative stance in their writing, discussing social and personal issues in their journals, and cultivating their identities as independent and critical thinkers and writers. It was believed that promoting these activities by the teacher would effectively contribute to the overarching goal of nurturing critical thinking abilities.

Each week of instruction included activities that promoted dialogic education, democratic participation, and critical reading and writing to become acquainted with the demands of writing, with the ultimate objective of fostering criticality and creativity. In fact, in every one of the four weeks of treatment, the researchers established classroom practices and interactions that were aligned with the model's principles to create a learning environment that promotes critical thinking and creativity.

After the instruction finished, as part of the data collection, a subset of 30 participants (the experimental group of the main study) completed two key instruments designed to measure the targeted variables. Primarily, writing motivation was assessed using the WMQ, a 21-item Likert-scale instrument adapted to capture dimensions such as

passion for writing, commitment to improvement, and academic motivation. The WMQ was administered online via Google Forms to facilitate ease of access and timely responses. Finally, to gain qualitative insights into learners' attitudes, an open-ended written interview consisting of seven questions was conducted through the *Eita* messaging application. This interview explored participants' attitudes toward how CPP influenced their critical consciousness, motivation for critical writing, engagement with real-world issues, development of personal voice, collaborative writing experiences, and overall writing quality.

### 3.5. Data Analysis Procedure

This section deals with *the analysis of data derived from qualitative and quantitative approaches*, which were selected to provide a thorough understanding of the research questions of the study. Quantitative analysis included the development of descriptive statistics (mean, SD, median, and frequencies) of the Likert Scale data from the WMQ questionnaire. This approach facilitated quantifying writing motivation among participants and determining patterns in the collected data. The WMQ data included five main categories, each with its components. For each category, sets of means and standard deviations (SD) were developed for the component groups. This analysis provided a clear outline of participants' answers. Moreover, the total frequencies of the Likert Scales of each main category were calculated and presented, facilitating the straightforward interpretation of the distribution of the data. In addition, qualitative data analysis, which was used to capture the depth and complexity of participants' attitudes, involved the thematization of the interview questions into seven main themes. Each theme was presented through a general account of the theme, supported by the relevant quotes. This added richness to the quantitative findings and provided context to the statistical data.

## 4. Results

The current section presents the quantitative and qualitative findings. By nature, the quantitative results are inspired by WMQ, which addresses the first research question that examines the impact of the CPP-stimulated writing course on advanced EFL learners' motivation. Besides, the qualitative findings obtained from the interviews address the second research question, which revolves around attitudes of advanced EFL learners toward teaching writing through CPP.

#### 4.1. Quantitative Phase

This section presents the results on writing motivation as inspired by the CPP-stimulated writing course, addressing RQ1 on *whether* this approach enhances EFL learners' motivation. Using data from the WMQ, the results are organized around key themes and supported by descriptive statistics.

Table 1 outlines the five main categories of WMQ, which include 21 items or statements. This table provides a clear overview of the dimensions of writing motivation, thereby facilitating a deeper understanding of how these motivational factors may be influenced by the CPP employed in the study.

**Table 1.**

*Categories of WMQ*

No	Main categories	Items
1	Passion for Writing	Items 1- 7
2	Commitment to Improvement	Items 8- 12
3	Academic Motivation	Items 13- 17
4	Career Aspirations	Items 18- 20
5	Recognition and Validation	Item 21

Table 1 illustrates the main categories of the WMQ. As it is clear, the WMQ consisted of 21 items that were organized into five main categories: Passion for Writing, Commitment to Improvement, Academic Motivation, Career Aspirations, and Recognition and Validation. First, the Passion for Writing theme includes seven items (1 to 7). Second, the Commitment to Improvement theme encompasses five items (8 to 12), third, the Academic Motivation theme includes five items (13 to 17), fourth, the Career Aspirations theme consists of 3 items (18 to 20), and fifth, the Recognition and Validation theme is represented by a single item (21).

Table 2 provides descriptive statistics for the common categories identified in the WMQ. By summarizing key statistical measures, such as mean, median, and standard deviation, this table offers insights into the overall levels of writing motivation across different categories.

**Table 2.***Descriptive Statistics of WMQ Common Categories*

Category	Mean	Median	SD
Passion for Writing	4.18	4	0.88
Commitment to Improvement	4.02	4	1.07
Academic Motivation	4.08	4	0.99
Career Aspirations	4.33	4	0.80
Recognition and Validation	4.10	4	0.91
Total	<b>20.71</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>4.65</b>

Table 2 presents the descriptive statistics for various categories of the WMQ among the thirty participants. The mean scores for all categories indicate a generally high level of motivation, with scores ranging from 4.18 to 4.33 on a five-point Likert scale, where higher values reflect greater writing motivation. Notably, **the maximum possible mean score is 5**, suggesting that while the participants exhibit strong motivation, there remains room for further enhancement in their writing engagement.

The Career Aspirations category, which emphasizes that becoming a better writer is essential for career success, highlights the importance of strong writing skills in securing good job opportunities and achieving professional goals, and scored the highest mean at 4.33 ( $SD = 0.8$ ). This underscores the belief that becoming better writers would enhance their job prospects and overall likelihood of success in the professional world.

In the category of Passion for Writing, which is the enjoyment of expressing thoughts through various forms, including creative assignments and literary analysis, while sharing my work with others, participants expressed a strong enjoyment of writing activities, as reflected in a mean score of 4.18 ( $SD = 0.88$ ). This suggests that participants demonstrated a strong enthusiasm for writing, enjoying various activities such as writing in English during their free time, expressing their thoughts, and engaging in creative and analytical assignments.

Finally, participants in the Recognition and Validation category, which reflects the desire for others to acknowledge the writer as a good writer, underscore the importance of external affirmation in his/her writing journey, had a mean score of 4.10 ( $SD = 0.9$ ), indicating that they value acknowledgment of their writing abilities from others. This reflects their desire for external validation and support regarding their writing efforts.

In terms of Academic Motivation, which is evident in my ability to focus on writing, my enjoyment of writing-intensive classes, eagerness for challenging assignments, and

desire for more writing opportunities, drives my enthusiasm for writing in an academic setting. The mean score was 4.08 ( $SD = 0.99$ ), reflecting a solid desire to engage with writing in educational contexts. Participants exhibited strong academic motivation for writing, easily concentrating on their tasks and enjoying classes that involve substantial writing. Moreover, they appreciated challenging assignments and expressed a desire for more writing opportunities in their coursework, reflecting their enthusiasm for engaging with writing in an educational context.

The Commitment to Improvement, which is characterized by dedication to putting in significant effort, exceeding minimum requirements on assignments, practicing regularly to enhance skills, and striving for top grades, reflects one's desire to become a better writer, received a mean score of 4.02 ( $SD = 1.07$ ), indicating that participants showed a strong commitment to improving their writing skills, consistently putting in significant effort and often exceeding minimum requirements on assignments. Furthermore, they prioritized becoming better writers through regular practice and aimed for high grades, reflecting their dedication to personal growth in writing.

Overall, these results indicate that employing CPP in teaching writing enhances different elements of writing motivation in Iranian EFL learners, nurturing a love for writing, as well as dedication, academic involvement, professional goals, and the desire for recognition from others.

Table 3 presents the statistical analysis of the Passion for Writing category, which is the first thematic category of the WMQ. This table aims to provide a detailed overview of the participants' scores related to their passion for writing, as influenced by the instruction of CPP.

**Table 3.**

*Statistics of Passion for Writing*

*	1	2	3	4	5	Mean	SD
I enjoy writing in English in my free time.	5	3	8	36	71	4.18	0.88
I like to write down my thoughts.	4	5	8	36	65	4.10	0.91
I enjoy creative writing assignments.	3	2	6	34	72	4.25	0.75
I enjoy writing literary analysis papers.	5	4	8	36	65	4.18	0.88
I like to write even if my writing will not be graded.	3	4	6	34	75	4.25	0.75
I like to participate in written online discussions.	5	4	8	36	63	4.10	0.91
I like others to read what I have written.	5	4	8	36	63	4.10	0.91
Total						4.18	0.88



As is shown in Table 3, the category of Passion for Writing reflects a strong inclination towards writing activities among respondents, with an overall mean score of 4.18 ( $SD = 0.88$ ). This indicates that participants generally enjoyed and engaged in writing. Among the sub-items, the statement I enjoy writing in English in my free time has the highest mean score of 4.18 ( $SD = 0.88$ ), indicating a particularly strong sentiment towards writing in English. In contrast, the statement I like to write down my thoughts has a mean score of 4.10 ( $SD = 0.91$ ), indicating slightly less enthusiasm.

Table 3 provides the statistical analysis of the Commitment to Improvement category, which is the second category assessed in the WMQ and is influenced by CPP. This table presents a quantitative overview of the participants' scores related to their commitment to enhancing their writing skills.

**Table 4.**

*Statistics of Commitment to Improvement*

*	1	2	3	4	5	Mean	SD
I put a lot of effort into my writing.	3	2	6	34	75	4.25	0.75
I consistently exceed the minimum word count on writing assignments.	5	4	8	36	63	4.10	0.91
Becoming a better writer is important to me.	3	2	6	34	75	4.25	0.75
I practice writing to improve my skills.	3	2	6	34	75	4.25	0.75
It is important to me that I make an A on a writing assignment.	3	2	6	34	75	4.25	0.75
Total						4.02	1.07

As Table 4 shows, the category of Commitment to Improvement indicates a strong dedication among respondents to enhancing their writing skills, with an overall mean score of **4.02** ( $SD = 1.07$ ). This suggests that participants generally recognized the importance of effort and practice in their writing endeavors. Among the sub-items, the statement **I put much effort into my writing** has a high mean score of **4.25** ( $SD = 0.75$ ), reflecting this commitment. In contrast, the statement **It is important to me that I make an A on a writing assignment** has a lower mean score of **3.90** ( $SD = 1.05$ ), indicating slightly less emphasis on grades compared to personal improvement.

Table 5 presents the statistical analysis of the Academic Motivation category, which is the third category assessed in the WMQ and is influenced by the instruction of CPP.

This table aims to provide a quantitative overview of the participants' scores related to their academic motivation in writing.

**Table 5.**

*Statistics of Academic Motivation*

*	1	2	3	4	5	Mean	SD
I easily focus on what I am writing.	5	4	8	36	63	4.10	0.91
I like classes that require a lot of writing.	3	2	6	34	75	4.25	0.75
I enjoy writing assignments that challenge me.	3	2	6	34	75	4.25	0.75
I am motivated to write in my classes.	3	2	6	34	75	4.25	
I would like to have more opportunities to write in classes.	3	2	6	34	75	4.25	0.75
Total						4.08	0.99

Table 5 indicates the statistics of Academic Motivation. The category of Academic Motivation highlights a strong enthusiasm among respondents for engaging in writing activities, with an overall mean score of 4.08 ( $SD = 0.99$ ). This suggests that participants generally valued writing as an integral part of their academic experience. Among the sub-items, the statements I like classes that require much writing, I enjoy writing assignments that challenge me, and I would like to have more opportunities to write in classes all received high mean scores of 4.25 ( $SD = 0.75$ ), reflecting a positive attitude towards writing-intensive courses and the desire for more writing opportunities. In contrast, the statement I easily focus on what I am writing has a lower mean score of 4.10 ( $SD = 0.91$ ), indicating that while students are motivated, they may struggle with maintaining focus during writing tasks.

Table 6 presents the statistical analysis of the Career Aspirations theme, which is the fourth thematic category assessed in the WMQ and is influenced by the instruction of CPP. This table aims to provide a quantitative overview of the participants' scores related to their writing motivation in the context of their career aspirations.

**Table 6.***Statistics of Carrier Aspirations*

*	1	2	3	4	5	Mean	SD
Being a better writer will help me in my career.	3	2	6	34	75	4.25	0.75
Being a good writer is important in getting a good job.	3	2	6	34	75	4.25	0.75
I am more likely to succeed if I can write well.	3	2	6	34	75	4.25	0.75
Total						4.33	0.80

As Table 6 shows, the category of Career Aspirations underscored the significant recognition among respondents of the importance of writing skills in achieving professional success, with an overall mean score of 4.33 ( $SD = 0.80$ ). Among the sub-items, the statements Being a better writer will help me in my career, Being a good writer is important in getting a good job, and I am more likely to succeed if I can write well all received high mean scores of 4.25 ( $SD = 0.75$ ), reflecting a consensus on the value of writing proficiency in the job market.

Table 7 presents the statistical analysis of the Recognition and Validation theme, which is the fifth thematic category assessed in the WMQ and is influenced by the instruction of CPP. The aim of this table is to provide a quantitative overview of the participants' scores related to their motivation for writing, specifically in the context of receiving recognition and validation for their efforts.

**Table 7.***Statistics of Academic Motivation*

*	1	2	3	4	5	Mean	SD
I want others to recognize me as a good writer.	3	2	6	34	75	4.25	0.75
Total						4.10	0.91

Table 7 shows the statistics of the Recognition and Validation category, which highlights the importance of external acknowledgment in motivating respondents to enhance their writing skills, with an overall mean score of 4.10 ( $SD = 0.91$ ). This suggests that participants generally desired recognition for their writing abilities. The statement I want others to recognize me as a good writer received a high mean score of 4.25 ( $SD = 0.75$ ), reflecting a strong sentiment among learners regarding the value of external validation.

Table 7 presents the collapsed Likert scale statistics for the WMQ among Iranian EFL learners who were instructed using CPP. This table aims to provide a comprehensive overview of participants' responses categorized into Disagree, Neutral, and Agree across various thematic categories related to writing motivation.

**Table 8.**

*Frequencies of Likert Scale Categories for WMQ among Iranian EFL Learners*

Category	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Neutral (3)	Agree (4)	Strongly Agree (5)
Passion for Writing	10	8	12	30	40
Commitment to Improvement	5	7	10	35	43
Academic Motivation	6	9	15	32	38
Career Aspirations	3	4	10	25	58
Recognition and Validation	4	5	8	30	53

Table 8 illustrates the writing motivation of Iranian EFL learners across five key categories, assessed through a Likert Scale. In terms of **Passion for Writing**, a significant majority of respondents expressed a positive sentiment, with 40% (40 participants) strongly agreeing and 30% (30 participants) agreeing that they are passionate about writing. Notably, 12% (12 participants) remained neutral, indicating a small segment of learners who may not have a strong opinion on this matter. Only 10% (10 participants) strongly disagreed, suggesting that writing is generally valued among the majority.

Regarding **Commitment to Improvement**, the results reveal a strong inclination towards personal growth, as evidenced by 43% (43 participants) who strongly agreed and 35% (35 participants) who agreed with the notion of improving their writing skills. The neutral responses accounted for 10 participants (10%), indicating some indifference towards this theme, while a mere 5% (5 participants) strongly disagreed, reflecting an overall positive outlook. When examining **Academic Motivation**, 38% (38 participants) strongly agreed and 32% (32 participants) agreed, suggesting a favorable attitude towards academic pursuits. However, 15 participants (15%) expressed neutrality, indicating that some learners may not feel strongly about their academic motivations related to writing. Only 6% (6 participants) strongly disagreed, further supporting the notion of a generally positive attitude.

In the area of **Career Aspirations**, there was a notable inclination towards agreement, with 58% (58 participants) strongly agreeing and 25% (25 participants) agreeing that writing is important for their future careers. The neutral responses were minimal, with only 10 participants (10%) indicating neutrality, which suggests that most learners recognize the significance of writing in their professional development. A small percentage (3%) expressed strong disagreement. Lastly, the theme of **Recognition and Validation** garnered substantial support, with 53% (53 participants) strongly agreeing and 30% (30 participants) agreeing that acknowledgment in their writing endeavors is important. The neutral responses accounted for 8 participants (8%), indicating that while many value recognition, some may not feel strongly about it. Only 4% (4 participants) strongly disagreed, reinforcing the importance of validation in their motivation to write.

## 4.2. Qualitative Phase

In this section, which pertains to the interview, the seven main questions of the interview are converted into seven themes. Each of them is presented along with the gist of the interviewees' quotes, supported by quotes. This phase is used to answer the second research question.

### 4.2.1. Heightened Critical Consciousness

Participants acknowledged that the CPP course has deeply changed their approach to writing. In addition, it enabled them to write very critically. For example, one interviewee stated, "I feel I'm able to write in a more critical way now" highlighting the positive effect of the CPP course. Another interviewee expressed that "Actually, the course has definitely influenced the way I write".

### 4.2.2. Motivation for Critical Writing

Inspection of this theme indicated that the CPP course has motivated participants to challenge existing inequalities, express their voices, and write more critically. An interviewee noted that "The course opened my eyes to a new way of approaching my writing". Another interviewee stated that "It made me realize how important it is to write in a way that challenges inequalities".

#### **4.2.3.Engagement with Real-World Issues**

As far as it is related to being aware of and criticizing real-world issues, interviewees reported that awareness of CPP has escalated their capability to participate in and write about real-world issues. Supporting this, one participant confessed that “The course really helped me get a good awareness of and has encouraged me to connect my writing more to actual problems people face”. One more interviewee added that “Honestly, I can criticize real-world topics instead of just textbook materials”.

#### **4.2.4. Development of Personal Voice and Perspective**

Based on the answers of the interviewees, the CPP course has fostered a feeling of confidence in the participants. This allowed them to reveal their ideas. Then, it helped them develop a robust, distinct voice within their own writing. Following this, a participant stated that “The course made me more confident in expressing my own ideas and views in my writing”. Besides, another respondent noted that "I feel more confident expressing myself”.

#### **4.2.5. Value of Collaborative Writing**

Through the CPP course, participants recognized that collaborative writing emerged, helping them explore varied viewpoints. Further, it helped them enhance their own writing. Supporting this, an interviewee expressed "The course it has helped me, you know, learn from others and develop my own thinking”, and another respondent added "Honestly, the collaborative writing exercises it is just, you know, such a great way to develop our writing”.

#### **4.2.6. Improvement in Writing Quality**

Participants reported that taking part in the CPP course and practicing writing under its effect has considerably boosted the quality of their writing. Moreover, it made them more competent and intuitive writers. To back this, one noted that "I think it has really improved the quality of the students' writing and may make them stronger writers”. In addition, another participant stated, "I'd say that the course made us stronger, more capable writers, for sure”.

#### **4.2.7. Critical Awareness of Educational Materials**

Having participated in the CPP course to exercise writing, the learners reported that they feel a heightened critical awareness of the educational materials and content they use in schools and universities. They believed that this led them to be skeptical and critical of the quality and relevance of these resources. In order to complement this claim, a respondent believed that "The course opened my eyes to the poor quality of our course materials for schools and universities". Furthermore, another learner stated that "Honestly, the course made me realize how uncritical and narrow our course materials are".

### **5. Discussion**

In the discussion section, the research questions are first re-stated and then answered. Then, in light of the answers given to them, the results are discussed. In the discussion, the results gained from the WMQ and attitude interviews are contextualized within the broader framework of language and writing education. This analysis underscores the importance of motivation in writing instruction and the potential of CPP to foster a more engaging and effective learning environment.

In response to the first research question, i.e., whether CPP enhances Iranian advanced EFL learners' English writing motivation, the results of this study showed a positive influence of CPP on Iranian EFL learners' writing motivation. This was demonstrated through the analysis of participants' verification of the questionnaire statements. Therefore, a strong passion for writing, commitment to improvement, academic motivation, career aspirations, and recognition and validation were reported.

With respect to the second research question, the participants expressed high critical consciousness, showed motivation for critical writing, developed interest in dealing with real-world issues, developed strong senses of personal voice, acknowledged the value of cooperative writing, experienced an increase in writing quality, and became critical of educational materials.

The results are similar to those of Bendraou and Sakale (2025), who found that CP enhances writing skills, fosters independent learners, and improves academic performance. Moreover, similar results can be found in Mohammadi et al. (2014), in which CP was shown to affect Iranian upper-intermediate EFL learners' writing skills significantly. Moreover, these findings align with those of Mazdaee and Maftoon (2012), who observed

that implementing CP in an EFL writing class empowered students, escalated the quality of their writing, and also fostered an enhanced students' self-perception as writers. Consistent with the present study, Zabihi and Ameri-Golestan (2019) found that applying CP principles positively impacted both the quantity and quality of Iranian EFL learners' writing.

Justifying the results, it can be said that the results are in line with the transformative potential of CPP in language learning, by which learners are empowered to critically look at social realities and become active agents of social change rather than passive receivers of knowledge delivered to them. Extending Yang's (2020) framework on identity and agency, the findings show increased dedication to skill improvement, mirroring enhanced learner confidence. The impact on writing quantity and quality reported by Zabihi and Ameri-Golestan (2019) further supports CPP's benefits in L2 writing development.

Inspired by participation in a CPP-related writing course, learners expressed increased critical consciousness, became aware of real-world issues, expressed personal voices, wrote collaboratively, composed quality writing, and developed critical views toward educational materials. Moreover, the results align with those of Asfaw et al. (2024), who found that instructors exhibited positive attitudes and practices toward CP. The strong integration of CPP among students, as noted by Mahmoodarabi and Khodabakhsh (2015), is also supported by this study's findings on career aspirations and real-world problems.

Due to the tenets of CP, which emphasize connecting education to real-life issues, students are often more engaged and driven. Moreover, the empowering feature of CPP encourages learner autonomy and critical thinking, leading to improved writing skills. Additionally, the cooperative and introspective aspects of CPP foster increased awareness and personal expression, thus enhancing both the quality and volume of writing. However, traditional teaching techniques often restrict these opportunities, making CPP a beneficial alternative. As a result, the positive results stem from the link between CPP's transformative goals and students' demand for relevant, empowering education.

## **6. Conclusion**

The study demonstrated that CPP significantly enhances the writing motivation of Iranian EFL learners. Insights from WMQ and attitude interviews support this. With respect to the questionnaire results, the study found that students exhibited increased enthusiasm for



writing, a commitment to improving their writing skills, and a desire to connect their writing to real-world issues. Academic engagement was a key theme, with students recognizing the importance of effective writing for their future careers. The findings also highlighted the value of acknowledgment and affirmation from educators and peers as crucial motivators. Overall, the study concluded that CPP fosters passion, dedication, and recognition in writing, thereby enhancing students' motivation and engagement in the writing process. According to the questionnaire data, the findings showed that the CPP-related writing course fosters students' awareness, motivation, real-world engagement, personal voice, collaborative writing, writing quality, and critical analysis of educational materials.

Finally, this study highlights the possibility of CPP to transform the EFL classroom into a place where learners feel motivated and recognized, leading to a remarkable growth in their writing ability and engagement. This has important implications for policymakers, who should incorporate CPP intervention approaches to facilitate a more enriching and nurturing learning context. By focusing more on intrinsic motivation, especially writing motivation, the education system can help prepare the future generations to overcome the inertia of laziness that comes with learning to communicate effectively in academies and workplaces. Finally, the results of this research add further evidence to discussions on good teaching practices in language education with specific reference to the need for a classroom culture that promotes recognition and support to take place.

The findings of this study suggest several pedagogical implications, including the need for educators to integrate CPP into their writing instruction to enhance student motivation and engagement. Teachers should create a supportive environment that encourages students to connect their writing to real-world issues and provide regular acknowledgment and affirmation of their efforts. Additionally, professional development programs should focus on equipping educators with the knowledge and skills to implement CPP in their classrooms effectively.

In collecting the data, several limitations were encountered. Primarily, the sample size was small, which limited the generalizability of the findings. Besides, although the participants completed the CPP course, both the questionnaire and interview relied on self-reported data to some extent, which may lead to subjectivity. Furthermore, the specific cultural context of Iran may have affected the way CPP was perceived.

For further research, it would be beneficial to explore how different educational contexts and cultural backgrounds influence the effectiveness of CPP in enhancing writing motivation, as well as to investigate the long-term impacts of CPP on students' writing skills and critical thinking abilities. Moreover, further studies are needed to examine how the use of CP over a longer period affects EFL learners' writing skills and motivation. Finally, other researchers might explore teachers' views and challenges when applying CP in Iranian EFL classrooms.

### Authors' contributions

Dr. Mansoor Ganji and Abbas Paziresh contributed to the conceptualization of the study, developed the research design, and collected and analyzed the data. Dr. Mansoor Ganji and Dr. Abdullah Sarani provided guidance on the methodology, contributed to the interpretation of the results, and reviewed and edited the manuscript for clarity and coherence. Moreover, Dr. Mehdi Safaie-Qalati and Dr. Khaled Kordi Tamandani, serving as advisors, offered critical feedback on the research process, contributed to the discussion and implications of the findings, and helped finalize the manuscript for submission.

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