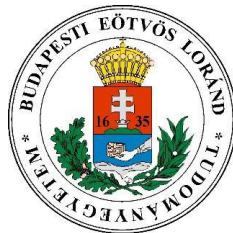


**DOCTORAL (PHD) DISSERTATION**

**EI PHYOE MAUNG**

**EFL Teacher Educators' Motivational Strategies and  
Pre-service Teachers' Motivational Dispositions in English  
Writing and the Process Writing Approach**



**Eötvös Loránd University  
Budapest, 2025**

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Writing and the Process Writing Approach**

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*I dedicate this dissertation to my beloved father and aunt, whose memories continue to inspire me, even though they left me during the course of this work. I also dedicate it to my mother, my other aunts, my younger brothers, and my life partner, whose unwavering presence, unconditional love, and support lifted me through every challenge along the way.*

*“It is not in the stars to hold our destiny but in ourselves.”*

—Inspired by William Shakespeare’s *Julius Caesar* (1599)

*In Memory of*

*Prof Dr Zoltán Dörnyei*

*(1960–2022)*

*Whose pioneering work on the L2 Motivational Self System  
inspired this research.*

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## Abstract

This doctoral study investigates how English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teacher educators in the Hungarian teacher education context can enhance the pre-service teachers' English writing performance, focussing on the process writing approach (PWA) in a more motivating classroom environment. Following the framework of Dornyei's (2005; 2009) L2 Motivational Self System, Hyland's (2003; 2019; 2021) process writing approach, and Deci and Ryan's (2018; 2020) Self-Determination Theory, the research explores EFL pre-service teachers' motivational dispositions in English writing through the PWA while also examining teacher educators' motivational strategies they employ in teaching writing classes, as well as their perspectives on the particular writing approach. Simultaneously, the study explores how teacher educators can enhance their pedagogical skills through continuous professional development (CPD) and institutional support within the context investigated.

An exploratory sequential mixed methods design was employed in this study, incorporating both quantitative and qualitative phases. First, an online questionnaire was administered to 148 pre-service teachers to investigate the motivating effects of different aspects of English writing, and their perspectives on the *process writing approach*, followed by in-depth online semi-structured interviews with 10 EFL pre-service teachers and 10 EFL teacher educators in the Hungarian context. Thematic analysis of the qualitative data revealed major influential factors that strengthen students' motivation in writing, encompassing the role of pre-writing activities, teachers' feedback, scaffolding, and the ideal L2 selves. The findings also shed light on the motivational benefits of the student-centred writing approach, as well as the limitations of AI-generated writing tools, while implementing deeper learning in second language (L2) classrooms, which was newly emerged through the semi-structured interviews.

Furthermore, the study revealed that teacher educators have a strong willingness to apply process writing in practical ways, and they expressed a need for more strategy-focused training courses, peer collaboration, and institutional support for their professional development and ultimately to support their students' writing skills acquisition. The findings render valuable insights that improvements in curriculum design, bottom-up CPD training programmes, and policy-level support are essential in the context explored to convey desirable educational outcomes.

All in all, this doctoral dissertation conveys pedagogical, research, societal, and policy-making implications for improving teaching writing skills in the contexts of EFL teacher education, and offers valuable recommendations for strengthening motivation-orientated writing pedagogies with the student-centred approach of process writing in the Hungarian teacher training universities.

## Table of Contents

<b>1. Introduction</b> .....	1
1.1 Background and rationale .....	1
1.2 Research problem and purpose .....	6
1.3 Research scope .....	6
1.4 Theoretical and practical significance.....	7
1.5 Structure of the dissertation .....	7
1.6 Definitions.....	8
<b>2. Review of Related Literature</b> .....	11
2.1 English Language Teacher Education (ELTEd) programmes in Hungary:	
A historical overview .....	11
2.2 Motivation for language learners .....	15
2.2.1 The social-psychological approach .....	17
2.2.2 The cognitive-situated approach .....	20
2.2.3 The socio-dynamic approach.....	22
2.2.4. Self-determination theory.....	25
2.2.5 The L2 Motivational Self System, significant others and instrumentality .....	27
2.2.6 Resilience and motivation .....	31
2.2.7 Competition and motivation.....	31
2.3 Writing .....	32
2.3.1 The difficulty of mastering writing for EFL students .....	32
2.3.2 General writing vs. academic writing.....	33
2.3.3 The history of process writing: A pedagogical revolution (1980s-1990s) .....	35
2.3.4 Theory and practice of teaching writing approaches.....	37
2.3.5 English writing in the age of Artificial Intelligence (AI) .....	42
<b>3. Research Design</b> .....	55
3.1 Research aim .....	55
3.2 Research questions.....	55
3.3 Mixed methods research .....	56
3.4 Demographic data of participants .....	57
3.5 Sampling strategy.....	60
3.6 Instruments.....	60
3.7 Participant recruitment.....	61
3.8 Development of semi-structured interview guides.....	61
3.8.1 Theoretical grounding .....	62

3.9 Data analysis overview .....	62
3.10 Ethical considerations .....	63
<b>4. Results and Findings .....</b>	<b>64</b>
4.1 Study 1: Pilot study for validating the questionnaire .....	64
4.1.1 Aim.....	64
4.1.2 Instrument.....	64
4.1.3 Participants and sampling method.....	66
4.1.4 Data analysis and findings.....	66
4.2 Study 2: Quantitative questionnaire study .....	70
4.2.1 Participants.....	70
4.2.2 Instrument.....	71
4.2.3 Data collection.....	71
4.2.4 Data analysis .....	71
4.2.5 Results and findings of the quantitative questionnaire study .....	71
4.3 Study 3: Pilot interviews with EFL pre-service teachers and teacher educators.....	86
4.3.1 Participants.....	86
4.3.2 The instrument.....	87
4.3.3 The development process .....	87
4.4 Study 4: Qualitative interviews with EFL pre-service teachers and teacher educators .....	93
4.4.1 Data collection and analysis .....	93
4.4.2 Results and findings of interview study with pre-service teachers .....	99
4.4.3 Results and findings of interview study with teacher educators .....	124
<b>5. Discussions .....</b>	<b>140</b>
5.1 Implications of the doctoral study.....	140
Pedagogical implications.....	140
Research implications .....	141
Societal implications .....	142
Policy-making implications.....	142
5.2 Limitations of the doctoral study .....	143
<b>Bibliography .....</b>	<b>144</b>
<b>Appendices .....</b>	<b>162</b>
Appendix A.....	162
Informed Consent and Description of Research (online study) .....	162
Appendix B .....	164
The final version of the questionnaire.....	164

Appendix C .....	169
A short description of the process writing approach .....	169
Appendix D .....	170
The final version of the interview guide for pre-service teachers .....	170
Appendix E .....	173
The final version of the interview guide for teacher educators .....	173

### List of Figures

<b>Figure 1</b> A process model of writing instruction (Hyland, 2003) .....	9
<b>Figure 2</b> Dörnyei's (2005) model of L2MSS and pre-service teachers' possible motives in their motivational dispositions (Maung, 2022).....	30
<b>Figure 3</b> Hyland's (2003, 2019, 2021) five stages of the process writing approach.....	41
<b>Figure 4</b> Flow of participant recruitment and data collection.....	58
<b>Figure 5</b> Correspondences between the RQ, SQs and the mixed methods studies.....	59

### List of Tables

<b>Table 1</b> Scales of the questionnaire .....	65
<b>Table 2</b> Reliability coefficient of the scales in the Hungarian context.....	66
<b>Table 3</b> Comparative analysis of the scales in the Hungarian context .....	67
<b>Table 4</b> Results of regression analysis of the motivational scales with motivated learning behaviour as the criterion variable (significance level $p < 0.01$ ).....	69
<b>Table 5</b> Reliability coefficients of the scales.....	72
<b>Table 6</b> Comparative analysis of the scales.....	73
<b>Table 7</b> Correlations between the scales ( $p < 0.05$ ).....	77
<b>Table 8</b> Significant correlations between the scales and criterion measure scale (motivated learning behaviour [MLB]) ( $p < 0.05$ ) .....	78
<b>Table 9</b> Results of regression analysis of the motivational scales with motivated learning behaviour as the criterion variable (significance level $p < 0.05$ ).....	81
<b>Table 10</b> Gender differences in motivational disposition toward English writing .....	83
<b>Table 11</b> Activities participants usually do to improve their English writing .....	86
<b>Table 12</b> Demographic data of pilot pre-service teacher participants .....	91
<b>Table 13</b> Demographic data of pilot teacher educator participants .....	92
<b>Table 14</b> Demographic data of pre-service teacher participants (qualitative study).....	95
<b>Table 15</b> Emerging themes of the interview study categorised into concepts discussed in the review of related literature (pre-service teachers) .....	98
<b>Table 16</b> Demographic data of teacher educator participants (qualitative study).....	120
<b>Table 17</b> Emerging themes of the interview study with teacher educators, categorised into concepts discussed in the review of related literature .....	122
<b>Table 18</b> Emerging themes of the interview study categorised into concepts discussed in the review of related literature (teacher educators).....	123
<b>Table 19</b> Newly emerging theme of the interview study with teacher educators regarding AI-assisted writing tools versus the Process Writing Approach (PWA).....	139

## 1. Introduction

### 1.1 Background and rationale

Exploring learners' individual differences, such as motivation, aptitude, learning styles, and personality traits, et cetera, has remained a cornerstone for second language (SL) and foreign language (FL) researchers for understanding variability in language learning outcomes in the applied linguistics field. Motivation is regarded as one of the most prominent individual differences, and it has been acknowledged as a key driving force to learners not only in uplifting their learning skills but also in achieving their academic goals (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011; Gardner, 2010; Hayes, 1996). Over the past two decades, an evolution in motivation research in the SL field has taken place as researchers' perspectives on motivation have shifted from a static toward a more dynamic, socially situated, and context-sensitive view. They have contributed to reconceptualising motivational theories of language learning in a broader scope. Lamb (2017), and Mercer and Dörnyei (2020) claim that motivation in language learning is a complex and socio-cognitive concept owing to the fact that learners' goals, values, emotional dimensions, and learning environments are tightly intertwined.

Regarding the status of English as a global and common language in communication, this dissertation situates English as a main focus within the context of second and foreign language acquisition. Without a wide knowledge of English, communication among nations all over the world would have been impossible. Billions of people are in the learning process, and many are exposed to this unflinching language. Various predictions reveal that by 2050, half the world population will be proficient in the English language (Hancock, 2013).

The English language is regarded as a kind of global lingua franca, and it has a great impact on sharing knowledge, different traditions and cultures of various nations. As the presence of this powerful language is evident in every field of life, increasing emphasis has been laid on developing English proficiency of the learners in Hungary in recent years like other countries. In Hungary, all students have to learn a foreign language, most commonly English language, starting from primary schools, typically at the age of 9 or 10. English is taught as a foreign language and is the most widely selected option in schools throughout the country (Eurydice, 2024). In higher education settings, although the mandatory state language examination required for university graduation was abolished as a legislative change in 2022, a variety of universities have established their own foreign language requirements based on programme-specific needs and institutional policies. Nevertheless, the majority of higher education students choose to study English language among various language options, and join

foreign language teacher preparation programmes due to its global relevance, widespread applicability in academia, job opportunities and labour market demands (Csizér, 2020). Therefore, teachers and students from all levels need to become proficient in this language.

While studying English, several researchers have acknowledged that writing in a foreign language is one of the most challenging skills to master for English as a foreign language (EFL) students as it is concerned with their high cognitive load, complex genre conventions, rhetorical control, and anxiety rooted in evaluation pressure on their written products (Bailey, 2015; Clark, 2023; Hyland, 2019; Young & Ferguson, 2020). Writing has an increasing significance for them as it represents the main medium that they use to do assignments in the different subject areas and answer examination questions. In fact, they find it very difficult to write properly, and they cannot share their ideas and thoughts (Bailey, 2015; Hyland, 2021). As a result, most of them cannot accomplish their tasks; they are afraid of writing a topic or an assignment. They do not know how to start, how to generate ideas, or how to conclude an essay, and they, finally, feel demotivated to write (Bailey, 2015; Hyland, 2019; Young & Ferguson, 2020). They have few technical skills of writing acceptable compositions in English. Consequently, strengthening their motivation to be able to write well becomes a widely recognised pedagogical priority for language teachers around the world including Hungary.

In recent decades, English language teachers in England had been trying to improve students' writing skills by finding out a new teaching method. They have developed a new approach to teaching writing, the *process approach* instead of the *product approach*, the traditional approach. They conducted research to test this approach, and their findings have shown that the approach is much more effective than the product approach. They have been able to solve difficulties in teaching writing by applying the approach, and now, it is widely used in teaching writing in England (Wyse, 2019; Wyse & Jones, 2008).

Bailey (2015), Clark (2023), and Hyland (2021) clearly state that the process approach focused on the steps involved in creating a piece of work, and *the process writing* allows for the fact that no text can be perfect, but that a writer will get closer to perfection by producing, reflecting on, discussing and reworking successive drafts of a text. Fowler (1989) acknowledges that *process writing* emerged as a reaction to the product approach, in that it met the need to match the writing processes inherent in writing in one's mother tongue, and consequently, allowed learners to express themselves better as individuals.

For students to succeed in a foreign language generally, and writing skills specifically, they need practice. They need to brainstorm and pre-write before they write to share their ideas and knowledge. *The process writing approach* shifted the attention from the traditional view of

looking at writing purely as a product to emphasising *the process of writing*. Students need to realise that what is first written down on paper is not the final product, it is only the beginning. The process approach depends on giving students time to work on what they want to write, going from pre-writing activities to the final draft (Godwin-Jones, 2018; Johnson, 2024). Apart from being familiar with the steps and benefits of *the process writing approach*, it is equally important for students to be motivated during the writing process, as the significance of motivation, as a predictor of achievement and performance in academic contexts has been proved extensively (Csizér & Dörnyei, 2005; Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2021; Hiromori, 2009; Winke, 2013).

According to Hyland (2019, 2021) and Johnson (2024), the major aim of *the process writing approach* is to emphasise the development of thinking skills along with the writing process. In this respect, while nurturing the process of writing in language classes, teachers' skills play the most important role in developing students' writing performance through this approach. The primary role of a language teacher in a language class, especially in teaching writing, is to create opportunities and develop activities so that students are able to practice the language in a meaningful and motivating context. In this regard, a good language teacher can help their students develop language skills, while at the same time, can motivate them as well.

Although empirical studies that inspect learners' motivation in second language acquisition (SLA) abound, exploration about the role of language teachers as motivational agents, and their teaching strategies in a motivating manner, especially in second language (L2) academic writing has garnered limited attention in the field of applied linguistics. In fact, teachers serve not only as content disseminators but also as the key players in classrooms who actively shape the motivating classroom environment for students through their instructional decisions, affective engagement, and teaching strategies (Guilloteaux & Dörnyei, 2008; Mercer & Kostoulas, 2018). While studies that investigated teachers' motivational teaching practices grounded in classroom settings have been widely documented, studies that systematically explored how teacher educators design, implement, and reflect on those practices within teacher education contexts are still limited (Kubanyiova, 2012; Hiver & Whitehead, 2018). Therefore, it has become an imperative issue we should address today since teacher educators have a cascading impact on students', in other words, pre-service teachers' attitudes, beliefs and future classroom behaviours.

Being an effective and highly qualified teacher is one of the most important human resources in any education system all over the world. As mentioned above, teachers are regarded as the most professional agents in delivering knowledge, stimulate, and support their

own efforts in knowledge development to students, and the most responsible individual in the teaching-learning process. Zeichner (2014) mentions that currently, there is an intense debate that is taking place in many parts of the world about the kind of teaching and teacher education that should define education in the twenty-first century. Therefore, the role of teacher education programmes has become vital to support quality teaching, which means teaching excellence and producing quality teachers for students' achievement since a few decades ago. Zeichner (2014) has classified teaching into two visions - teachers as professionals, which means teachers who are qualified in teaching, methodologies, pedagogies who can convey students' achievement, and teachers as technicians, which means teachers who can promote their career through research life. He emphasises his view on teachers as professionals, which means quality teaching and quality teachers. Therefore, producing well-qualified pre-service teachers has become the most fundamental and important for teacher training institutions.

Given this multidimensional context, the research sets out to investigate the motivational strategies employed by EFL teacher educators and pre-service teachers' motivational dispositions in English writing with a special focus on *the process writing approach* in the Hungarian higher education contexts. Moreover, it is also concerned to explore the perspectives of English language teachers and students on this approach. It is supposed that teachers need to foster this approach in their classrooms to promote students' critical and creative thinking skills, which are also included in the 21<sup>st</sup> century skills (Trilling & Fadel, 2009; Hyland, 2019). This research can support technical teaching skills for language teachers in higher education institutions to promote students' writing performance. Furthermore, this research can also support the significant shift from the traditional approach to a learner centred one in language classes, especially in teaching writing skills. Brown (1992) and Young and Ferguson (2020) support my idea that if teachers want to create a community of learners, they must set up a classroom ethos that differ from the traditional classrooms.

Hargreaves (1999) claims that creating a professional knowledge society in schools or universities is the urgent need for management of schools and universities and effective teaching learning nowadays. According to Hargreaves, knowledge creation can be analysed from two perspectives – the characteristics of knowledge-creating schools and the process of knowledge creation. Here, Hargreaves' idea of knowledge dissemination is excluded because it is not related to this study.

Hargreaves (1999) claims that the ultimate goal of the knowledge creation and sharing processes is to academically improve the surroundings, and the whole society by up-to-date research findings. As a matter of fact, for instance, the idea of *the process writing approach* is

not a new one for many countries, including Hungary. However, some teachers may have limited knowledge about this approach due to its technical term. In this study, I aim to contribute to knowledge creation by generating and disseminating insights, through my research findings, that can support not only teacher educators but also pre-service teachers in the Hungarian EFL teacher education context, particularly in this writing approach. According to Hargreaves, the research includes a high-quality knowledge creation process. By doing so, it may not be denied that this research is advantageous for English language teaching and learning processes in Hungarian language classrooms, especially in writing classes.

Simultaneously, teaching writing in teacher education and higher education contexts becomes a challenging skill for teachers to teach owing to the technological explosion in Artificial Intelligence (AI), and the emergence of AI-assisted writing tools, such as the Chat Generative Pre-Trained Transformer (ChatGPT), Grammarly, and Quillbot, in recent years. Despite offering numerous benefits and opportunities to both EFL teachers and students, these tools provide concerns for teachers in language teaching and learning since there may be a lack of guidance for students regarding ethical issues such as originality and plagiarism in their writing assignments, and since the utilisation of those softwares may discourage students' thinking and creativity in writing composition (Cardon et al., 2023; Lund & Wang, 2023; Pecorari, 2024). On the other hand, given the human-driven nature of *process writing* that encourages students' active engagement in the writing activity, and practicing essential critical thinking and composition skills in writing, the research is a timing that seems to be a promising solution that may reduce teachers' potential concerns and anxiety in writing instruction while developing students' writing performance to obtain the academic achievement.

Consequently, it can be assumed that this research will be advantageous for EFL teacher educators in Hungary who are attempting to create learner-centred classrooms in the teacher training universities. In other words, creating learner-centred classrooms means creating a community of students who can collaborate well with one another, to be quality students, to be highly motivated students, to be good problem-solvers not only in classrooms but also in real life situations.

Additionally, this research is an evidence-based study, and consequently, a form of knowledge creating which is important for teachers and students in fostering the effective teaching learning process. I am trying to inform Hungarian EFL teacher educators and pre-service teachers by creating knowledge about the *process writing approach*, and by letting them know how to motivate pre-service students in this approach in teacher training universities. In addition, it is expected that this research will be beneficial for language teachers at the higher

education context in Hungary in order to achieve desirable educational outcomes, and develop their professional and academic excellence. This research also aims to contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of motivational dynamics in teacher education contexts, that shed light on teaching writing skills which are often overlooked in EFL teacher preparation programmes in spite of being a skill that is primarily intended for academic and professional communicative competence. Through the research findings, the study ultimately offers theoretical insights into the motivational aspects in the L2 writing pedagogies, and extend practical implications for curriculum developing, instructional designing and teacher training, as well as policy development not only in the Hungarian context but also in the global settings.

### 1.2 Research problem and purpose

Despite the fact that the field of second language motivation in Hungarian teacher education has been widely explored, few studies have focussed on investigating EFL pre-service teachers' motivating effects of different aspects of English writing with a special focus on *the process writing approach*. Additionally, the way EFL teacher educators strategically support students in a more motivating manner in teaching English academic writing has been an unexplored niche in the country.

This research addresses these gaps by exploring the motivational strategies employed by teacher educators in the Hungarian EFL classroom settings, together with the motivational dispositions of pre-service teachers in the application of the *process approach* in teaching writing. I situated this study within the broader fields of applied linguistics, L2 motivation research, and teacher education aiming to support Hungarian English teacher training programmes to a great extent, and also proposing to inform other teacher preparation programmes in the global contexts through the generalisable and transferable research findings.

### 1.3 Research scope

The study is focused on pre-service English teachers enrolled in Hungarian universities who are attending at the undivided teacher preparation programmes, and on their teachers engaged in teaching writing. Writing, here, is defined as the use of English for academic, pedagogical and research purposes, emphasising on *the process writing approach* (Bailey, 2015; Hyland, 2021).

Regarding motivational dimensions, it is conceptualised using the social-psychological, the cognitive-situated and the socio-dynamic frameworks, encompassing constructs such as topic difficulty, teacher's assessment, topic, pre-writing, teacher's strategies, significant others,

ideal L2 self, intrinsic motivation, instrumental motivation, resilience, competition, and motivated learning behaviour. Motivational strategies employed by teacher educators are defined as intentional pedagogical practices which are designed to encourage students' active engagement, brainstorming, creativity, critical thinking, and performance in writing tasks (Dörnyei, 2001; 2005; Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2021).

#### 1.4 Theoretical and practical significance

From a theoretical perspective, this study offers deeper insights into motivation in L2 teaching in teacher education settings, extending previous research focus on students' motivational disposition to the English academic writing instruction, as well as the training of teachers. It also provides a complete picture of understanding into how teachers' motivational strategies have a great impact on students' motivational dispositions, and how they interact in L2 teaching and learning processes by incorporating to the ongoing literature on motivation in the second language acquisition (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2021; Ushioda, 2020) with a particular focus on English writing skills development.

Practically, the research findings convey several implications for curriculum design, instructional strategies and English writing pedagogies. The findings also inform English teacher preparation programmes in Hungary and the development of writing pedagogies that foster pre-service teachers' confidence and competence in academic writing. Furthermore, this study advises policymakers by highlighting the importance of motivational strategies in teaching writing within broader efforts in order to improve teacher recruitment and retention in Hungary. All in all, the research findings inform pre-service teachers how to improve their English writing skills using *the process writing approach*, which seems to be a promising solution to enhance their creativity and critical thinking skills in the AI age. The study also suggests Hungarian EFL teacher educators how to motivate their students by using the approach in order to promote their English writing skills in a more motivating manner.

#### 1.5 Structure of the dissertation

This doctoral dissertation is structured as follows. Chapter 1 offers the background and rationale of the study. Chapter 2 reviews key literature on a historical overview of English language teacher education (ELTEd) programmes in Hungary, theoretical and conceptual perspectives on motivation for language learners with distinct motivational theories that can be applied in language education, as well as the essence and aspects of second language writing with a particular attention to *the process writing approach*. The argumentation between human-

driven writing approach (*process writing*) and AI-assisted writing tools is also presented in this section. Chapter 3 outlines the methodological framework, encompassing research design, participants, instruments, data collection, and data analysis procedures. Chapter 4 presents and discusses the quantitative and qualitative findings, including the results of the pilot studies, integrating the findings to address the research questions. Finally, Chapter 5 concludes the study by summarising the key insights, in terms of pedagogical, research, societal, and policy-making implications, alongside its limitations and recommendations for future research and practice.

## 1.6 Definitions

As it is crucial to provide clarity in the research, establish a coherent analytical framework, ensure a shared understanding of the main concepts, which are majorly focused on this study, as well as to present the discussion and guide the interpretation of the research findings, the following key terms will be defined: EFL pre-service teachers, EFL teacher educators, L2 motivation, motivational disposition in English writing, process writing, academic writing. These definitions will clarify relevant theoretical perspectives, and the specific educational setting in which the doctoral research takes place.

**EFL pre-service teachers:** students of English language teacher education programmes provided by teacher training institutions, typically between the ages of 18 to 25.

**EFL teacher educators:** teachers of pre-service teachers, who provide English language teacher preparation courses, including English writing, at the respective universities, regardless of whether they are native or non-native speakers of English.

**L2 motivation:** the present study is guided by the following definition proposed by Dörnyei and Ushioda (2011).

In the L2 field, motivation concerns the direction and magnitude of human behaviour, in particular: (1) the choice of a particular action, (2) the persistence with it, (3) and the effort expended on it. It is responsible for why people decide to do something, how long they are willing to sustain the activity, and how hard they are going to pursue it. (p. 4)

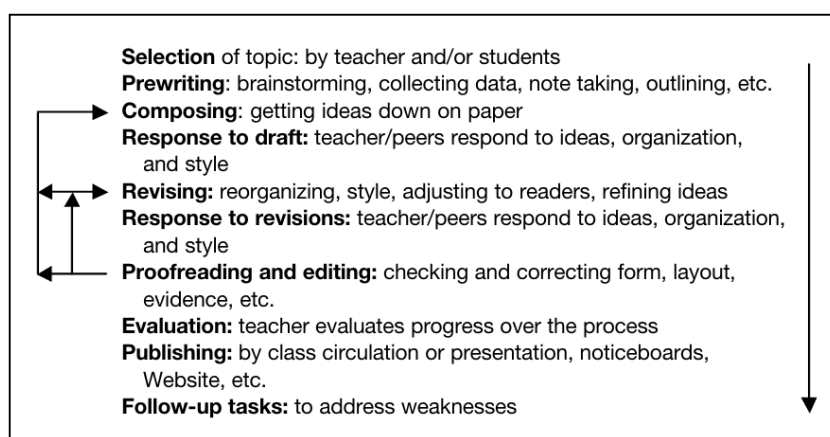
This conceptualisation aligns with the research framework applied in this study regarding an exploration of the motivational disposition of English as a foreign language (EFL) pre-service teachers in English writing with a particular emphasis on the *process writing approach*. As

writing in a foreign language is often regarded as a cognitively demanding, and emotionally charged process, understanding pre-service teachers' motivational disposition in connection with its direction, persistence, and intensity can offer valuable insights into their attitudes in acquiring second language especially in writing, challenges and effectiveness of applying the process writing when viewed through a pedagogical lens.

**Motivational disposition in English writing:** it may be regarded as the consistent set of attitudes, beliefs, and tendencies that influence on EFL pre-service teachers' motivation related to writing in English, for instance, their willingness to write, the value they place on L2 writing, their idealistic future version of themselves as writers, their goal orientations in improving writing, and their emotional responses to writing tasks, such as, enjoyment, resilience, competition, anxiety and confidence (Deci & Ryan, 2020; Dörnyei, 2005; Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011; Fülöp, 2009; Fülöp & Györi, 2021; Jowkar et al., 2014).

**Process writing:** Hyland (2003) highlights the *process approach* as a recursive, cognitive and reflective process that emphasises students' developmental stages of writing. This study is informed by Hyland's (2003) theoretical framework of *process writing* as follows, and as described in Figure 1.

Like the expressive orientation, the process approach to writing teaching emphasises the writer as an independent producer of texts, but it goes further to address the issue of what teachers should do to help learners perform a writing task. The numerous incarnations of this perspective are consistent in recognising basic cognitive processes as central to writing activity and in stressing the need to develop students' abilities to plan, define a rhetorical problem, and propose and evaluate solutions. (p. 10)



**Figure 1** A process model of writing instruction (Hyland, 2003)

**Academic writing:** in the context of this study, academic writing refers to a formal, purposeful, and objective written communication that encourages students' brainstorming, critical thinking, creativity, structured argumentation, and evidence-based reasoning while writing their assignments or term papers. It involves the ability to express their own ideas, support their ideas with reliable and proper sources, organise the ideas systematically and coherently, and present them clearly to the target audience. Here, English language is used as a medium in the teaching learning process. Academic writing, in this study, is explored as a process rather than a final product, which is developed through teacher's instructional strategies in motivating manners, and which is influenced by students' motivational dispositions and self-perceptions (Bailey, 2015; Wilson, 2022).

## 2. Review of Related Literature

This chapter provides a comprehensive historical overview of English language teacher education (ELTEd) programmes in Hungary, examines motivation for language learners, and explores the nature and aspects of writing together with effective teaching writing strategies with a special focus on the *process writing approach* that can enhance second language learners' writing skills in English. Although systematic literature reviews are increasingly favoured in academic research, this chapter adopts a narrative review as I intend to offer a flexible, and thematic exploration of relevant literature, reflecting the broad and interdisciplinary nature of this doctoral research.

### 2.1 English Language Teacher Education (ELTEd) programmes in Hungary:

#### A historical overview

English language education in Hungarian universities operates within a framework that increasingly emphasises internationalisation (Kontra, 2016). Several universities offer degree programmes in English, and students are often required to demonstrate proficiency in English for both academic and professional purposes. The Bologna Process, which standardises higher education across Europe, has also contributed to the prominence of English in Hungarian universities by encouraging mobility and cross-border collaboration, often facilitated by English as the common language (Csizér, 2020; Dörnyei et al., 2006; Kontra, 2016).

English Language Teacher Education (ELTEd) in Hungary has experienced significant changes over the past fifty years, influenced by changes in educational policy, societal expectations, and global trends in language learning (Kontra, 2016). This section examines the development of ELTEd in Hungary across three key periods: the 1970s, the 1980s, and from the 1990s to the present day. It focuses on how these changes have affected teacher preparation, curriculum design, and the practical challenges faced by English language teachers in Hungary.

During the 1970s, English Language Teacher Education in Hungary emphasised theoretical knowledge significantly. Teacher education programmes at Hungarian universities focused primarily on linguistics, literature, and philology, and consequently, English teacher trainees invested the majority of their time to the study of English literature, history, and linguistic theory, while placing minimal emphasis on practical teaching methods (Csizér, 2020; Kontra, 2016). The researchers indicate that courses on teaching methodology comprised of merely 2% of the curriculum, resulting in prospective teachers being inadequately prepared for real classroom challenges.

The emphasis on theory exemplifies the Humboldtian tradition (Kontra, 2016), which prioritised academic research, and comprehensive analysis of language and literature over practical teaching techniques. Teaching was regarded not as a practical skill but as a manifestation of academic expertise cultivated in universities. Teacher trainees were anticipated to gain sufficient linguistic and literary knowledge for teaching; however, they were deficient in exposure to contemporary pedagogical methods and classroom management techniques (Kontra, 2016).

The ELTEd programmes in the 1970s exhibited a significant weakness due to the insufficient amount of required teaching practice for teacher trainees. According to Kontra (2016), the average English teacher trainee engaged in merely 15 hours of supervised teaching practice, which was inadequate, considering the intricacies of classroom management and language instruction. This resulted in several newly qualified teachers entering the profession with limited practical teaching experience, thereby creating a notable disparity between their academic knowledge and practical teaching skills. Contemporary critics, such as Bérczes (1982a, 1982b), noted that training programmes did not have sufficient capacity to equip teachers to address the practical challenges of the profession. The researcher contended that numerous graduates struggled to effectively implement their theoretical knowledge in classroom settings (Kontra, 2016). The disconnection between theory and practice resulted in frustration for both teachers and students, elevating to dissatisfaction in the teaching profession during this time.

Here, it should be noted that this situation should be understood as it was affected by the broader sociopolitical context of Hungary being a closed socialist country in 1970s. During that time, Russian was the first foreign language, and there was no chance to communicate with English speakers (Kontra, 2016).

In the 1980s, some modifications were conducted in English Language Teacher Education, however, the fundamental structure of teacher training largely persisted as it was in the 1970s (Kontra, 2016). The emphasis still remained on contents that focused on theories, with reduced consideration for practical teaching skills. On the one hand, linguistics and literature continued to be the primary focus of the curriculum, but on the other hand, methodology courses were infrequently offered.

The increasing global significance of English has prompted the Hungarian education system to undergo adaptations. English emerged as a crucial international language, prompting Hungarian policymakers to acknowledge the necessity for enhanced language instruction. Despite this awareness, universities exhibited a sluggish response in enacting significant

reforms, while numerous educators persisted in opposing modifications to the conventional, theory-centric model of teacher education (Kontra, 2016).

Throughout the 1980s, educators and policymakers increasingly acknowledged the inadequacies of the teacher education model they were employing. A significant number of pre-service teachers increased their voices, demanding for advanced practical trainings in teaching methodologies and classroom management since they encountered a lack of preparedness for classroom realities. Dörnyei (2009) notified that the *disconnection* between theory and practice hinders the success of novice teachers in the classroom. Moreover, Csizér (2020) and Kontra (2016) pointed out that Hungarian universities exhibited resistance to these changes, majorly attributable to the hierarchical structure of academic institutions. Linguistic research and literary studies were regarded as more prestigious aspects rather than applied linguistics or teacher education in this context, hindering the progress of reforms, that had led to a slow pace of change.

The political transformations of 1989 – 1990 initiated a new phase for English language teacher education in Hungary. As Kontra (2016) stated, the dissolution of the Soviet Union facilitated Hungary's engagement with international influences and collaborations, resulting in substantial reforms in teacher education area. The international organisations, such as the British Council and the World Bank, backed the country through The English Language Teacher Supply Programme (ELTSUP) as a significant initiative during this period. Such collaborations gave birth the establishment of Centres for English Teacher Training (CETTs) in the 1990s, which implemented a practice-focused model of teacher education, emphasising teaching methodology and classroom management described above. The programmes represented a notable transformation from conventional five-year curricula into three-year courses, which were concentrated on the practical teaching skills essential for Hungarian higher education institutions, particularly in the EFL contexts (Csizér, 2020; Kontra, 2016).

The CETT programmes significantly enhanced practical teaching experience. In contrast to the previous requirement of only 15 hours, teacher trainees were required to fulfil approximately 60 hours of tailored teaching practice. This transition enabled trainees to acquire essential classroom experience prior to achieving full qualification as teachers (Csizér, 2020; Kontra, 2016). The programmes incorporated modern teaching methodologies, including communicative language teaching (CLT) and task-based learning, alongside enhanced practical training. These approaches highlighted the importance of student engagement, collaboration, and the application of language in practical contexts, representing a notable transition from the theoretical emphasis of previous teacher education programmes (Csizér, 2020).

Despite notable transformations, ELTEd programmes in Hungary nowadays still exhibit challenges and innovations in parallel. Kálmán and Öveges (2020) pointed out the university entrance requirement and a proof of foreign language certificate by noting that a language proficiency level equivalent to the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) B2 is required as a prerequisite for university entrance in Hungary. This change went into effect at the start of 2014, following significant changes in the method of admissions to higher education institutions as a consequence of the modification of Government Decree 335/2014 (XII. 18.) to Government Decree 423/2012 (XII. 29). This directive, since repealed, specified that effective January 1, 2020, students wishing to enrol into bachelor or undivided degree programmes shall have to submit evidence of having achieved at least the B2 level, measured with a complex language certificate or its equivalence. If that happened, however, as of academic year 2019-2020, there was to be a requirement that for entry to higher education, a certificate of completion of the intermediate level foreign language (FL) examination or an advanced FL matura examination should be provided.

According to them, the decision seems to have two primary goals – the initiative would have certainly served two main purposes —

(1) it was designed to set an external motivational objective for FL learning in public education, (2) it would have provided a solution to the output requirement of the higher education system, that is, it would have eliminated the need for the ‘Degree rescue’ language instruction scheme launched to help young adults pass a B2 level language exam and get their degrees, as obtaining a degree in any field is dependent on a B2 level language exam certificate in Hungary. (p. 124)

On the other hand, the decision brought about two major concerns — the lack of clarity regarding the support systems that would be provided to help students meet the new language requirement, and the possibility of leading to an increased focus on exam-oriented language teaching, which could overshadow the broader goal of developing functional language skills (Kálmán & Öveges, 2020). The researchers claimed that nearly half of all prospective university applicants would have been unable to meet the B2 level language proficiency requirement, and as a result, several higher education programmes that traditionally admitted large numbers of applicants without a language certificate would have faced potential closure due to a sharp decline in the applicants. Furthermore, the push for external motivation to pass exams may not necessarily foster genuine language acquisition, and prioritising exam preparation could detract from efforts to improve practical language use in secondary education. While the B2 language proficiency requirement might have reduced the number of students who delayed receiving

their degrees due to lacking a foreign language certificate, it would not have effectively addressed the underlying issues in foreign language teaching within the higher education system (Kálmán & Öveges, 2020).

In the early 2000s, Hungary became a member of the European Union and implemented the Bologna Process, which sought to standardise higher education throughout Europe. This resulted in additional reforms in English Language Teacher Education, particularly the establishment of a two-tier system comprising a bachelor's degree in English studies and a subsequent master's degree in English teacher education (Csizér, 2020; Kálmán, 2016; Kontra, 2016).

The system facilitated a specialised approach to teacher education, with the Master's phase concentrating on pedagogical skills, teaching methodologies, and practical experience. Csizér (2020) and Kálmán (2016) indicate that the Master's curriculum has been updated to incorporate courses on second language acquisition (SLA) theory, classroom management, and technology-enhanced language learning (TELL), aligning with global trends in language education.

Moreover, practical teaching experience is also a fundamental element of contemporary teacher education programmes in Hungary. Master's students must complete supervised teaching placements to apply the theories and methods acquired in actual classroom environments. This practical experience is essential for their growth as competent educators (Csizér, 2020; Dörnyei, 2009; Kálmán, 2016).

In the Hungarian context, reflective practice has emerged as a significant component of teacher education, alongside practical training. Pre-service teachers are advised to participate in reflective activities, including journal keeping and action research, to critically assess their teaching practices. This reflective approach aids future educators in cultivating an outstanding professional identity and in the ongoing enhancement of their teaching competencies (Dörnyei, 2009).

## 2.2 Motivation for language learners

Dörnyei (1998) argues that the term *motivation* is frequently used in the field of education and educational research, however, there is no general agreement on the term in the literature by various researchers. Dörnyei (1996) points out that motivation theories are very complex since every different psychological perspective on human behaviour is associated with a different theory of motivation. According to him, motivation to learn an L2 is particularly compound, and it presents a unique situation within motivational psychology due to

multifaceted nature and roles of language itself. In his view, language is a communication coding system that can be taught as a school subject; language is an integral part of the individual's identity involved in almost all mental activities; and language is the most important channel of social organisation embedded in the culture of the community where it is used. In this respect, in his view, it may be assumed that motivation to learn an L2 is more complex and difficult than other school subjects.

According to Keller (2006), motivation is one of the most important factors in language learning. Motivation can influence the success or failure of learner's learning in the target language. Keller (1983) explains that motivation is defined as the choices people make as to what experiences or goals they will approach or avoid and the degree of effort they will exert in this respect. Therefore, motivation is the key factor which can influence learners in their ways to achieve their goals. The more motivated learners are, the more efforts they expend in their learning.

Moreover, Williams (1994) argues that learning a foreign language involves far more than simply learning skills or a system of rules, or grammar. According to him, it involves an alteration in self-image, the adoption of new social and cultural behaviours and ways of being, therefore, has a significant impact on the social nature of the learner. As motivation to learn an L2 is particularly complex and it presents a unique situation within motivational psychology due to the versatile nature and roles of language itself (Dörnyei, 1996), therefore, it can be assumed that it is not an easy job for language teachers to motivate learners.

Before discussing several motivational theories, which may be beneficial for and applicable by language teachers in motivating their learners, it is worth learning a comprehensive review of key theoretical and empirical contributions to the study of L2 motivation, with particular emphasis on research grounded in the mainstream psychology. Since the scope of this dissertation has mainly focused on the psychological paradigm, the studies rooted in sociologically oriented theoretical frameworks, such as Norton's (2013) theory of investment, are excluded from this literature review. Thus, the following section is organised thematically, following three broad theoretical orientations in mainstream psychology, namely – *the social-psychological approach, the cognitive-situated approach, and the socio-dynamic approach*. Each of them was characterised by distinct motivational concepts (Dörnyei & Ryan, 2015; Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2013).

The social-psychological approach is a theoretical orientation that emphasises the role of broader social influences (e.g., family, peers, and foreign media) on learners' attitudes toward language learning and their motivational dispositions, whereas the cognitive-situated approach

highlights the general aspects of psychological theories of motivation, which seems to focus more narrowly on the contexts in particular language learning environments including teaching writing classes. Additionally, the socio-dynamic approach, which is the third orientation in mainstream psychological theories, reflects a more developed and recent interest in the dynamic and context-sensitive nature of motivation that lays an emphasis on how motivational patterns shift over time, and across various classroom contexts.

These three approaches are crucial to the evolution of L2 motivation research coupled with significant historical contributions starting from 1959 until today. However, rather than viewing as strictly chronological developments, they are best viewed as coexisting and interrelated perspectives in mainstream psychology. Since current and ongoing empirical studies have been informed by earlier theoretical models, Boo et al. (2015) suggest that L2 motivation research should be conducted through the ongoing integration and refinement of existing theoretical frameworks rather than through discrete and time-bound paradigms. These frameworks may be thoroughly observed in the following section.

### 2.2.1 The social-psychological approach

Dörnyei and Ushioda (2013) clarify that several research from a social-psychological perspective focus on the learning environment, learners' attitudes and the relationships between different linguistic communities. In the mainstream psychology, the idea of social-psychological approach has been informed by various theoretical models developed by Gardner and his fellows (1985, 2010), Clément (1980), Giles and Byrne (1982), and Schumann (1986), namely – the socio-educational model, social-contextual model, intergroup model and acculturation model respectively. Here, the first two models will be highlighted since they are common and widely used.

Gardner's (1985, 2010) socio-educational model is popular for linking an individual's motivation to learn an L2 to their attitudes toward the language, integrative orientation, and the broader socio-cultural environment. He viewed that an individual's attitude is characterised by their evaluative reaction toward a particular object which depends on their personal beliefs or opinions, in other words, the individual's attitudes comprise of both cognitive and affective factors that reflect not only the value they assign to something and their emotional response to it. In his model, an individual's attitudes are influenced by three distinct factors such as the language community, i.e., how language learners feel about those who speak the L2; the L2 learning situation in which the individual's attitude toward the teacher and the target language; and the process of learning the L2 itself.

Gardner (1985, 2010) also defined that integrative orientation occurs when a learner is motivated to learn an L2 since they are interested in the language community and its culture, including social aspects such as communication and relationships within the language, highlighting the fact that the learner's environment has a great impact on their L2 learning motivation. For instance, a learner is motivated to learn an L2 when they are more likely to grow favourable language-related attitudes towards the language as they are surrounded by people who value language learning. However, one limitation of this model is that Gardner views motivation as a linear process which is influenced by psychological and social factors at a fixed point in time regardless of one of the most important features of L2 learning motivation – its fluctuating nature (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2013).

Gardner's (1985) socio-educational model which laid emphasis on the relationship between language-related positive attitudes and L2 learning motivation, described above, has been widely recognised by several researchers, particularly in the contexts where English is learned as a second or foreign language. Abundant empirical research conducted in Japan, Iran, China and Chile has consistently proved that there is a powerful positive correlation between learners' attitudes toward learning English and their motivation to obtain the language acquisition (Kormos et al., 2011; Taguchi et al., 2009). Csizér and Dörnyei (2005) and Taguchi et al.'s (2009) studies also claimed that the indirect but significant role of learners' attitudes toward the language community plays a key role in their motivation levels. MacIntyre et al. (2019) further support this claim by demonstrating that learners' positive attitudes toward language learning are strongly associated with their emotions such as enthusiasm, excitement, and interest in learning the language, which may have a well-documented motivation-enhancing effect (Fredrickson, 2004). Gardner (1985) posits that these positive attitudes are shaped by a learner's social and external influences such as family, and media exposure, e.g., engaging with TV shows, movies, music, social media, and online content in the target language. In this regard, research by Kormos et al. (2011), Csizér and Dörnyei (2005), and Csizér and Kormos (2008) suggest that parents play a significant role in shaping learners' attitudes toward learning an L2 as they may provide an opportunity for their children to expose to foreign media which fosters positive perceptions of the language community. However, there is also a notable limitation in these findings which implies that several studies solely rely on self-reported media which make it difficult to verify whether external influences, such as parental encouragement or media exposure, have a great impact on learners' motivation (Dörnyei et al., 2006).

Another significant advancement of social-contextual model in L2 learning motivation theory is Clément's (1980) model which typically emphasises the noteworthiness of L2 learners' contact experiences with members of the language community. The main idea of this model refers *linguistic self-confidence* to "a lack of anxiety and positive self-ratings of L2 proficiency" (Sampasivam & Clément, 2014, p. 25) that coupled with Clément's contribution for L2 learners. Clément (1980) declares that there is a strong correlation between an individual's positive and frequent interactions with speakers of the target language and L2 learning motivation to acquire the language. To be exact, learners develop a higher level of linguistic self-confidence when they are allowed to interact frequently with native speakers of an L2, and when they are delighted with their interaction with them, which, in turn, strengthens their motivation to learn the language. Like Gardner's (1985) model, Clément's work also has a notable limitation that he views L2 learning motivation as a linear process that does not take account into how motivation fluctuates and develops over time. In fact, L2 learning motivation may influenced by not only internal factors, including learners' confidence and emotions, but also external ones such as the learning environment or life events as the idea of motivation is more complex and constantly evolving (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2013). Initially, Clément (1980) proposed that linguistic self-confidence was extraneous in monoethnic contexts when learners have less exposure to native speakers of the target language. However, he changed his assumption later when further research (Clément et al., 1994) was developed arguing that an individual's motivation to learn an L2 can be strengthened from indirect contact with foreign media such as media consumption, online communication, and travel. Despite its theoretical significance, the clear vision of the cause-effect relationship between linguistic self-confidence and L2 learning motivation is supposed to be unclear owing to the varied, inconsistent operationalisation of the concept in the L2 motivation field (Dörnyei et al., 2006; Yashima, 2002). On the one hand, some researchers broadly define linguistic self-confidence as a general belief in one's ability to learn any foreign language, but on the other hand, others follow Clément's (1980) original assumption that takes account on both L2 learners' L2 anxiety and self-perceived proficiency (Yashima, 2002; Clément et al., 1994). The diverse and inconsistent assumption in defining linguistic self-confidence conveys difficulty drawing clear conclusions regarding its precise role in L2 learning motivation.

Another important contribution within social-psychological research is *integrative orientation*, which refers to the concept that learners are motivated to learn an L2 since they have a willingness to engage in the language community, and interact with its members (Gardner, 1985). On the one hand, empirical support for this claim has been derived from

multiple studies by Bernaus and Gardner (2008), and Csizér and Dörnyei (2005) in English as a Second Language (ESL) learning contexts, but on the other hand, some researchers have doubted its relevance today in light of the global spread of English (Jenkins, 2009) since most learners who speak English across the world today are non-native speakers; they view English as a global lingua franca; they learn English as a second language and they assume that it is not necessary to become part of communities where people speak English natively while they are learning the L2 to be able to use it internationally. Therefore, Yashima (2002) pointed out that modern L2 learner's goals have shifted to place an emphasis on practical motivations to learn the L2, for instance, travelling, studying abroad, working internationally, and interacting with global communities, rather than on the willingness to integrate into the communities where people speak English natively.

Whilst the social-psychological approach renders valuable insights into L2 learning motivation, it also brings several limitations. Firstly, it views motivation as a linear process due to the fact that social and psychological factors have a great impact on students' learning including second language writing at a fixed point in time, rather than perceiving motivation as a dynamic and fluctuating process which limits the ability of research findings to be generalised across diverse learning stages (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2013). Secondly, this approach has restricted direct application to classroom teaching as it primarily focuses on social influences broadly including family, media and cultural attitudes. Thirdly, this approach contemplates that motivation is coupled with learners' attitudes toward specific language societies, which may not apply in the globalised world today, where English is mainly perceived as a global medium of communication (Dörnyei et al., 2006; Yashima, 2002). Despite these limitations, it cannot be denied that the social-psychological approach has several relevances for L2 learners, and it remains influential in understanding how learners' attitudes, self-confidence and social perspectives shape their motivation for L2 learning acquisition.

### 2.2.2 The cognitive-situated approach

Dörnyei and Ryan (2015) and Dörnyei and Ushioda (2013) discussed the emergence of the cognitive-situated approach to L2 learning motivation highlighting on two primary roots, that is to say, it is necessary to maximise the understanding of L2 motivation, and it is also crucial to shift our focus from broad social contexts to actual learning environments like L2 classrooms in order to overcome the above-mentioned limitations of the social-psychological approach. Several researchers have adopted various cognitive psychological theories such as Weiner's (1986) attribution theory, Bandura's (1995) self-efficacy theory, Ryan and Deci's

(2020) self-determination theory, and Dweck's (2000, 2006) mindset theory to better understand motivational dynamics in the L2 learning contexts (Smid, 2022). Dörnyei's (1994) and Williams and Burden's (1997) motivational frameworks have recognised that the L2 course, teacher, class, institution, and broader educational system are important aspects as multifaceted nature of instructional settings. However, one of the limitations of these models is that they portray motivation as a linear cause-effect process, which is similar to earlier social-psychological approaches, since they failed to capture its fullest degree of dynamic nature (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2013; 2021).

Other important cognitive-situated concepts include *L2 learner attributions* and *self-efficacy*. Weiner's (1986) attribution theory posits that learners' interpretations of their past successes and failures have a direct effect on their motivation regardless of the nature of those successes and failures being stable or unstable. Moreover, studies by Kálmán and Gutierrez Eugenio (2015) and Ushioda (2001) suggest pedagogical strategies that can strengthen positive thinking patterns in negative achievement situations by corroborating the motivational significance of unstable attributions. Similarly, Bandura's (1995) self-efficacy theory emphasises an important aspect that learners' beliefs have a significant influence in shaping their motivation which leads towards their capabilities in the end (Smid, 2022). This idea was supported by Piniel and Albert's (2017) and Piniel and Csizér's (2013) works highlighting the cyclical relationship between learners' self-efficacy, motivation, and learning experiences. In this regard, future-oriented cognitive appraisals are shaped by learners' self-efficacy while linguistic self-confidence encompasses affective motivational dimensions, and is more retrospective (Clément, 1980; Mills et al., 2007).

Ryan and Deci's (2018, 2020) self-determination theory (SDT) integrates five constructs such as intrinsic and extrinsic orientations, perception of competence, autonomy, and self-regulation into the cognitive-situated approach. According to them, intrinsic orientation is coupled with individual's internal satisfaction such as enjoying the process of writing essays and feeling proud after clearly expressing own and complex ideas in writing, whilst extrinsic orientation is associated with external rewards such as passing a written exam and getting positive feedback from a teacher for a well-written assignment. They also added that both intrinsic and extrinsic orientations exist on a continuum based on individual's internalisation levels, such as individual's doing writing tasks due to the teacher's demand, and practising writing because the individual personally believes that it is important for their future, etc. These ideas were affirmed by Noel's (2001) and Noel et al.'s (2020) empirical work, underscoring the relationship between the internalised orientations, stronger motivation, and positive perceptions

of competence and autonomy. Although the cross-sectional nature and reliance on self-reported data in these empirical studies exhibit certain limitations with regard to the stability and validity of the findings, it may not be denied that classroom practices that enhance learner's perceptions of competence and autonomy have a positive impact on their motivation and learning outcomes.

Although the cognitive-situated approach exhibits significant contributions, it shows some limitations. Despite its dynamic and evolving nature, the cognitive-situated approach often considers motivation as a static individual trait, and focusses solely on learner's perspectives rather than incorporating teacher's perspectives by overlooking the sensitive nature of the context in terms of different classroom settings, teaching strategies, or social environments that may have impact on the learner's L2 learning motivation (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2013; Kálmán & Gutierrez Eugenio, 2015; Noels, 2001; Piniel & Albert, 2017; Piniel & Csizér, 2013). Consequently, this not only weakens the contextual relevance of findings but also partially undermines its pedagogical aspirations in L2 learning acquisition. Besides, although rich research evidence proves that students' emotions are an essential part of motivation, this approach pays limited attention to those emotional aspects, resulting in an incomplete understanding of how motivational processes work. Despite those limitations, the cognitive-situated approach may be considered as a significant and progressive step in L2 motivation research by paying full attention to cognitive dimensions and pedagogical relevance (Dörnyei, 2009b; Dörnyei & Ryan, 2015; Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2021).

### 2.2.3 The socio-dynamic approach

The socio-dynamic approach to L2 motivation is a significant and progressive shift from traditional and static models to reframing how motivation researchers understand the driving forces behind L2 acquisition rather than considering motivation as a linear and fixed construct. According to Larsen-Freeman (1997) and Larsen-Freeman & Cameron (2008), this perspective employs the Complex Dynamic Systems Theory (CDST), which highlights the dynamic, context-sensitive, and temporal nature of psychological constructs, assuming that motivational processes develop constant interactions between individual, contextual, and temporal variables. This outlook considers motivation not only as a contextually grounded process but also a deeply intertwined process with the learner's self-concept by making it highly susceptible to change over time (Dörnyei & Ryan, 2015; Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2013). In this respect, Dörnyei (2005, 2009a) operationalises these theoretical insights in the L2 Motivational Self System (L2MSS), including three interconnected constructs such as the ideal L2 self, the ought-to L2 self, and the L2 learning experience, which reflect the learner's vision for their future self, the social

expectations imposed upon them, and their immediate experiences within the L2 learning environment, respectively. This L2MSS will be explained further in detail in the following section.

The emergence of the ideal L2 self within the framework of Dörnyei's L2MSS is a modernised and broadened concept of Gardner's (1985, 2010) theory of integrative motivation, which is mainly considered for ESL environments. While Gardner favoured the context-specific notion more, Dörnyei emphasised the construct not only as a learner's affinity toward native speakers but also as their identification with a wider global community of English users (Csizér & Dörnyei, 2005). Several studies have empirically validated this inclusive notion by employing regression analysis (Csizér & Lukács, 2010; Kim, 2009), and structural equation modeling (SEM) (Kormos et al., 2011; Taguchi et al., 2009) to prove the construct's strong relationship with L2 learning motivation. Yet, one notable limitation of this concept is that the research has mainly relied on cross-sectional designs that limit the insight into the longitudinal dynamics that Dörnyei (2007) originally posited. This idea was supported by Papi's (2022) argumentation that common measurement strategies often blur the line between personal goals and societal expectations as it does not clearly separate what an individual personally value from what society expects of them, resulting in the possibility of mistaking external pressure for genuine personal motivation. Although the ideal L2 self is considered as a compelling construct, these limitations strongly recommend further refinement in both conceptualisation and methodology as it is crucial to fully understand and express its dynamic nature in L2 motivation research.

Another complex idea in understanding the L2 learner self in this socio-dynamic approach engages its emotional dimension that would expect internally driven goals to foster positive and affective experiences, which in turn reinforce an individual's motivation to learn an L2 (Fredrickson, 2004). However, Smid (2022) recommends that further empirical evidence in this area is required due to the fact that several studies explore emotions but limit their interpretive clarity as they often conflate the emotional dimensions with cognitive elements (Csizér & Kormos, 2009). On the one hand, emotions have been explored more directly but on the other hand, findings have been inconsistent. For instance, the work of MacIntyre and Vincze (2017) proves that L2 love predicted the learner's robust ideal L2 self, whilst the contribution of Teimouri (2017) exhibits the reverse causal direction. These findings imply a reciprocal relationship between emotions and self-concept that may continuously influence each other. This circular perspective aligns with the socio-dynamic assumptions of L2 learners' motivational dispositions as a complex and developing process. The implication clearly states

that positive emotions may not only occur alongside strong future self-guides but can also shape and strengthen them highlighting the fact that supporting emotional support is essential for teachers in their second language teaching methodologies.

In comparison to the ideal L2 self, research concerning the ought-to L2 self shows more variable findings in terms of theoretical and empirical evidence. Taguchi et al. (2009) report that several studies about the ought-to L2 self identified a direct but weaker motivational influence on learners while other studies proved only indirect or negligible effects (Csizér & Kormos, 2009). Interestingly, this inconsistency was further explored by Papi's (2022) and Teimouri's (2017) empirical works. Their studies argue that the inconsistency stems from a limited conceptualisation of the construct as it does not account for the distinction between personally internalised duties such as developing L2 writing skills for academic achievement, expressing oneself more effectively in writing, and pursuing future educational or professional opportunities, and those imposed by external sources, such as fulfilling university requirements about writing tasks, meeting teachers' expectations, and conforming to academic standards set by institutions. Papi (2022) and Teimouri's (2017) contributions which were grounded in factor analytic methods, reveal that the construct can be divided into two subcomponents such as the *ought-to self/own* and the *ought-to self others*, and these subcomponents have a strong motivational influence on L2 learners in terms of internalised forms. Their statement about the ought-to L2 self aligns with Ryan and Deci's (2020) self-determination theory, which posits that learners' motivation can be enhanced when they internalise external expectations. However, Higgins (1998) pointed out that when the ought-to L2 self aligns with an individual's prevention-oriented regulatory focus, its motivational effects differ qualitatively from their ideal L2 self, which is linked to the individual's promotion focus. Here, according to Higgins (1998), it is worth noting that a prevention-oriented regulatory focus means an individual's motivational attitude when they are willing to avoid negative outcomes, fulfil duties, and meet obligations, focusing on their safety, responsibility, and avoiding failure or punishment, while a promotion focus refers to an individual's motivational mindset when they are driven by their hopes, aspirations, expectations, and the desire to achieve positive and favourable outcomes. Based on their findings, it may be observed that the ought-to self plays a significant, motivational role but its effectiveness depends largely on the degree to which the learners internalise and personally accept their expectations while learning an L2.

Again, the ought-to L2 self exhibits salient emotional consequences which further reinforce the qualitative differentiation described above. Research indicates that negative emotions such as anxiety and shame have a strong influence on learners' academic performance

in terms of external pressures (Teimouri, 2017; Higgins, 1998). Teimouri's study highlights the fact that lower internalisation is coupled with higher levels of L2 anxiety and reduces positive emotions for students. His declaration was supported by Piniel and Csizér's (2015) longitudinal findings revealing their observation that learners show a developed and more internalised ought-to self when they can reduce anxiety in learning. Their declarations verify the fact that it is important to help learners align their external expectations with their personally meaningful goals. Dörnyei (2009a, 2014) proposed the similar concept in the form of L2 vision that when the vivid mental imagery is coupled with fulfilling professional goals, it provides another avenue for enhancing students' motivation. Furthermore, Chan (2014) and Magid (2014) state that helping students to be able to apply mental imagery can support them in imagining their future L2 selves more clearly, and this may lead to increasing their motivation to learn the L2. Despite methodological concerns being limited to its generalisability, their research findings support a valuable pedagogical insight for second language teachers and learners claiming that if the teacher can foster internalisation, and help students' positive vision-building, it may effectively strengthen their motivational and emotional dimensions of language learning.

After discussing the three approaches which are essential, and widely pertinent in ongoing L2 motivation research, several motivational theories which may be beneficial for and applicable by language teachers in motivating their learners will also be discussed below.

#### 2.2.4. Self-determination theory

Canadian psychologists, Deci and Ryan (2008) claim that self-determination theory (SDT) is based on human motivation (autonomous and controlled motivation). The central tenet of this theory is that a person's basic psychological needs, such as the need for competence, autonomy and relatedness, have to be satisfied with the psychological well-being of humans in order to be successful in life.

Their theory posits that there is a set of universal psychological needs that must be satisfied for effective functioning and psychological health. In this regard, the first need is the need for competence which means feeling confident, effective and productive in whatever a person is doing. To be continued, the second need is the need for relatedness, which means the person feels that they matter to others, they matter to their environment, and they are being taken care of by their environment and surroundings. Finally, the third need is the need for autonomy, which means being congruent with oneself, being self-endorsed, self-governing and being wholehearted behind what the person is doing (Deci & Ryan, 2008).

There are two general individual different concepts in SDT – causality orientations and life goals. The former one includes autonomous orientation, which has been positively related to psychological health and effective behavioural outcomes and impersonal orientation, which has been reliably associated with poor functioning and symptoms of ill-being, such as self-derogation and lack of vitality. The latter one includes two general categories of life goals which are intrinsic aspirations including affiliation, generativity, and personal development, whereas extrinsic aspirations include wealth, fame, and attractiveness.

According to Deci and Ryan (2008), there have been some newer developments in SDT. They are mindfulness, energy and vitality, and applications. Here, mindfulness means an open awareness and interested attention to what is happening within and around oneself. Energy means that action comes either directly or indirectly from basic psychological needs, whereas vitality is the energy that is exhilarating and empowering, that allows people to act more autonomously and persist more at important activities. Furthermore, applications mean applying SDT concepts to the important topics of close relationships, parenting, education, work, well-being and health, sport and exercise, and sustaining our planet.

Following Deci and Ryan's (1985, 2008, 2017) self-determination theory, Noel (2019) highlights that SDT is based on existential, humanistic and organismic psychologies. SDT is existential when one wants to possess a meaningful life and simultaneously, one definitely regards oneself that it is one's own responsibility to possess such a meaningful life. So, in order to pursue one's destiny, one personally makes a choice, and what one thinks of that choice will guarantee to possess one's goal of life (Noel, 2019). As stated by Noel, SDT is humanistic by claiming that an individual regards themselves satisfied when they are true to their authentic selves. In addition, SDT is organismic, as a person is satisfied when they develop more and more due to their natural curiosity to their environment, so they are eager to learn from the environment, and as a result, they finally achieve the desired novel skills from that environment, in other words, they develop (Noel).

If we apply this theory in education, it requires that students' need of competence, autonomy and relatedness should be satisfied in their learning in order for them to possess psychological well-being and motivation in their academic lives. If these pre-requisites are met, students can accomplish their tasks and achieve their life goals, which means a teaching career and continuous professional development (Deci & Ryan, 2008). These three components of SDT – if satisfied – result in motivation; therefore, it is utmost for me to explore how to motivate EFL pre-service teachers at teacher training universities in language classrooms, including teaching writing.

### 2.2.5 The L2 Motivational Self System, significant others and instrumentality

(This section is an edited version of the article published in *Journal of Adult Learning, Knowledge and Innovation* in July 2022, referred to as Maung, Kálmán & Gyóri (2022), and the conference proceedings from 29th KOTESOL International Conference: More Than Words: Teaching for a Better World in October 2022, referred to as Maung (2022) in the bibliography of my dissertation. For a more elaborate description of the study, see the publication and conference proceedings.)

In this section, the possible selves (the ideal self and the ought-to selves), significant others, intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation and positive learning experiences as well as instrumental motivation are discussed.

The L2 Motivational Self System garnered interest in L2 motivation research in the last two decades. It was theorised by Hungarian psycholinguist, Dörnyei (2005) as a comprehensive synthesis of his past research on language learning motivation. His theory was constructed as a result of the combination of two significant theoretical developments, one taking place in the L2 field, the other in mainstream psychology (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2013). The latter is concerned with Markus and Nurius' (1986) theory.

Markus and Nurius (1986) claimed that the notion of *possible selves* is one of the most powerful mechanisms which links the self with action. According to them, possible selves are how individuals see themselves in a future state; how they imagine what they might become in the future, what they want to be in the future and what they would like to avoid becoming in the future. Possible selves are related to one's hopes, expectations, wishes and fantasies (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2013). On the one hand, Markus and Nurius (1986) view possible selves as they are a reality for the individual, which means people can visualise a possible self. On the other hand, Markus and Ruvolo (1989) argue that possible selves are very close to the actual thoughts and feelings that individuals experience as they are in the process of motivated behaviour and instrumental action.

In this regard, according to Higgins (1987, 1989), there are two types of possible selves; the ideal self and the ought-to self. The former one is particularly important for guiding academic achievement of a learner and it is related to the following attributes which one would really like to possess (e.g., representation of hopes, aspirations, or wishes), whereas the latter one refers to the representation of attributes that one believes one ought to possess (e.g., representation of someone else's sense of duties, obligations or moral responsibilities). In contrast, Markus and Nurius' (1986) definition of the ideal self is that it represents an individual's idea of what they would like to become.

In Csizér's (2019) view, "the ideal self involves the individual's own vision for him or herself, while the ought self involves someone else's vision for the individual which bear little resemblance to one's own desires or wishes or the possibility of ever attaining them (p.82)." However, they suggest that the ideal and ought-to selves seem similar to each other, they are both related to the attainment of a desired-end state. Their idea is supported by Higgings' (1998) theory that there are two different types of future selves which are motivationally distinct from each other; ideal self-guides which have a promotion focus and ought-to self-guides which have a prevention focus. The former one concerns hopes, aspirations, advancements, growth and accomplishments. The latter one regulates the absence or presence of negative outcomes associated with failing to live up to various responsibilities and obligations (Csizér, 2019).

Apart from the ideal L2 self, the ought-to L2 self, Dörnyei proposed three components which make up the L2 Motivational Self System. They are the ideal L2 self, the ought-to L2 self and the L2 learning experience. The first one becomes a powerful motivator when a person speaks an L2 because they desire to reduce the discrepancy between their actual and ideal selves. The second one concerns the attributes that one believes one ought to possess to meet expectations and to avoid possible negative outcomes. And the third one includes situated, executive motives related to the immediate learning environment and experience, for example, the impact of the teacher, the curriculum, the peer group or the experience of success (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2013; 2021). Here, it should be noted that some of the components that make up the L2 learning experience may be assumed to be *significant others* in the individual's motivation to learn the L2 because the impact of the teacher or peers may affect one's motives to learn the L2. For instance, if it is important for a learner not to hear a negative comment of the teacher on their L2 learning, it may affect the learner's motivation to learn the L2. Interestingly, if the learner would like to make a good impression on his/her peers in learning the L2, it may affect his/her motivation to learn it. This perception is supported by Williams and Burden's (1997) words "An individual's motivation is also subject to social and contextual influences" (p. 23). According to them, "the social and contextual influences include the whole culture and context and the social situation, as well as significant other people and the individual's interaction with these people" (p. 23).

By reviewing these words, it can be concluded that family members, peers, classmates, teachers, headmasters, neighbours et cetera, in other words, all the people around the learner who matter to the learner, might be included in the concept of *significant others*. In this respect, Williams and Burden (1997) differentiate motivational factors as learner internal, which include intrinsic interest, perceived value of activity, mastery and self-concept, and learner external,

which include significant individuals, interaction with significant individuals, the learning environment and the broader context (Horváth & Kálmán, 2020). These aspects of significant others more or less influence the learner's basic psychological needs and correspondingly, their motivational orientation (Horváth & Kálmán, 2020; Noel, 2019).

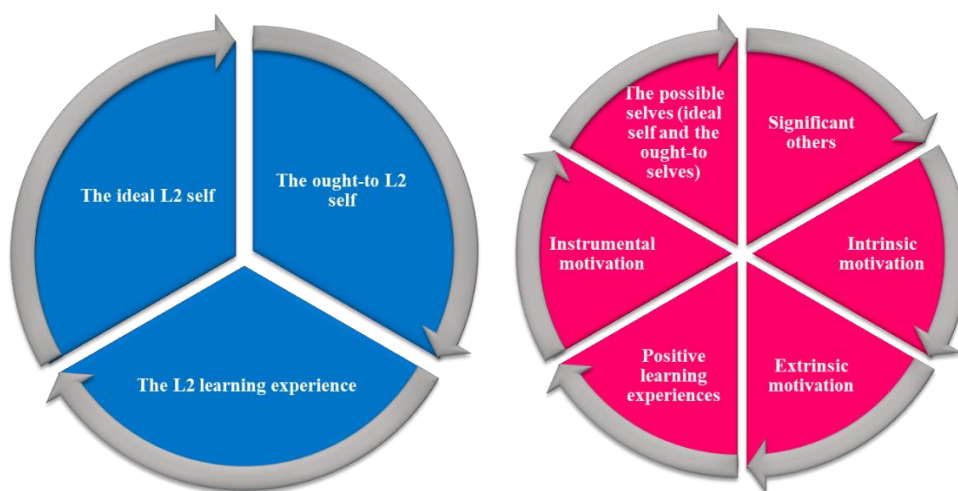
Interestingly, Dörnyei and Ushioda (2013) argue that

for some language learners, the initial motivation to learn a language does not come from internally or externally generated self images but rather from successful engagement with the actual language learning process for example, because they discover that they are good at it. (p. 86)

According to them, social influences coming from the learner's environment and both positive and negative learning experiences can affect the learner's motivation.

Additionally, self-guides may have instrumental motives as well. The ideal self-guides have a promotion focus related to one's hopes, aspirations, advancements, growth and accomplishments, whereas ought-to self-guides have a prevention focus to avoid negative outcomes concerned with safety, responsibilities and obligations. Both the ideal self-guides and ought-to self-guides relate to one's end-state whether desired or feared (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2013; 2021). In this respect, if an individual desires to learn an L2 because they would like to be promoted in their professional career, it is an ideal self-guide of instrumental motivation. If an individual desires to get a good grade in learning an L2 as they do not want to get any blame from their parents, it can be regarded as an ought-to L2 self-guide of instrumental motivation. In metacognition, this may be a form of an instrumental motivation coined by Gardner (1959) and Horváth & Kálmán (2020). On the one hand, this instrumental motivation is a landmark concept in motivation research which is related to the practical benefits of acquiring an L2, for example, passing the examination, achieving the scholarship award to study abroad or getting a better grade in class. On the other hand, according to Noels (2001, 2005) and Ryan and Deci (2017), the instrumental motivation is strongly correlated with external regulations and so can be regarded as a kind of extrinsic motivation. This idea is supported by Liu, Hau and Zhen's (2018) statement that "extrinsic motivation can be internalised into one's self-regulation and can facilitate academic achievement, performance, achievement goals and even well-being" (p. 186). Regarding their discussions, it cannot be denied that instrumental motivation can transform into intrinsic motivation when an individual's performance results in favorable practical benefits related to their surroundings.

To sum up, according to Dörnyei and Ushioda (2013, 2021), from a self-perspective, the concept of instrumental motivation can be categorised in two significant types – instrumentality-promotion and instrumentality-prevention. Another approach to categorising instrumental motivation is represented by Kyriacou and Benmansour (1997), who claimed that there were two types of instrumental motivation (long-term and short-term ones). The long-term instrumental motivation emphasises acquiring the L2 to enhance one’s future professional career whilst the short-term instrumental motivation stresses getting good grades. All in all, these instrumental motivations are also related to the ideal L2 self, the ought-to L2 self, as well as significant others (part of the L2 learning experience), all of which are interconnected with one another and make up the three main components of The L2 Motivational Self System (see Figure 2). The following figure (Figure 2) is an edited figure from the conference presentation published in KOTESOL Proceedings in October 2022, referred to as Maung (2022) in the bibliography of my dissertation. For a more elaborate description of the study, see the proceedings.)



**Figure 2** Dörnyei's (2005) model of L2MSS and pre-service teachers' possible motives in their motivational dispositions (Maung, 2022)

After exploring Dörnyei's (2005) L2MSS and its constructs, this literature review also examines the two other constructs, *resilience* and *competition*, which may have a significant impact on students' motivation in second language acquisition, and which will also be measured in the quantitative questionnaire study of the dissertation.

### 2.2.6 Resilience and motivation

Various researchers have revealed that there are several psychological characteristics that forecast students' academic achievement, including writing skills, with the result of them being successful or unsuccessful in their learning (Martin, 2013; Cassidy, 2016). One of the psychological characteristics is resilience. Bartley et al. (2010) expressed that an individual's performance, achievement, health, and wellbeing are greatly and positively influenced by their resilience, to be more precise, their superior quality, strength, or asset as well as advantageous characteristic that they are likely to possess. Cassidy (2016) defined resilience as "a psychological construct observed in some individuals that accounts for success despite adversity" (p. 1), which reflects "the ability to bounce back, to beat the odds and is considered an asset in human characteristic terms" (p. 1).

Academic resilience can be defined as the capacity of a student to overcome chronic adversity that is seen as a major threat to their educational development (Martin, 2013). This opinion is supported by the OECD's (2018) report that on average, across OECD countries, students who have relatively more advantaged socio-economic profiles and better disciplinary climates become academically resilient students who display positive behaviors and attitudes towards learning; for example, they do not skip classes, they are being highly motivated to earn good grades and succeed in school. Interestingly, Jowkar et al. (2014) posit that academically resilient students have an ability to sustain high levels of achievement motivation and performance, although they have the risk of doing poorly in school, and ultimately dropping out of school, due to challenging situations. Regarding this, they affirm that the role of motivation is central to educational resilience. Based on the facts discussed above, it may be assumed that motivation plays a key role in students' academic resilience in order to achieve the desirable educational outcomes, including the acquisition of English writing skills. Therefore, resilience has been chosen as one of the dimensions in the questionnaire to fulfil the major aim of this study.

### 2.2.7 Competition and motivation

Human competition is a contest between two or more people in which they are trying their best to achieve the desired goal that cannot be shared between them, resulting in those who will win and those who will not win at the end of the contest (Cantador & Conde, 2010). DiMenichi and Tricomi (2015) view competition as a means to improve effort-based learning and attention of students. Fülöp (2009), and Fülöp and Györi (2021) found that students with different cultural backgrounds, consider competition as a means of improvement and

motivation. Garcia, et al. (2024) claim that competition can be regarded as a social comparison, which means the tendency to self-evaluate by comparing oneself to others, which is an important source of competitive behaviour.

According to Cantador and Conde (2010), the idea of competition is very evident in sports matches, in which teams provide their best efforts to win the first prize in a tournament. Similarly, in essay competitions in universities, students yield their highest level of performance in essay writing so that they can win the first prize. There are two kinds of competition – individual and team competition. Cantador and Conde (2010) argue that team competition is less harmful to students, and it can effectively improve their learning skills due to the fact that each member from the team can cooperate with one another, and participate anonymously rather than in individual competitions. Nevertheless, it cannot be denied that competition has a positive impact on education since Verhoeff (1997) claims that a well-organised, and challenging competition elicits the participants' best efforts, enhances their motivation and learning, and helps them avoid failure in learning. This claim is supported by Fülöp et al. (2025), Fülöp and Györi (2021), and Lawrence (2004) who claim that competition encourages active learning and increases motivation as well as Fulu (2007), who argues that competition can cause several advantages for students such as recognition gain, higher motivation, and self-esteem. All in all, it may be assumed that competition and motivation are interconnected with each other, and competition might have an impact on students' motivation in order to achieve the desired educational outcomes. This inspired me to include competition as one of the dimensions in the questionnaire exploring the motivational disposition of pre-service teachers in English writing.

## 2.3 Writing

### 2.3.1 The difficulty of mastering writing for EFL students

While it is acknowledged that mastering English writing serves as a means for EFL students to unleash their creativity, broaden their knowledge, and enhance their language proficiency, many encounter difficulties in achieving proficiency due to various reasons. These challenges include a lack of confidence in their writing abilities (Hyland, 2021; Johnson, 2024; Rianti, 2023; Young & Ferguson, 2020), struggles with initiating a text, organising the following paragraphs, concluding the final text, and a deficiency in technical writing skills such as pre-writing, drafting, editing, and revising (Godwin-Jones, 2018; Hyland, 2021; Johnson, 2024). Furthermore, many encounter inadequate instructional support from teachers and a pervasive lack of motivation among them which, unfortunately, lead them to poor writing

performance. Consequently, it has become an essential need for EFL teachers to develop effective strategies that not only address these challenges but also foster a more motivating learning environment to facilitate students' improvement in English writing skills by encouraging their creativity in writing (Hyland, 2021; Wallace & Ruegg, 2020).

### 2.3.2 General writing vs. academic writing

GeekforGeeks (2020) defines general writing in second language teaching and learning as any piece of writing which focuses on general topics of writing that primarily aims to inform and entertain the readers despite no particular type of audience or readers like academic writing. It focuses on subjective writing style and purely personal tone which follows artistic unstructured format. Letters, emails, diaries, journal entries, and magazine publish etc. are common types which belong to general writing regardless of using proper citations and references.

Nation (2009) acknowledges that general writing in EFL/ESL contexts encompasses any form of written communication that does not necessarily favour academic and professional standards like academic writing. In general writing, learners are allowed to express their ideas, share their thoughts, experiences and emotions in both formal and informal ways that focus on personal writing style without the necessity of providing structured writing formats or citation rules. One of the significant advantages of general writing is that it contributes to students' acquisition of second language writing by fostering creativity, fluency, and confidence in using the target language.

On the other hand, academic writing is one of the foundational skills for students in higher education, as it helps them to think deeply, question assumptions, present well-formulated arguments based on evidence and effectively express their ideas to others through written texts in terms of communication. Wilson (2022) claims that academic writing searches for truth about the world that we do not already know, unlike creative writing like fiction and poetry where the goal is to entertain the audience; journalistic writing that people read in the news where the goal is to inform; and transactional writing where the goal is to communicate. It simply means that academic writing is “where we go to learn about the world we live in – about what is true, how things came to be, and how we know (p. 3)”. According to him, academic writing is fundamentally analytical and philosophical as it makes a claim to clear-sighted understanding of an issue.

Bailey (2015) defines academic writing as a formal, structured and objective style of writing which is commonly used in higher education and academic settings, advocating that

academic writing should be clear, precise, evidence-based and logically structured. He emphasises that academic writing also requires the writer's critical thinking and strong argumentation skills, and it is important to prioritise coherence, clarity, and the use of credible sources to support their arguments in writing academically. Furthermore, Bailey also stresses that proper referencing, avoiding plagiarism, and maintaining a formal writing style to ensure credibility and academic integrity are the key important factors of academic writing. According to him, the common type of academic writing includes paper, essay, case study, notes, dissertation/thesis, reflection, report and proposal.

According to Wilson (2022), most of the universities develop their curricula focusing on academic writing as it is the necessary skill for students' personal and professional development, and as it is crucial for them to interpret and analyse information they receive. He viewed academic writing as "*better living through interpretation*" (p. 2) as students need to understand the complexities of the world through written texts due to the fact that writing plays a significant role since the ancient time to today's artificial intelligence world in various areas such as history, cultures, education, political discourses, and business, which influence their everyday lives. As such, being able to write academically becomes one of the important skills to master for students not only to understand the complexities of the real-world scenarios, but also to promote their capacity to navigate and contribute to various aspects of life, ultimately beyond their academic success.

Wilson (2022) claims that there are three pillars of academic writing — writing is thinking, writing is a process, and writing is the one that we write best through interaction with others. At first, he recognises that writing is simply the expression of what people think, to be exact, writing is the *thought process*, not the *single thought* since students need to think simultaneously while they are writing. Secondly, he highlights that writing comprises a sequence of steps in expressing ideas since students first need to understand the topic statement provided by the teacher and interpret the statement in their own way in order to render their own argument, followed by organising and presenting their argument clearly and logically. That is why he claims academic writing as a step-by-step process as each step is built on the previous one, elevating the students' thinking and writing stronger and more effectively.

Thirdly, he viewed writing as a developed process from conversation with others. He suggested that students may improve their writing skills by interacting with peers or others, in the form of discussion. By doing so, they may absorb new knowledge and learn diverse perspectives, which may help them in refining their ideas and improving the quality of their writing. Additionally, he recommended that it is more advantageous to EFL students to

communicate with others first, then exchange ideas, and finally receive feedback before starting their actual writing, rather than writing alone throughout the process. By doing so, they will be able to produce stronger, more creative and insightful written texts.

However, it is considerable that Wilson's (2022) view on the third pillar of academic writing may not have an equal effect on all students, especially introverted learners since they may often feel more comfortable in brainstorming, generating ideas and writing individually rather than engaging in peer discussions unless they are paired with the ones whom they feel comfortable. This idea was supported by Sahid et al. (2023), who claim that introverted students may prefer to organise their thoughts without being influenced by external voices as they recognise writing as an individually reflective and introspective activity. Despite the valuable aspects of peer interaction and feedback, forcing them to engage in a particular social activity in classrooms may hinder their creativity in writing rather than enhancing their writing performance. Therefore, teachers should occasionally choose alternative approaches such as written discussions, online forums, or structured feedback sessions that allow the introverted students to respond at their own pace which may suit their learning styles. By doing so, the teacher can foster a balanced approach that ensures inclusivity and respects individual differences for both extroverted and introverted students. Consequently, they may benefit from the writing process in a way that aligns with their strengths, and finally they may be able to improve their academic writing in English.

The primary focus of my dissertation is EFL pre-service teachers at Hungarian universities. They are currently learners, but they may start their career as English teachers at secondary schools in the future after they have graduated and successfully accomplished teacher qualification exams and practical training. For them, proficiency in both general and academic writing is imperative. Although *process writing* plays a significant role in acquiring overall writing skills for them, the primary emphasis should be placed to equip them to become proficient writers in academic writing owing to the fact that it is particularly crucial as they are required to submit term papers, assignments, and research papers that align with strict ethical guidelines.

### 2.3.3 The history of process writing: A pedagogical revolution (1980s-1990s)

In the 1970s, many ESL composition teachers in intensive language programmes used writing mainly as a support skill in language learning. Some of the activities in writing included doing grammar exercises, answering reading comprehension questions, and writing dictation. Furthermore, writing was viewed as one technique used to add interest to a lesson or even

perhaps, as a testing device to diagnose grammar or comprehension errors (Hyland, 2003). In the 1980s, linguistics and teachers of EFL/ESL observed that traditional writing exercises were *product* oriented, meaning that they were more concerned with the final result than with the process of learning which can occur through the writing activity (Caplan & Johns, 2022; Hyland, 2021; Young & Ferguson, 2020).

Richards et al. (1999) defined *process writing* as an approach that puts emphasis on the composing process, wherein the writer makes use of tools such as planning, drafting and revising. These tools are used to help students improve their writing skills and possibly achieve target-like procedures in composing. Sometimes, *process writing* is comparable with the product approach or the prose model approach that focuses on producing different kinds of written products by imitating model paragraphs or essays.

Pennington et al. (1996) conducted a study on the introduction of *process writing* among secondary school students in Hong Kong. The outcome of the survey suggests the presence of a complex pattern of cause-and-effect relationships between students' attitudes and teachers' behaviours. Results also revealed that the student group that had positive experiences with *process writing* were those who demonstrated positive attitudes at the beginning of the project. This group was supervised by a teacher who integrated elements of *process writing* into his/her teaching outline. On the other hand, the group that evaluated the experience negatively was taught by a teacher who focused on traditional language exercises and grammatical accuracy and did so with very little integration of elements of *process writing*. These findings underline the importance of the role of the teacher in teaching writing processes inside the classroom.

Fulcher (1997) maintains that the process approach often emphasises the development of thinking skills along with the writing process. Raimes (1983) also underscored the strong relationship between writing and thinking that makes writing a valuable part of any language course. Based on these facts, it can be said that writing plays a vital role for students in learning English in classrooms as it is a cognitive activity. Teachers also need to achieve different teaching styles and strategies in teaching writing skills to their students.

According to Walvoord and Fassler (1985), there are two important paths to effective writing: (1) knowing what effective writing looks like and (2) knowing how to plan and carry out a writing task. Fulcher (1997) asserted that students need opportunities to practice various forms and functions in writing, for these might subsequently lead to the development of other skills needed in producing written texts. Part of these opportunities can be acquired by spending classroom time on writing, as this will allow students to work together on writing in different

ways. As Raimes (1983) pointed out, group work in the classroom proves to be a valuable exercise for native speakers who are learning to write.

Moreover, Michaelsen (1992) mentions that a growing body of evidence had accumulated to prove that small group-based instructional methods can be used to promote the achievement of a wide variety of desirable educational outcomes. Therefore, teachers and administrators should bear in mind that small groupwork can enhance students' language acquisition. Learning by working together means cooperation or collaboration. It is also a characteristic of the *process writing approach* as students may take group writing activities occasionally as part of it. Therefore, teacher educators, decision makers, administrators and curriculum designers should encourage and implement *process writing approach* in teaching English as a foreign language in universities in order to enhance students' writing performance and achieve desirable educational outcomes.

#### 2.3.4 Theory and practice of teaching writing approaches

In this section, the three approaches to teaching academic writing that can be applied in L2 classroom settings will be scrutinised.

##### *The product approach*

Bailey (2015), Caplan and Johns (2022), Hyland (2019, 2021) and Tribble (1996) claim that there are three approaches to teaching writing, namely, *the product approach*, *the process approach* and *the genre approach*. *Product writing is an approach* to teaching writing that focuses on students' final products, that is, the text they are asked to produce. It is a traditional approach to teaching writing and students are encouraged to focus on their end products and they do not need to generate and brainstorm ideas. Badger and White (2000) highlight that in the product approach, the important aspects of writing such as planning, drafting and revising are not included. Moreover, the role of the teacher in this approach is the instructor or the provider of model language. The teacher has to guide exercise, and correct students' errors of writing when their final output is created (Grossmann, 2009). In this approach, while students are writing, other processes or skills are neglected such as classroom activities and communicative language strategies which are important in language learning. Students emphasise to produce their end product, and they unwillingly reduce their opportunity to active language learners. Instead, they emphasise their grammatical and linguistic accuracy skills (Bailey, 2015) as well as sentence level structural linguistics and bottom-up processing (Grossmann, 2009; Johnson, 2024). In other words, the overall writing abilities of the students

are of secondary importance since they are judged on the basis of a particular task. Overall, the major weakness of this approach is focusing entirely on the learners' final product rather than on the actual writing process.

### *The process approach*

One approach that has had a major impact on language writing instruction is the process approach. Learners focus on the process in way that they produce their products rather than on their products themselves. Tribble (1996) claims that the process approach is an approach to the teaching of writing which stresses the creativity of the individual writer, and which pays attention to the development of good writing practices rather than the imitation of models. Therefore, it may be assumed that the process approach helps students write better by aiding them in the actual process of writing.

Badger and White (2000) argue that the *process writing* is an approach that is concerned with linguistic writing skills, namely planning, revising, drafting and editing, rather than linguistic writing knowledge, namely structure and mechanics. It concentrates on teaching writing through the process and stages of writing (Belinda, 2006).

In this regard, several researchers observe and analyse this approach and propose different models such as the Schmidt model, which focuses on the role of an individual's consciousness in writing; the Van Galen model, which emphasises hierarchical control processes in writing; the Hayes and Flower model, which shapes writing as a problem-solving process, including translating and reviewing stages; and the revised Hayes model, which incorporates the individual's working memory and motivation as the major components of the stages of process writing (Johnson, 2024). Given the nature of those models being suitable for proficient writers (Johnson, 2024), they will not be discussed further as they fall outside the scope of this doctoral study. However, it is worth noting that Flower and Hayes' stages of writing places a particular emphasis on students' thinking processes and goal-oriented behaviour. Flower and Hayes (1981) claim that the process approach can be characterised by four features. The first of these key points is that the act of writing is a series of distinctive thinking processes. The second is that these processes are interconnected. The third is that the act of composing is a goal-directed thinking process guided by the writer's developing network of goals, whereas the fourth is that the process involves producing sub-goals and changing main goals at times. These four points are implemented by each writer to a certain extent within the writing process.

According to Tompkins (2004, cited in Johnson, 2024), the three stages can be grouped in this approach: the pre-writing, writing, and post writing stage. However, Bayat (2014) argues that this approach is composed of the stages of planning, translating, and reviewing. From the point of view of Flower and Hayes (1981), the process approach depends on four points; writing as a series of distinctive thinking processes, writing as a series of interconnected processes, writing as a series of composing as a goal-direct thinking processes which is guided by the writer's developing network of goals, and finally, writing as a series of producing sub-goals and changing main goals at times. From the point of view of Flower and Hayes, the subcomponents of the main stages of the *process writing* can be separated as the following stages: prewriting, drafting, editing, revising, and publishing (Hyland, 2003; 2021). These stages can be recognised as the most perfect view on this approach.

Based on these stages, it can be assumed that prewriting is the foundation stage in the writing process. Hyland (2019, 2021) and Wing (2009, cited in Johnson, 2024) explain that in the very first stage of writing process, learners decide on the objective, target of their writing text, select the argument and outline for writing in order to explore and summarise ideas for the task. Consequently, learners try to think or brainstorm ideas related to their writing task. Therefore, writing is a thinking process, and learners have to produce a final written product based on their thinking after they go through the thinking process. Here, brainstorming is the most fundamental and essential one in order to continue and accomplish other stages of writing. Mohammad and Hussein (2013) claim that brainstorming is a technique in which the students compile a list of potential ideas and examples for a given topic. It is a powerful process for generating creative ideas and solutions through intensive and freewheeling group discussion. Every participant is encouraged to think aloud and suggest as many ideas as possible. There are two types of brainstorming: *free brainstorming and guided brainstorming* (Mohammad & Hussein, 2013). According to them, free brainstorming usually takes one shape in which the students would discuss ideas related to the topic without guidance from the teacher while guided brainstorming can take several shapes: journalistic questions, cubing, cluster mapping, and double/triple entry, etc. They also mention that brainstorming and writing and motivation are two major areas in second language learning and teaching. In their research, they conducted an experiment involving 12 students from the post Foundation Programme at Qatar University through journalistic guided brainstorming questions and free brainstorming question. They proved that both types of group brainstorming can motivate students to engage in the writing process. However, students prefer guided journalistic brainstorming as it helped them focus better on the various aspects of the topic and produce richer and more penetrating ideas.

Therefore, based on their work, it can be concluded that brainstorming can totally fulfil the requirement for the pre-writing stage which is the most fundamental and essential stage in the writing process.

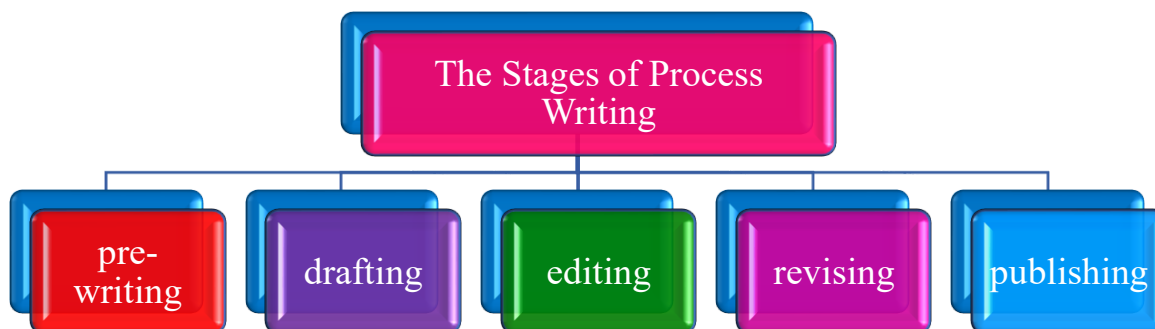
Therefore, many researchers conclude that *process writing* has been considered a method of thinking that facilitates students' analyses and organisation of ideas. Furthermore, Raimes (1983) argues that the activities of pre-writing include gathering of ideas, rehearsing, reading, planning, discussing with peers and making small notes prior to writing the first draft. However, students are not professional writers and sometimes, they may have the content but have no idea as to how to use the available content. Skilled writers can think of new ideas which they are in the process of writing (Hyland, 2021; Johnson, 2024). Unlike skilled writers, students do spend some time planning before they begin the actual writing. Many researchers assure that writers can generate most of their ideas and construct the basic structure of the content in the prewriting stage and one of the characteristics of students' poor performance in writing is that they do not plan before writing; they simply write whatever comes to their mind.

In another stage of writing, which involves drafting or composing the product, drafting itself is also known as composing or translating and involves the process of putting ideas into language (Bailey, 2015; Caplan & Johns, 2022). In the first draft, students emphasise more on writing out the ideas rather than textual features like neatness, spelling, or grammar. Students can try to check their text after writing down their ideas. One of the major strengths of this stage is that students can return to the drafting stage as often as they need before starting the rehearsing of their end product.

In the post writing stage, students can reflect on their first draft and begin to modify if they need it. Tompkins (2004, cited in Johnson, 2024) explains that when the first draft has been written, students then begin to improve it by making the necessary changes so that ideas are clarified and refined. This stage can be also called a revision stage since students can add, delete, substitute or move ideas if they need to change. However, according to Hyland (2003), revising process and editing process is not the same. The revising process is mainly concerned with deep-level changes that affect the meaning of a text, while the editing process is regarded as involving surface-level changes that do not affect the meaning of a text. To be assumed here that, students who accept revising as an important part of the writing process will improve their skills in revising and consequently, they can also improve the whole text focusing on the overall issues such as idea elaboration, coherence, and unity.

In this approach, although several researchers refer to several stages while writing, it may be assumed to best learn through a work process which includes brainstorming, drafting,

editing and publishing products based on the theories discussed above. Therefore, in order to find out the purpose of this study, I follow Hyland's (2003, 2019, 2021) five stages of the *process writing approach*, as shown in Figure 3.



**Figure 3** Hyland's (2003, 2019, 2021) five stages of the process writing approach

### *The genre approach*

Badger and White (2000) argue that the genre approach is the extension of the product approach. It does not give adequate emphasis to the linguistic skills that language learners require to master to be able to effectively and actively produce a piece of writing in the absence of specific writing instructions. Nevertheless, many genre theorists argue that this writing theory differs from product approaches because the genre approach focuses on the social contexts in which students need to produce in their writing. In the genre approach, there are many elements that teachers and learners should take into account. They are the purpose of writing, the subject matter, the target audience, the relationship between the writer and the audience, and the organisation patterns. The role of the teacher in this approach is to provide model language and to monitor students' understanding of lesson objectives or purposes and the writing contexts (Archer, 2017; Badger & White, 2000).

As mentioned earlier, *the process writing* is an approach which prefers teaching writing that focuses on the creative process of producing a text. It focuses more on the varied classroom activities which promote the development of language use: brainstorming, group discussion and re-writing. In this approach, teachers teach students to write effectively, knowing who their target audience is and ignoring the final product. Learners have the opportunity to manage their own writing and a chance to think as they write. Since the 1980s, the process approach has been

accepted and applied to EFL and ESL writing classes because of its effectiveness (Hyland, 2019; 2021; Caplan & Johns, 2022; Onozawa, 2010).

In comparison, while *the product approach* prioritises the final product meeting predefined criteria, *the process approach* focuses on students' skill development and creativity, making it more suitable for novice writers (Bailey, 2015; Caplan & Johns, 2022; Hyland, 2021; Johnson, 2024; Young & Ferguson, 2020), thus, choosing university level students as the focus of this study, as *process writing* may have a great impact on enhancing their' creativity in writing.

However, *the process writing approach* is not without its limitations. One significant drawback is its time-consuming nature. Implementing this approach in classroom settings may require a considerable investment of time, particularly if students are unfamiliar with its principles. Research suggests that while *the process writing approach* may be more suitable for university-level students compared to young learners, its complexity can pose challenges for the latter group. Young learners may encounter difficulties with tasks such as editing their texts and engaging in pre-writing activities. Additionally, while some teachers may already incorporate elements of *process writing* in their teaching practices, they may not explicitly recognise it as such due to its technical and academic terminology (Bailey, 2015; Caplan and Johns, 2022; Hyland, 2021). Moreover, successful implementation of *the process writing approach* necessitates adequate teacher training to ensure proper application in the classroom, as teacher expertise plays a crucial role in enhancing students' writing performance through this approach (Bailey, 2015; Caplan and Johns, 2022; Hyland, 2021; Rianti, 2023; Young & Ferguson, 2020).

### 2.3.5 English writing in the age of Artificial Intelligence (AI)

(This section is an edited version of the article in press in Educational Role of Language Journal, which will be referred to as Maung (in press) in the bibliography of my dissertation. For a more elaborate description of the study, see the publication when it will be published online.)

In this section, English writing in the age of AI, and its impact within the higher education context will be discussed. Particular attention is rendered to ethical perspectives in writing, cognitive processes engaged with writing, the role of universities in regulating AI use in teaching writing, the comparison between human-driven writing approach (*the process writing*) and AI-assisted writing tools, as well as the effectiveness of *process writing* supported by empirical evidence.

### *Students' creativity and English writing skills development in the AI age*

English writing skills are crucial for English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners due to several reasons. Firstly, proficiency in English writing facilitates effective communication in various academic and professional settings. As English is widely used as a global lingua franca, possessing strong writing skills enables EFL learners to convey their thoughts, ideas, and research findings proficiently to a broader audience (Hyland, 2021; Johnson, 2024; Rianti, 2023; Young & Ferguson, 2020). Whether composing academic essays, reports, or emails, the ability to express oneself clearly and coherently in written English is indispensable. Moreover, mastering English writing enhances EFL learners' academic performance. Many academic assessments, especially in higher education, heavily rely on written assignments. Students who excel in writing are better equipped to articulate their knowledge and understanding of course materials, leading to higher grades and academic success. Additionally, proficient writing skills empower EFL learners to engage more actively in scholarly discussions, contribute to academic debates, and produce well-structured arguments supported by evidence (Hyland, 2021, Young & Ferguson, 2020). Furthermore, English writing proficiency opens opportunities for EFL students in the global job market. In today's interconnected world, employers value candidates who can communicate effectively in written English, regardless of their native language. Lee and Schmidgall (2020) declared that strong writing skills enable EFL learners to create compelling resumes, cover letters, and professional documents, thereby increasing their employability and career prospects.

While mastering English writing skills is important, creativity in English writing is equally essential for EFL students as it fosters critical thinking, innovation, and self-expression. By encouraging creativity, students can break away from conventional language patterns and explore alternative ways of expressing themselves. This not only enhances their linguistic fluency but also encourages them to develop their unique voice and style in writing (Godwin-Jones, 2018; Hyland, 2021; Johnson, 2024). Creative writing assignments allow them to unleash their imagination, experiment with language, and cultivate a deeper appreciation for English literature and culture.

Hence, acquiring English writing skills play a pivotal role in the academic, professional, and personal development of EFL students as the proficiency in writing enables effective communication, enhances academic performance, expands career opportunities, and fosters creativity and critical thinking. Therefore, teachers should lay a lot of emphasis on the development of English writing skills, and provide ample opportunities for students to explore their creative potential in writing.

Despite the fact that EFL teachers and students acknowledge the significance of attaining proficiency in English writing and nurturing creativity in English writing, the proliferation of AI writing tools within academic settings has witnessed a notable ascent. This trend has exerted a substantial influence on second language teaching and learning, particularly in the field of writing, following the introduction of AI writing tools in late 2022 (The Stanford d.school, The Stanford Institute for Human-centered Artificial Intelligence [HAI], and The Stanford Accelerator for Learning, 2023). Students often turn to these tools to generate texts for their assignments when they encounter difficulties in initiating their writing or organising their ideas. According to HAI et al. (2023), and Lund and Wang (2023), while this practice can help students overcome initial hurdles, it may lead to excessive reliance on AI writing tools, potentially hindering their creativity in their writing process, which fosters originality, critical thinking, and expression of individual ideas, and which encourages them to explore language nuances, experiment with different writing styles, and develop their unique voice.

Henceforth, for teachers apprehensive about maintaining academic integrity (Roe et al., 2023) when employing AI writing tools in second language education, as well as for those concerned about the potential stifling of students' creativity in English writing, several researchers advocate an alternative approach to teaching writing, which is known as *the process writing* (Hyland, 2021; Johnson, 2024; Rianti, 2023), which conveys numerous advantages in fostering students' creativity while enhancing their English writing skills. I explored the discourse surrounding the utilisation of AI writing tools, juxtaposed with the human-driven approach of *process writing* in this study. All in all, while the ethical concerns and potential impact of AI-assisted writing tools on students' creativity and independent learning have risen significantly, despite them bringing new opportunities and innovations in educational contexts, especially in higher education settings, *the process writing approach* seems to be a promising solution as it ensures students' active engagement in the writing process as well as develop essential critical thinking and composition skills in writing.

In the following sections, I will present an exploration of writing as cognitive and creative processes, which is followed by an analysis of the challenges faced by EFL students today. The discussion continues with the emergence of AI writing tools and their implications. Later, it delves into the cognitive and metacognitive benefits of *process writing*, supported by empirical evidence, and highlights the ethical and pedagogical risks associated with AI-generated writing in second language acquisition. Finally, key insights and implications of how AI writing tools and the process writing approach influence on students' long-term creativity in English writing will be scrutinised.

### *Writing as a cognitive process*

Second language (L2) writing denotes the process of articulating thoughts and ideas through written communication in a language distinct from one's native language. Within the realm of second language acquisition (SLA), mastering writing skills in a new language is widely acknowledged as a formidable challenge for EFL students due to the inherent complexity of the task (Godwin-Jones, 2018). Writing entails intricate cognitive procedures, encompassing the formulation of conceptual frameworks, the translation of mental constructs into tangible linguistic expressions, and the synthesis of personal experiences and acquired knowledge on diverse subjects. According to Hyland (2019, 2021) and Rianti (2023), the endeavour of writing entails a series of cognitive processes, such as pre-writing activities, drafting, editing, revising, and publishing, each constituting integral stages in the overarching writing process. Therefore, several researchers from various disciplines, including cognitive psychology, stylistics, rhetoric, text linguistics, critical library theory, hypertext theory, second language acquisition, and writing pedagogy, have also extensively investigated the nuanced dynamics involved in the writing processes of both novice and proficient writers (József, 2001).

As mentioned above, writing is fundamentally a cognitive process that engages various mental faculties and cognitive mechanisms. At its core, writing involves the intricate interplay of cognitive functions such as memory, attention, language processing, and executive functions (József, 2001). During the initial phase of writing, known as pre-writing, students generate ideas, organise thoughts, and plan the structure of their composition. Subsequently, the drafting stage entails translating these mental representations into written language, requiring the integration of linguistic rules, vocabulary, and syntactic structures. As the writing progresses, writers engage in processes of editing and revision, wherein they critically evaluate and refine their text to enhance clarity, coherence, and effectiveness (Hyland, 2021; Johnson, 2024; Rianti, 2023). Throughout this iterative process, second language learners draw upon their metacognitive skills to monitor and regulate their cognitive activities, ensuring alignment with their communicative goals. As it is discussed above, ultimately, writing serves as a dynamic means through which individuals externalise, refine, and communicate their thoughts, contributing to the development and expression of complex cognitive abilities.

### *Writing as a creative process*

Botella et al. (2018) claim that writing is inherently a creative process, requiring students to tap into their imaginative faculties and draw upon their reservoir of prior knowledge and experiences. As students engage in writing tasks, they are tasked with the challenge of

articulating their unique perspectives, insights, and interpretations through the written medium. This necessitates the synthesis and integration of their existing knowledge with newfound ideas, fostering intellectual growth and deeper understanding. By expressing their own ideas in writing, students not only demonstrate comprehension of subject matter but also exercise autonomy and self-expression, thereby cultivating their individual voice and identity as writers (Godwin-Jones, 1018; Hyland, 2019, 2021; Johnson, 2024). Through this dynamic interplay between personal reflection and scholarly inquiry, students imbue their writing with authenticity and originality (Botella et al., 2018; Roe et al., 2023), thereby enriching the discourse and contributing to the broader landscape of knowledge acquisition and dissemination.

On the other hand, according to Archer (2017), writing is a creative endeavour that involves several stages requiring effort, artistry, technique, imagination, knowledge, and skill to ensure effectiveness. Thus, to produce quality writing, it's essential for learners to not only follow these stages but also to value their own creativity by employing their imagination and creative abilities. Recognising the writing process can assist students in translating their creative ideas into written form. Besides, a creative mindset enables learners to develop imaginative writing based on their knowledge and creativity. According to Botella et al. (2018), creativity involves the ability to generate novel experiences characterised by originality, uniqueness, and extraordinariness, thus introducing fresh ideas and perspectives into a work. This implies that to produce high-quality writing, writers must integrate these various elements. As asserted by Smith (2013), embracing risk is inherent in creativity, prompting individuals to venture beyond established boundaries into uncharted territory. Consequently, writers must boldly express their ideas and thoughts in their writing, employing captivating language to underscore the inherent creativity of their work. By doing so, learners enhance their own understanding and appreciation of their creative writing. Moreover, fostering creativity in English writing empowers students to engage more deeply with the language, leading to richer and more nuanced written communication.

### *The emergence of AI writing tools, its effectiveness in acquisition of second language writing, and limitations*

Since late 2022, an unprecedented technological explosion in the field of artificial intelligence (AI) has been observed, which is a development that has been widely recognised across various sectors. Notably, one significant outcome of this technological advancement has been the emergence of AI writing tools such as Chat Generative Pre trained Transformer

(ChatGPT), QuillBot, Copy.ai, Writesonic and SurferSEO, DeepSeek, etc. These tools leverage cutting-edge natural language processing algorithms to generate human-like text autonomously, offering a wide array of applications across industries, including education (Gustilo et al., 2024; Lund & Wang, 2023; Roe et al., 2023).

In the realm of second language acquisition (SLA), AI writing tools have garnered considerable attention for their potential to enhance the writing skills of language learners to some extent. By providing learners with immediate feedback on grammar, spelling, punctuation, and style, these tools offer invaluable support in the writing process (HAI et al., 2023; Roe et al., 2023). Moreover, AI writing tools can assist learners in generating coherent and grammatically correct sentences, thereby alleviating some of the challenges associated with expressing themselves in a new language. Through consistent practice and interaction with AI writing tools, learners can refine their writing abilities and gain confidence in expressing their ideas effectively in a second language.

Furthermore, the effectiveness of AI writing tools in second language writing acquisition extends beyond mere grammar correction. These tools often provide language learners with access to vast repositories of writing prompts, vocabulary suggestions, and model texts, facilitating independent learning and promoting language fluency (HAI et al., 2023; Lund & Wang, 2023). Overall, the emergence of AI writing tools represents a promising development in language education, offering innovative solutions to the challenges faced by second language learners in developing their writing skills.

Despite their numerous benefits, AI writing tools also pose several disadvantages to students' acquisition of writing skills. Firstly, overreliance on AI tools may hinder the development of students' critical thinking and creativity (Lund & Wang, 2023; Roe et al., 2023; Zhai, 2024). By providing instant corrections and suggestions, these tools may discourage students from engaging in the cognitive processes (Escorcía, 2024; Wen et al., 2023) necessary for independent writing, such as brainstorming, problem-solving, and self-editing. Consequently, students may become dependent on AI assistance, resulting in a passive approach to writing rather than active engagement with the content.

Secondly, AI writing tools may perpetuate a one-size-fits-all approach to writing, overlooking the individualised needs and learning styles of students. These tools often prioritise standardised grammar and style conventions, neglecting the nuances of language and expression. As a result, students may feel constrained by rigid writing norms imposed by AI algorithms, stifling their ability to develop a unique voice and writing style (HAI et al., 2023; Lund & Wang, 2023; Roe et al., 2023).

According to the researchers, AI writing tools may inadvertently reinforce errors or biases present in their training data. While these tools are designed to improve writing accuracy, they are not immune to errors or biases inherent in their programming or dataset. Students may unknowingly adopt incorrect grammar or biased language patterns suggested by AI tools, thereby perpetuating inaccuracies or reinforcing stereotypes in their writing.

Furthermore, the use of AI writing tools may contribute to ethical concerns, particularly regarding plagiarism and academic integrity (Gustilo et al., 2024; Roe et al., 2023). Students may misuse AI-generated content, either intentionally or unintentionally, leading to instances of plagiarism. Additionally, the automated nature of AI writing tools may make it challenging for educators to detect instances of academic dishonesty, undermining the integrity of assessment processes.

While AI writing tools offer valuable support in the writing process, their use in educational settings must be approached with caution. Educators should encourage students to balance the benefits of AI assistance with the development of essential writing skills, critical thinking, and ethical awareness. Moreover, ongoing research and interviews are needed to address the limitations and challenges associated with the integration of AI writing tools in students' acquisition of writing skills.

#### *The cognitive and metacognitive benefits of process writing over AI-assisted writing*

Writing is fundamentally regarded as a cognitive and metacognitive process that involves several mental faculties such as memory, problem-solving, linguistic processing, and creativity of language learners (Escorcia, 2024; Hyland, 2021; Johnson, 2024; Li, 2023). As discussed above, *the process writing approach* has a great impact on strengthening these abilities, while it is ensuring its structured stages of pre-writing, drafting, revising, editing, and publishing, which allows learners to establish logical thinking, refine ideas, and explore linguistic creativity through iterative engagement with their own texts. The essence of *the process writing*, more importantly, is that it supports students to develop deeper cognitive pathways by letting them actively generate, evaluate and reformulate their ideas rather than passively absorbing pre-defined structures or patterns (Hyland, 2021; Johnson, 2024; Wen et al., 2023; Xu et al., 2021).

On the other hand, AI-assisted writing significantly discourages those essential cognitive processes of students, e.g., when they rely on AI-writing tools such as ChatGPT, QuillBot, or Grammarly to generate sentences for their essays, they unintentionally skip the fundamental engagement which is necessary for their writing skills development. Applied

linguistics and cognitive psychology research throughout history claim that students' deep engagement is essential for promoting their writing performance (Hyland, 2021; Johnson, 2024; Reschly & Christenson, 2022; Rianti, 2023; Wen et al., 2023), whilst a ready-made output is produced by AI-writing tools in which students do not engage in problem solving and linguistic practices which are needed to acquire effective writing skills. Consequently, the opportunity to remain in correspondence with enhancing grammatical precision, lexical diversity, and overall linguistic creativity becomes less, ultimately leading to superficial language development especially in writing (Hyland, 2021; Rianti, 2023).

Furthermore, *the process writing approach* encourages students to elicit a higher degree of cognitive investment in the composition process in written texts since writing involves brainstorming, decision-making, planning, and conceptual organisation, not simply about producing grammatically correct sentences (Bailey, 2015; Hyland, 2021; Teng, 2022; Wallace & Ruegg, 2020). While AI tools provide syntactical corrections, the above integral aspects of writing development are not guaranteed. In other words, relying on AI-generated texts represents a cognitive shortcut that significantly diminishes the pedagogical value of writing as an intellectual exercise, which may result in weakened critical thinking skills and linguistic autonomy, lessening students' ability to articulate complex ideas independently in creating texts in the long term (Johnson, 2024; Kemmerer, 2023; Li, 2023; Wen et al., 2023; Zhai et al., 2024).

#### *(a) Metacognition and self-regulation in writing*

Several researchers have acknowledged that metacognitive skills including self-monitoring, planning and evaluating one's writing, are indispensable in promoting students' writing proficiency (Escorcia, 2024; Teng, 2022; Wen et al., 2023). *The process writing approach* inherently fosters these skills by encouraging students to reflect on their own decisions, make structural and lexical choices in their writing, and give them an opportunity to revise their work based on their critical self-assessment (Bailey, 2015; Caplan and Johns, 2022; Hyland, 2021; Johnson, 2024; Young & Ferguson, 2020). By doing so, students may receive an opportunity to enhance their ability to regulate writing strategies, while the teacher is fostering an autonomic learning environment for them. This may allow students to strengthen their self-regulated learning strategies, increase their willingness to be able to write very well, and enable them to identify and correct errors, refine arguments and develop unique writing styles by themselves.

Conversely, relying on AI-generated written texts obviously weakens these metacognitive processes because students transfer decision-making responsibilities to the

algorithm when they apply AI tools to generate ready-made texts, resulting in diminishing the ability to express their own ideas in writing, and critically assess their writing (Baron, 2023; Escorcía, 2024; Wang, 2024; Zhai et al., 2024). This may lessen their reflective practice, critical thinking and questioning skills due to the fact that they cannot simply deny AI-generated ideas, failing to question the relevancy of those ideas in a given autogenerated text. As a result, the ability to develop metacognition and transferring skills to a new and unfamiliar context becomes weakened, and finally, incapable of being able to write academically.

In addition, the process of writing allows students to experience the iterative nature of writing in a self-directed manner since the practice of revising and editing drafts fosters a deeper engagement with the target language (Escorcía, 2024; Hyland, 2021; Teng, 2022) while relying on AI-generated texts provides limited opportunities to refine their texts when needed. Here, it should be noted that over-reliance of AI written products may discourage students' confidence to create their own texts but welcome undesirable outcomes such as depending too much on ready-made texts rather than implementing real linguistic competence.

#### *(b) The role of cognitive load in AI-generated writing*

Cognitive load theory claims that students ensure meaningful learning when they are provided an opportunity to actively process and disseminate information to others rather than passively absorb it (Garnett, 2020; Lovell, 2020; Sweller, 2019). Various researchers viewed that writing is a form of cognitively demanding task as it requires students to handle diverse forms of cognitive load, include intrinsic load (understanding grammar and syntax), extraneous load (navigating formatting and structure of a written task), and germane load (integrating ideas to produce a coherent text) (Kormos, 2023; Li, 2023; Xu et al., 2021). When students incorporate these cognitive demands in the writing process, they will be able to gradually develop the necessary skills which are required to improve their writing quality by repeatedly practicing and actively engaging with the L2.

Nevertheless, AI-generated texts prove the decreased demands of those cognitive loads in an artificial way since the use of AI tools reduces germane cognitive load by pre-emptively producing full sentences and paragraphs although they can minimise extraneous loads by navigating grammatical corrections and structural improvements in their writings (Kormos, 2023; Wang, 2024; Zhai et al., 2024). As a result, students are demotivated to engage in language learning process in-depth, which may lead to shallow linguistic retention and weaker overall writing proficiency. Recent empirical studies indicate that students who frequently rely on AI-generated texts struggle with applying the cognitive loads in writing such as internalising

syntactic and lexical structures, and finally their ability to independently produce unique and qualified writing may be weakened (Baron, 2023; Wang, 2024, Zhai et al., 2024). Ultimately, when students engage less in creativity, critical thinking, problem-solving, in other words, reduced cognitive engagement in their learning writing (Baron, 2023), the impact goes beyond broader academic and professional contexts due to the fact that the reduced engagement could negatively affect multiple areas of their life, e.g., their performance in writing class, and their effectiveness at work when they start their career in future, and their communication in real-world scenarios (Kormos, 2023; Xu et al., 2021). In the long run, this artificial reduction in cognitive load brings several undesirable consequences that extend beyond L2 learning, potentially dimming overall academic and intellectual development which are crucial for students.

### *Empirical evidence: The effect of process writing on students' creativity*

#### *(a) Case studies in EFL contexts*

According to diverse second language acquisition studies with a special focus on writing, *the process writing* proves significant benefits in developing students' writing performance particularly in implementing students' creativity and engagement. Hyland (2019, 2021) and Young and Ferguson's (2020) empirical studies explored the impact of *process writing* on students' creativity, narrative and argumentative writing skills. Their findings proved that applying *the process writing approach* enhanced the participants' ability to intricate and compelling narratives, use greater lexical diversity in their texts, and construct stronger argumentative sentences. Moreover, students showed their ability to refine their ideas and make their texts develop in a more cohesive and logical manner by using drafts and self-reflecting while writing. The findings also claim that the participants exhibited higher levels of engagement since they are intrinsically motivated owing to the fact that they enjoy their writing to a great extent rather than perceiving writing as a task to be accomplished assigned by the teacher.

Further supporting this claim, research by Saddler (2023), highlights that the participants in their study acknowledge a sense of autonomy during writing, which is particularly crucial for L2 learners to improve their writing in such a way that students can write better when they are allowed to express their ideas freely and independently. As a cognitively demanding process, they enjoyed their writing by conceptualising ideas, organising arguments, and refining linguistic concepts, strengthening their creativity in writing. Their findings imply

that the *process writing* should be implemented in writing class where students can actively engage with their writing in order to promote creativity in second language acquisition.

### *The ethical and pedagogical risks of AI-generated writing in second language acquisition*

#### *(a) Plagiarism and the loss of student agency*

Second language teachers, especially in Higher Education, demonstrate their concerns for students in utilising AI writing tools as a heightened risk of plagiarism and the erosion of academic integrity (Baron, 2023; Gustilo et al., 2024; Pecorari, 2024; Roe et al., 2023). They are concerned that those AI tools may even make it easier for students to accidentally copy someone else's work without providing proper citations, misleading them that they can use the information as their own. This can lead to plagiarism and consequently, academic integrity is obviously questionable, which results in violating ethical writing standards and students' creativity in writing. According to Gustilo et al. (2024) and Pecorari (2024), consequently, their ability to critical thinking, developing original ideas, expressing those ideas freely and independently, constructing well-supported arguments, and ultimately, the role of academic and intellectual development will be neglected.

Moreover, AI-assisted writing can lead to a loss of student agency since they become passive learners rather than engaging themselves in developing writing (Baron, 2023; Cardon et al., 2023). On the one hand, *process writing* improves students' voices and critical thinking skills, elevate unique opinions, and engage with the subject matter in-depth, but on the other hand, AI tools allow students to depend on ready-made and immediate sentences or paragraphs, neglecting the role of cognitive loads which are essential for academic success.

#### *(b) The role of universities in regulating AI Use in teaching writing*

Since AI tools have become increasingly integrated into academic settings, several researchers recommended that universities should develop clear policies to regulate their use in teaching writing (Baron, 2023; Cardon et al., 2023). Numerous universities across worldwide have already implemented strict guidelines, banning AI generated writing in students' assignments, due to ethical concerns discussed above such as originality, academic integrity and plagiarism issues (Baron, 2023; Lund & Wang, 2023). Although it may not be possible to exclude the role of technological explosion in education settings especially in Higher Education, EFL teachers and policymakers should majorly emphasise the fundamental cognitive processes engaged in writing for students, for instance, identifying students' grammatical errors, sentence patterns, and organisation of paragraphs in their assignments, as

well as providing constructive feedback to them in order to support student creativity in writing (Clark, 2023; Kormos, 2023).

Simultaneously, recent studies pointed out that it is important to maintain a balance between encouraging students' creativity in writing and addressing ethical concerns in teaching writing as the creativity and ethics seem to be two ends of the same continuum in this AI age for the reason that the former one allows students to think freely and explore new ideas, while the latter one can enhance creativity by generating ideas especially when students feel exhausted in brainstorming or thought-block (Baron, 2023; Zhai et al., 2024). The researchers also added that universities should develop their present curricula by integrating AI literacy programmes in order to educate students on how to ethically and effectively use AI while encouraging their own creative and intellectual development on the other hand. It is recommended for teachers to focus on guiding students in using AI as a learning aid for reviewing and giving feedback on their written products rather than relying on the tools to think critically and generate ideas (Cardon et al., 2023; Gustilo et al., 2024; Wang, 2024). By doing so, universities may be able to help students cultivate responsible digital writing practices while ensuring the integrity of academic writing. However, some questions arise in this context! How can teachers monitor students' usage of AI tools after school, e.g., when doing assignments as their homework despite it is possible for them to guide students to use the tools correctly and ethically in classrooms. Additionally, how can teachers remedy if some students might be addicted using the AI tools in generating ideas?

In summary, several questions still remain regarding the advancement of AI writing tools in academic contexts. What further improvements can be made to these technical tools? To what extent can the AI explosion continue? Should we focus more on time-saving texts, or the texts created by students in the long term? What impact will the increasing use of AI-assisted writing tools have on students' learning and growth? Additionally, how will universities measure ethical considerations regarding students' written texts, such as originality, plagiarism, and proper source attribution? Here, it is important to note that certain AI detection tools, such as QuillBot and Turnitin, which are used by some universities to assess ethical considerations in students' texts, still exhibit several limitations (HAI et al., 2023). For example, these tools can be costly, particularly for users requiring extensive use, and may also struggle to accurately identify more advanced or nuanced forms of AI-generated content. Finally, will it be possible for language learners and teachers to completely eliminate the use of AI writing tools in the future?

These questions persist as formidable challenges within the realm of teaching writing, and as indicated by the preceding discussion, the adoption of *the process writing approach* emerges as a potential solution to these complex issues. By emphasising the iterative nature of writing and fostering students' creativity throughout the writing process, regardless of the presence of AI writing tools, *the process writing approach* seems to be a promise for enhancing students' writing proficiency. Furthermore, this approach prioritises student engagement and ownership of their writing, aligning with the broader goals of education in promoting critical thinking and independent learning (Hyland, 2021). In proposing the implementation of *the process writing approach*, teachers aim to cultivate students' ability to generate and articulate ideas effectively while navigating ethical considerations and technological advancements in writing instruction.

By positioning language education as a catalyst for interdisciplinary learning in increasingly digital and diverse educational contexts, this paper bridges theory and practice to strengthen students' engagement and cognitive development as well as to improve their writing skills development, while maintaining ethical guidelines, focusing on an innovative writing approach grounded in neuroscience perspective, regardless of linguistic and cultural boundaries. Implementing the *process writing approach* in EFL/ESL teaching writing classes within higher education is universally beneficial in diverse academic settings across the world due to the fact that writing remains a fundamental skill that surpasses different linguistic and cultural contexts. Teachers can foster students' creativity and active engagement through *process writing* by equipping them to think critically and independently. Students will, then, achieve the opportunity to develop their unique voices, and refine their ideas over multiple drafts through this approach. By prioritising student-centred writing instruction through this human-driven writing approach, second language teachers worldwide can support learners to become independent and confident writers who can express their own ideas in a creative way in their writings, and who can communicate effectively through writing in both academic and professional contexts, without concerns over ethical issues coupled with AI writing tools. Ultimately, this may lead the students to desired outcomes and success in their educational and career pursuits in the long term.

### 3. Research Design

This chapter outlines the methodological framework applied in this study, which investigated the motivational strategies employed by the teacher educators, and the motivational dispositions of pre-service teachers with regard to English writing with a particular emphasis on the *process writing approach* at Hungarian teacher training contexts. The first section presents the main aim of the research, and its associated research questions, followed by an explanation of the research design, data collection methods, sampling method, participants, and data analysis methods.

#### 3.1 Research aim

The main aim of this doctoral study is to explore EFL teacher educators' motivational strategies, and pre-service teachers' motivational dispositions in English writing through the *process writing approach* within the Hungarian EFL teacher education context. The study also investigated the pre-service teachers and teacher educators' perceptions on the process writing, and how their teaching writing strategies can be effectively developed through the writing approach in a more motivating manner in the context investigated.

#### 3.2 Research questions

In order to fulfil the main aim of the study, I formulated the following main research question (RQ), and subsequent research questions (SQs) based on the literature review presented in Chapter 2.

RQ: How can EFL teacher educators improve pre-service teachers' English writing performance through the process writing approach in a more motivating manner at Hungarian teacher training universities?

SQ1: What are the perceptions of EFL pre-service teachers of *the process writing approach* at Hungarian teacher training universities?

SQ2: Which are the most motivating aspects of *process writing* for EFL pre-service teachers?

SQ3: What are the perceptions of EFL teacher educators of *the process writing approach* at Hungarian teacher training universities?

SQ4: What are EFL educators' motivational strategies required in strengthening pre-service teachers' motivation in English writing to improve their writing

performance through *the process writing approach* at Hungarian teacher training universities?

SQ5: How can these skills be effectively developed during the improvement of teacher education and continuous professional development of EFL teacher educators at Hungarian teacher training universities?

### 3.3 Mixed methods research

In order to find answers to the research questions which were outlined in CHAPTER 1, the mixed methods research paradigm will be applied, using a questionnaire survey and semi-structured interviews. Mixed methods research combines both qualitative and quantitative methods, and is extensively used in social sciences (Dörnyei, 2007). From the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, this method became popular owing to Campbell and Fiske (1959), who introduced, the multitrait-multimethod, which is a way to validate research designs by separating trait and method effects. In the 1970s, this idea was developed further by the introduction of triangulation, which means the combination of data sources to study the same social phenomenon in social science research (Dörnyei, 2007). Denzin (1978) highlighted triangulation, as a way of increasing validity. Then in the 1990s, mixed methods researchers presented another paradigm by developing the former concepts, which is the combined, integrated or mixed methods in the philosophy of pragmatism (Dörnyei, 2007). According to Dörnyei, mixed method research can be defined as a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods within a single research project. According to him, researchers can contribute the best of both qualitative and quantitative approaches by using mixed methods research and consequently, they can combine the strengths of both. Dörnyei also professes that the corresponding evidence obtained through multiple methods can increase generalisability, which means external validity of research results. Another undeniable truth of the mixed method research is that the final results are more concrete and usually acceptable for a larger audience than the results of a single method research. Dörnyei's (2007) claims of the mixed methods research were earlier expressed by Brewer and Hunter in 1989, recapping the strengths of the mixed methods as below:

The social sciences are well known for disputes between proponents of different methods, or styles, of research. In a sense, these methodological debates are a healthy sign. Scepticism is an essential part of scientific inquiry, and different types of methods represent important critical perspectives. Equally important,

however, is the fact that different research methods offer possible solutions for one another's problems. (p. 1)

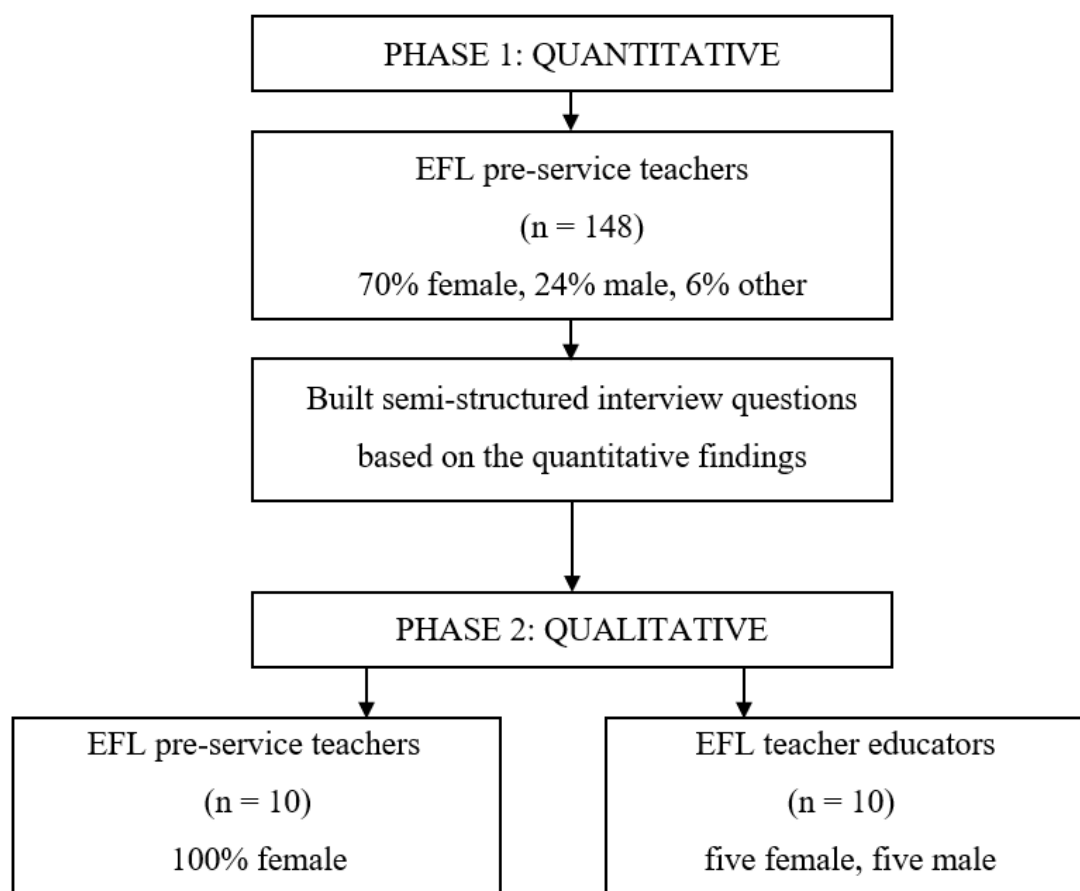
Based on these reasons, the mixed methods research design was selected to carry out the present research inquiry, as it serves the best to fulfil the needs of the present study by allowing me for an in-depth exploration of the complicated relationship of how EFL teacher educators' motivational strategies influence the motivational dispositions of pre-service teachers in English writing through the process of writing. Initially, the quantitative study helps to identify the significant trends and areas of focus regarding pre-service teachers' different motivational profiles in the writing area. The results of the quantitative study guide the follow-up qualitative phase to explore these inquiries more deeply through participants' own experiences and beliefs. This sequential combination ensures that the qualitative data was built directly based on the quantitative findings, and consequently, it enhances the overall depth, clarity, and validity of the research findings and conclusions.

### 3.4 Demographic data of participants

This study involves two distinct phases: the quantitative and the qualitative phase. In the quantitative phase, EFL pre-service teachers enrolled in the English language teacher education programmes at public universities in Hungary were selected as participants since they represent the target population for exploring different motivational profiles in English writing. Out of 195 pre-service teachers who accessed the questionnaire, 148 participants from six public universities in Hungary, where English language teacher education programmes were provided, fully completed the survey, and were included in the quantitative data analysis, of which 70% were female students, 24% were male students, and 6% identified another identity. According to the participants' biographical data, their ages ranged from 18 to 27 years. Although there are more teacher training universities that provide English language teacher education programmes in the country, data were collected from six institutions since the data access depended upon the respective universities' institutional policies and administrative consent, which may sometimes determine the feasibility of involving in educational research (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

Applying random sampling and voluntary participation they filled in the survey, expressing their willingness to engage in the follow-up qualitative study, participants were invited for semi-structured interview sessions. 10 pre-service teachers participated, and all of them were female students. Additionally, 10 EFL teacher educators from four public universities, of which five were female teachers and five were male teachers, who provided

them with academic writing training, and who are responsible for supervising the pedagogical development of the pre-service teachers voluntarily joined the semi-structured interview sessions. These educators provided rich and valuable insights into the motivational strategies they employ in their teaching writing classes, their personal opinions and experiences about the implementation of process writing, and the challenges they face in nurturing the approach effectively in a motivating manner in their teaching contexts. This two-tiered participant structure supports me in obtaining a comprehensive picture of the interchange between pedagogical practices and strengthening students' motivational dispositions in EFL writing skills development through the lens of process writing. Figure 4 represents the flow of participant recruitment and data collection processes, while Figure 5 refers to the correspondences between the main research question, subsequent research questions, and the mixed methods studies, where the bullet points in the last column of the table demonstrate the outcomes of my doctoral research.



**Figure 4** Flow of participant recruitment and data collection

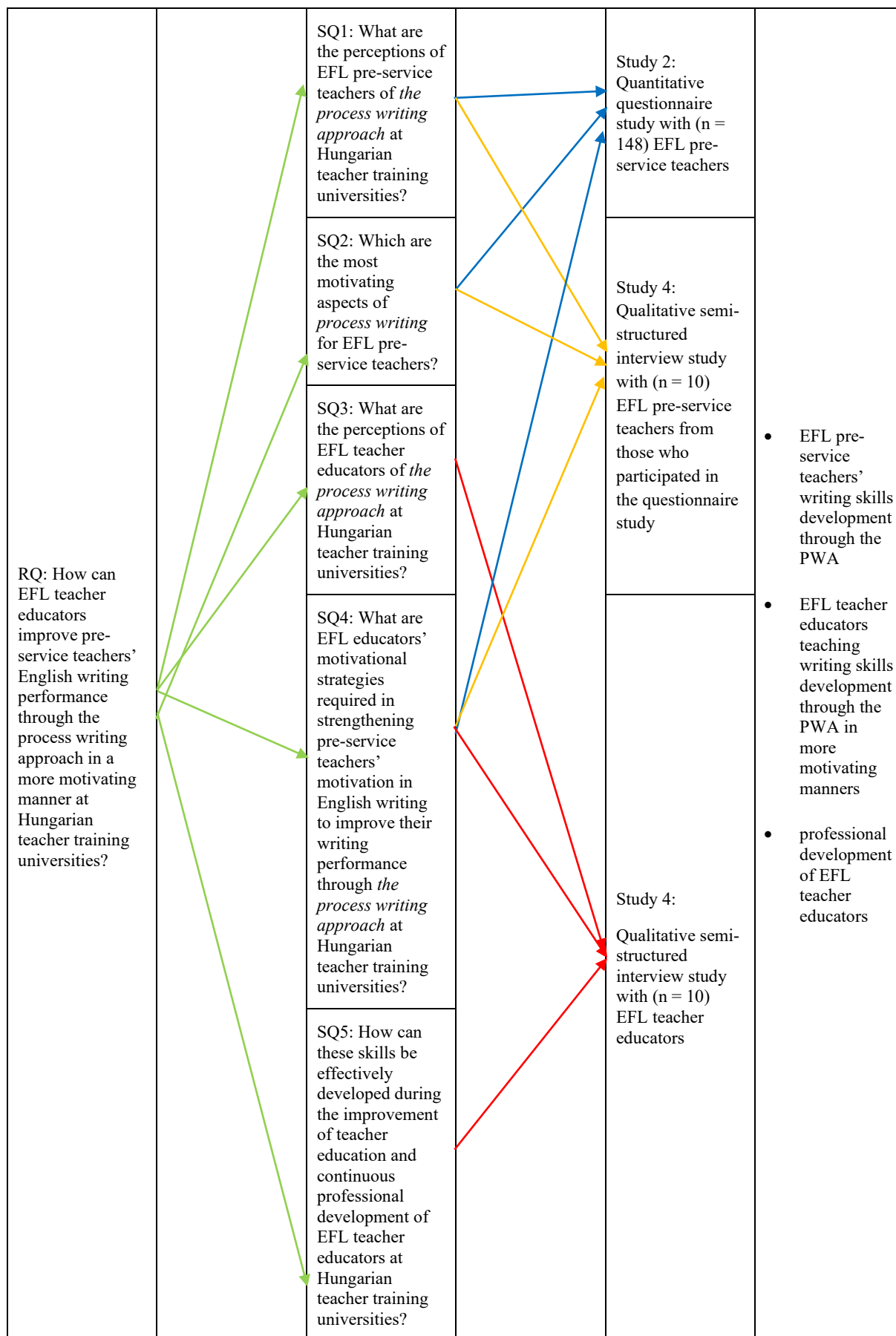


Figure 5 Correspondences between the RQ, SQs and the mixed methods studies

### 3.5 Sampling strategy

Throughout the data collection process, purposive sampling method was applied while selecting participants as one of the strengths of the sampling technique is that it provides richness in information of the participants and direct relevancy to the research questions (Patton, 2002). Due to the fact that the present study applied exploratory sequential design, and was focused on specific populations in EFL teacher education programmes in Hungary, this non-probability sampling technique was applied throughout all the phases of the study. This idea was verified by Palinkas et al.'s (2015) confirmation that purposive sampling is particularly appropriate for research which intends to seek insights from individuals who have a willingness to express their specific knowledge or experience in connection with the phenomenon under exploration. The study captured comprehensive perspectives which are essential to the research aims by selecting EFL pre-service teachers who engaged in learning writing, and their teachers, in other words, teacher educators, who provided writing instruction at the Hungarian teacher training institutions. According to Palinkas et al. (2015), this sampling approach also brought advantages for ensuring depth in qualitative inquiries of the study, as it helped me find the participants who could express their thoughts and experiences with clarity and detail during the interview studies.

There are six phases in this empirical exploration, and each of them will be scrutinised in detail in the research findings section.

### 3.6 Instruments

Two main research instruments engaged in this doctoral study: a quantitative questionnaire, and a set of qualitative semi-structured interview questions. I developed my own questionnaire, under the guidance of supervisor and co-supervisor, following Dörnyei's (2005) model of L2MSS and its constructs, as well as resilience and competition. The purpose of questionnaire study was to gather and generalise quantitative data on pre-service teachers' motivational disposition in English writing in connection with the writing processes. Then, the interview protocols were constructed to complement the survey data, aiming to explore the perceptions of both pre-service teachers and their teacher educators at Hungarian public universities in relation to the students' motivational disposition, and the teachers' motivational strategies employed in teaching writing classes respectively. Moreover, their challenges and perspectives on the process writing approach were also explored through the interview questions.

The instruments were created based on the thorough review of related literature discussed in the previous chapters, and the research aims of the present study. After analysing the survey results, the follow-up interview questions were designed to explore deeper insights into key concepts, which were identified by the respondents in the survey. Pilot testing of the quantitative and qualitative instruments was performed in the Hungarian teacher training context to ensure the instruments' clarity, validity, and appropriateness.

### 3.7 Participant recruitment

Participants for both research phases were recruited through institutional channels, including programme coordinators, academic staffs, professors, and teachers at public universities in Hungary. Initially, the research purposes, the description of the process writing approach, and the informed consent were shared to all the potential participants ensuring transparency, and their consents to participate in collecting data. EFL pre-service teachers were, first, invited to participate in the online survey voluntarily and anonymously for the quantitative part. In the survey, they were asked whether they would have a willingness to participate in the follow-up interview study, and if they would have a willingness, they were allowed to fill their contact email address for the communication purposes regarding the interview protocols. The respondents who consented were, then, randomly selected to take part in the interview series. In addition, teacher educators were invited through their email address, and departmental contacts in order to voluntarily participate in the interview sessions.

### 3.8 Development of semi-structured interview guides

Based on the relevant literature review discussed in the second chapter of the dissertation, and the findings of the questionnaire survey, semi-structured interview guides for both EFL pre-service teachers and their teachers (teacher educators) were constructed.

Since the mixed methods design was focused on this study, qualitative data collection was employed to achieve deeper understanding into the findings yielded by the survey. The purpose of this study was not only to collect data per se but also to check instrument development for the next steps, which aligns with the principle of connecting qualitative follow-up with quantitative findings (Creswell, 2014).

Quantitative findings were thematically analysed to further explore emerging issues (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Creswell, 2009), for example, items that showed notably high or low levels of the participants' agreement were selected to identify for further inquiry. These themes were transformed into open-ended semi-structured interview questions which were intended to

elicit participants' explanations, beliefs, and experiences in detail. As a next step, two interview guides were created: one for EFL pre-service teachers and one for EFL teacher educators which were piloted as explained in the following study to evaluate whether the questions were clear and themes were relevant. English language was used as a medium in constructing the interview questions due to the fact that all the intended participants for the whole research engaged in the English teacher preparation programmes at public universities in Hungary. Based on these facts and according to Braun and Clarke (2006), and Creswell and Plano Clark (2011), I followed a mixed analytical approach in this qualitative study, where initial quantitative findings informed the creation of semi-structured interview questions (the deductive approach), whereas the interviews were designed to allow for the emergence of new themes and deeper insights (the inductive approach).

### 3.8.1 Theoretical grounding

The design of the interview guides was informed by Dörnyei's (2005) model of L2MSS and its constructs, and Hyland's (2003, 2021) stages of *process writing*. Semi-structured interview questions were aimed to reveal participants' own experiences with teaching writing strategies, writing skills acquisition, their perceptions on motivation in English writing with a special focus on the *process writing approach*, students' engagement in writing composition, and the role of teacher educators in fostering students' engagement in English writing.

### 3.9 Data analysis overview

The obtained data from the quantitative study were, first, analysed applying descriptive statistics, and inferential statistics, such as paired and independent sample *t*-tests, correlation and regression analysis to investigate pre-service teachers' motivational disposition in English writing. As regards the qualitative results, the responses were coded based on motivational dimensions I measured in the quantitative part of this study, except the criterion measure scale (*motivated learning behaviour*). The initial codes were, then, organised into larger thematic categories based on the coded data to start to view patterns emerging in the dataset. The qualitative analysis followed the thematic analysis method outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006) as well as Creswell's (2009) data analysis template for qualitative data. This methodical and reflective process allowed me to gain a rich, deeper, and layered investigation of the participants' motivational disposition related to the *process writing approach*. The details will be explained further in the following research findings chapter.

### 3.10 Ethical considerations

Ethical integrity was prioritised throughout all phases of this doctoral research strictly following the ethical guidelines addressed by the institutional and international research standards. Before conducting data collection, ethical approval was obtained from the relevant university's Research Ethics Committee. All participants were delivered informed consent providing detailed information about the research purposes, procedures, their role and right to withdraw participation at any time without any consequences. Informed consents from all participants regarding both the survey and semi-structured interviews were collected before and during data collection, highlighting the fact that their responses would never be identifiable in any research publications or presentations.

To protect the participants' confidentiality and anonymity, I stored securely their pseudonymised data. Following the European Union's General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and the respective university's ethical guidelines, all personal and sensitive information were strictly handled, ensuring confidentiality, and they were saved in encrypted and password-protected files.

Again, during the interview sessions, the participants were asked if they agreed to record their video in order to confirm their consent before starting the interview questions. Additional steps regarding the qualitative components were carried out to ensure that participants felt comfortable while answering and expressing their personal opinions and experiences at my questions. I provided detailed attention to any sign of discomfort, pause or termination to the interview requested by the participant during the process as qualitative interviews may occasionally evoke their emotional responses. After anonymising their interview transcripts, video recordings were also permanently deleted following the transcriptions.

All these procedures were contributed following ethical considerations that included respect for participants, transparency, accountability, and fairness that were related to both the quantitative and qualitative components.

## 4. Results and Findings

In order to answer the research questions of the present study outlined in Chapter 1, a series of statistical analyses, such as reliability analyses of the scales, comparative analysis of the scales, correlational and linear regression analyses, as well as paired-samples and independent samples *t*-tests were performed for the quantitative strand, while the findings were complemented by qualitative insights based on semi-structured interview results, which will also be integrated into the second part of this chapter. The results of both the quantitative and qualitative findings provide a comprehensive understanding of the motivational dynamics that have a significant impact on EFL writing instruction and learning in Hungarian higher education.

### 4.1 Study 1: Pilot study for validating the questionnaire

(This section is an edited version of the article published in GILE Journal of Skills Development in April 2025, referred to as Maung, Győri & Kálmán (2025) in the bibliography of my dissertation. For a more elaborate description of the study, see the publication.)

#### 4.1.1 Aim

Based on the literature review and the purpose of the main study, the following research questions were formulated for the pilot investigation of the quantitative study.

1. Are the constructs of the pilot questionnaire reliable in the Hungarian context?
2. What characterises pre-service teachers' motivational disposition in English writing in the context investigated?
3. What dimensions of English writing contribute the most to the motivated learning behaviour of pre-service teachers in the context?
4. What are the pilot results?

#### 4.1.2 Instrument

As the preliminary stage of the research, I developed and piloted the motivation questionnaire, following Dörnyei's (2005) model of the L2 Motivational Self System (L2MSS) and several additional constructs, and motivated learning behaviour (mlb) as a criterion scale. This questionnaire intended to investigate the motivational disposition of EFL pre-service teachers who joined the English teacher education programmes in the Hungarian teacher education contexts, and their perceptions on applying *the process writing approach* in writing. This was a crucial and foundational phase, which was designed to ensure the psychometric validity and reliability of the dimensions in the quantitative questionnaire. Since one of the

significant strengths of the questionnaire is that it is easy to design, it may be used under different circumstances, and allows me to quickly collect a large amount of data within a short period of time (Dörnyei, 2007), I intended to apply the questionnaire study at the first stage of the data collection process.

I developed a questionnaire containing a total of 11 scales, comprising 67 items related to L2 motivational dimensions in English writing, plus a criterion variable scale: motivated learning behaviour. The questionnaire included Likert-scale items, ranging from “strongly disagree=1” to “strongly agree=5” designed to measure pre-service teachers’ perceptions toward topic *difficulty*, teacher’s *assessment*, writing *topics*, *pre-writing* activities, teacher’s *strategies*, *significant others*, *ideal L2 self*, *intrinsic motivation*, *instrumental motivation*, *resilience*, *competition*, and *motivated learning behaviour*, the criterion variable scale. I developed the motivational scales, except for the resilience and competition scales, which were adapted from Orosz et al. (2018), and which were validated by the two experts, my supervisor and co-supervisor. The criterion variable scale was taken from Kormos and Csizér (2008). The questionnaire included a section where participants were asked to answer inquiries related to their biographical contexts, which had to be completed before the scales. The English language is applied in designing all the items, as the respondents were pre-service teachers attending the English teacher education programme in the context investigated.

The pilot questionnaire was then delivered to pre-service teachers enrolled in the English teacher education programme provided by a public university in Hungary in the form of a Qualtrics online survey due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

**Table 1** Scales of the questionnaire

Motivational dimensions	
1.	5 items targeting what writing topic <i>difficulty</i> motivates students (pre-service teachers)
2.	5 items aimed at what kind of <i>teacher’s assessment, comment and feedback</i>
3.	5 items targeting what kind of writing <i>topics</i> motivate students
4.	7 items covering what kind of <i>pre-writing activities</i> motivate students
5.	5 items covering what kind of teaching <i>strategies</i> motivate students
6.	6 items directed at <i>significant others</i>
7.	5 items on the <i>ideal L2 self</i>
8.	6 items dedicated to <i>intrinsic motivation</i>
9.	6 items concerned with <i>instrumental motivation</i>
10.	5 items measuring <i>resilience</i>
11.	7 items related to <i>competition</i>
+	
A criterion variable scale	
12.	5 items associated with <i>motivated learning behaviour</i>

#### 4.1.3 Participants and sampling method

40 pre-service teachers of an English teacher preparation programme at a public university in Hungary participated in the quantitative pilot survey. All of them are Hungarian students, studying English as their first foreign or second foreign language. Their ages ranged from 18 to 21 years. Purposive sampling method was applied to collect the participants' data in order to measure the reliability and validity of the questionnaire.

#### 4.1.4 Data analysis and findings

Data were analysed using IBM SPSS Statistics (Version 28) to answer the pilot research questions. The statistical analyses were divided into descriptive and inferential analyses. For descriptive statistics, mean scores and standard deviations were analysed to assess the central tendencies and variability of the motivational dimensions. Results of the scales and their components were examined to elicit the participants' valuable insights. For inferential statistics, reliability analysis using Cronbach's alpha was employed to measure internal consistency. Linear regression analysis was also conducted to assess which motivational dimensions contributed the most to motivated learning behaviour. The results demonstrated (see Table 2) that the pilot questionnaire was ready to be used for the main quantitative study, as its constructs proved to be reliable. The pilot results can be seen as follows:

#### *Reliability analysis of the scales*

Table 2 shows the Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficients of the scales in the Hungarian EFL teacher training context, which were calculated to answer the first research question (Are the constructs of the pilot questionnaire reliable in the Hungarian context?).

**Table 2** Reliability coefficient of the scales in the Hungarian context

<b>Construct</b>	<b>Cronbach's <math>\alpha</math></b>
1. difficulty	.801
2. assessment	.725
3. topic	.599
4. pre-writing	.803
5. strategies	.632
6. significant others	.749
7. ideal L2 self	.678
8. intrinsic motivation	.781
9. instrumental motivation	.800
10. resilience	.703
11. competition	.785
12. motivated learning behaviour	.824

The high Cronbach's alpha results for the revised scales in the Hungarian context demonstrated the internal reliability of the measured dimensions, allowing for further analyses with these variables in this context.

### *Comparative analysis of the scales*

Subsequently, descriptive statistics of the scales from the Hungarian context were computed to answer the second research question (What characterises pre-service teachers' motivational disposition in English writing in context?) related to the motivational disposition of the participants. Table 3 shows the results of the descriptive statistics of the scales, their mean values and standard deviation values in Hungary.

**Table 3** Comparative analysis of the scales in the Hungarian context

	<b>Construct</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Deviation</b>	
1.	assessment	4.33	.52	*
2.	instrumental	4.03	.74	
3.	pre-writing	3.68	.68	
4.	ideal	3.68	.71	*
5.	strategies	3.62	.72	
6.	topics	3.58	.61	
7.	intrinsic	3.46	.76	*
8.	resilience	3.40	.73	*
9.	significant others	3.14	.76	
10.	difficulty	2.97	.86	
11.	competition	2.96	.82	
12.	motivated learning behaviour	3.79	.82	

\* The lines indicate a significant difference between the scales based on paired samples *t*-tests ( $p < 0.05$ ).

In the Hungarian context, the first two dimensions of teachers' *assessment* and pre-service teachers' *instrumental motivation* manifested the highest mean values (4.33 and 4.03). A paired samples *t*-test revealed that there was no significant difference between them. Consequently, from a statistical perspective, the two dimensions were observed to be equally motivating in the realm of English writing activities among the participants. This finding is supported by Hyland (2021) and Saddler (2023), who claim that the assessment practices employed by teachers play a pivotal role in shaping students' attitudes and enthusiasm towards writing tasks, claiming that teachers' assessment substantially influences the motivation of students engaged in English writing activities. These findings contribute to the broader

understanding of the multifaceted dynamics between teachers' assessments and student motivation in the domain of language learning, including the acquisition of writing skills.

Interestingly, it was also found that pre-service teachers' *instrumental motivation* is a powerful motivator in the context of this pilot study, echoing the research findings of Dörnyei and Ushioda (2021), Lamb et al. (2019), and Maung et al. (2022).

The subsequent four dimensions, *pre-writing activities*, *the ideal L2 self*, *the teacher's strategies* and *topic*, displayed similar mean values (3.68, 3.68, 3.62 and 3.58 respectively) and standard deviation scores (.68, .71, .72 and .61 respectively), suggesting that these dimensions are perceived as somewhat less motivating. However, they still fall within the higher range of the Likert scale, ranging from 3.58 to 3.68. This suggests that pre-service teachers believe they are inspired to write effectively when the teacher assigns *pre-writing* activities before allowing them to engage in actual writing tasks. The research findings confirmed the results of previous studies claiming that *pre-writing* activities exhibit a positive impact on students' motivational levels, and teachers' guided pre-writing exercises, for instance, brainstorming, contribute significantly to heightened motivation (Johnson, 2024; Saddler, 2023). Their findings indicate that students who participate in purposeful *pre-writing* activities tend to approach English writing tasks with increased confidence and enthusiasm. Additionally, their research results highlighted the importance of incorporating diverse and stimulating *pre-writing* strategies to cater to the varied needs and preferences of students (Hyland, 2021; Saddler, 2023; Young & Ferguson, 2020). These results emphasise the potential of well-designed *pre-writing* activities as a valuable pedagogical tool to enhance motivation in the context of English writing.

If we move to the fourth and fifth bands of Table 4, the mean values of the three dimensions, that is, *intrinsic motivation*, *resilience*, and *significant others*, revealed that they have the lower mean values compared to the previous six dimensions, ranging from 3.14 to 3.46. The data indicate that these dimensions appear to be the second least motivating aspects in the participants' motivational disposition in English writing within the investigated context.

The mean values of the last two dimensions, that is, *difficulty* and *competition*, showed the lowest mean values and standard deviation scores, with no significant differences between them, ranging from 2.96 to 2.97 and 0.82 to 0.86, respectively. These findings suggest that *difficulty* and *competition* are the least affecting motivators in the motivational disposition of Hungarian participants toward English writing. In essence, pre-service teachers exhibit lower motivation in English writing activities when faced with challenging topics and competitive scenarios, whether individual or group-based, that do not have a positive impact on their motivation. Notably, the scale "*competition*" emerged as the least powerful motivator in the

Hungarian context for this pilot study, implying that pre-service teachers find competitive situations conducive to enhancing their motivation in English writing.

### *Linear regression*

As I also wanted to investigate which dimensions contributed most to the motivated learning behaviour of the participants in Hungary for this pilot study (research question 4), linear regression analysis was carried out, and the results are presented in Table 4.

**Table 4** Results of regression analysis of the motivational scales with *motivated learning behaviour* as the criterion variable (significance level  $p < 0.01$ )

Variable	$\beta$	$t$	$p$
1. ideal L2 self	.569	4.765	<.001
2. pre-writing	.314	2.632	<.001
R <sup>2</sup>			.592

During the regression analysis, all variables were initially calculated, and the most powerful independent variables were selected based on their statistical contribution to the dependent variable (motivated learning behaviour), rather than solely relying on their Cronbach's alpha values. Based on the regression coefficients and statistical influence, the two independent variables *ideal L2 self* and *pre-writing* proved to predict *motivated learning behaviour*.

The outcomes derived from the regression analysis in the Hungarian context indicate that 59% of the participants' motivated learning behaviour can be explained by two dimensions – *the ideal L2 self* and *pre-writing* activities. When comparing the  $\beta$  coefficients of the two scales, it may be observed that the impact of *the ideal L2 self* (.569) is almost twice as strong as that of *pre-writing* (.314). These results confirm Dörnyei and Usioda (2021), Hyland (2021), Saddler (2023) and Young and Ferguson (2020), who claim that learners require a portfolio of task-based techniques that are triggered by the activation of their *ideal L2 self*. In this regard, they recommended such practical guides for second language teachers which are comprehensive, encompass an imagery/vision component capable of eliciting suitable emotions, and align with various pertinent plans, scripts, and self-regulatory strategies. The integration of these various components forms a cohesive motivational conglomerate for learners, emphasising the interconnected functioning of motivation, cognition, and emotion as integral to effective language learning, including writing.

After calculating the statistical analysis of the pilot data in Hungary and presenting the results, the pilot questionnaire was ready to be used for the main quantitative study, as its constructs proved to be reliable.

#### 4.2 Study 2: Quantitative questionnaire study

Following the pilot investigation, the second phase of the study involved administering the finalised motivation questionnaire to a larger sample of EFL pre-service teachers from six teacher training universities in Hungary. This was conducted to answer the main research question, and subsequent research questions — RQ, SQ 1, SQ 2, and SQ 4 — of this doctoral study.

RQ: How can EFL teacher educators improve pre-service teachers' English writing performance through the process writing approach in a more motivating manner at Hungarian teacher training universities?

SQ1: What are the perceptions of EFL pre-service teachers of *the process writing approach* at Hungarian teacher training universities?

SQ2: Which are the most motivating aspects of *process writing* for EFL pre-service teachers?

SQ4: What are EFL educators' motivational strategies required in strengthening pre-service teachers' motivation in English writing to improve their writing performance through *the process writing approach* at Hungarian teacher training universities?

In order to find the answers, reliability analysis of the scales, comparative analysis of the scales, correlational analysis, linear regression analysis, and an independent samples *t*-test were performed. The results and findings will be discussed in detail in the subsequent sections.

##### 4.2.1 Participants

A total of ( $n = 148$ ) EFL pre-service teachers of undivided teacher training programmes from six public teacher training universities in Hungary participated in the survey. They were the students enrolled in English language teacher education programmes in the academic year of 2022 – 2023. The age of the participants, based on the biographical data they provided, ranged from 18 – 27 years. Among them, 70% were female students, 24% were male students, while 6% participants identified as another identity.

#### 4.2.2 Instrument

The validated qualtrics questionnaire piloted in Study 1 was applied at this stage.

#### 4.2.3 Data collection

Through collaboration with the teachers and administrative staff from the universities, data were collected in classroom settings through an online survey format. Participants were thoroughly informed about the purpose of the research, and their consents were obtained. The survey was administered to them, and they were allowed to conduct it anonymously and voluntarily to ensure their honest responses.

#### 4.2.4 Data analysis

Using IBM SPSS Statistics (Version 28), the results were analysed and interpreted to answer the main research questions related to the quantitative study. The statistical analyses were divided into two parts: descriptive and inferential analyses. Initially, a reliability analysis was conducted, using the Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient, in order to evaluate the internal consistency of the scales. Mean scores and standard deviations were then analysed for descriptive statistics in order to assess the central tendencies and variability of the motivational dimensions among the pre-service teachers. The results of the scales and their individual components were analysed to gain deeper insights into the performance of the participants in the context investigated. Thirdly, correlational analysis was conducted to explore the relationships that characterise the dimensions related to English writing. Finally, linear regression analysis was performed to identify which motivational dimensions contributed the most to the motivated learning behaviour of the Hungarian participants in English writing.

The quantitative phase was conducted, aiming to observe generalisable insights into motivational dispositions in English writing skills development of pre-service teachers using a structured instrument, as the approach allowed me to identify broad patterns. The results of the quantitative findings are discussed below, and these findings informed the development of interview protocols for the next steps, which involve the qualitative studies of the doctoral research (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018).

#### 4.2.5 Results and findings of the quantitative questionnaire study

The following section presents the detailed results and findings of the main quantitative study answering the following main research question and subsequent questions presented above.

### *Reliability analysis of the scales*

In order to evaluate the internal consistency of the scales applied in the current study, Cronbach's alpha coefficients were calculated for each construct first. Table 5 shows that 10 out of 12 scales demonstrated acceptable to excellent reliability scores as their Cronbach's alpha values exceeded the commonly accepted minimum threshold of .60 for exploratory research (George & Mallery, 2003; Nunnally, 1978).

**Table 5** Reliability coefficients of the scales

<b>Construct</b>	<b>Cronbach's <math>\alpha</math></b>
1. difficulty	.718
2. assessment	.721
3. topics	.586
4. pre-writing	.772
5. strategies	.523
6. significant others	.769
7. ideal L2 self	.742
8. intrinsic motivation	.817
9. instrumental motivation	.776
10. resilience	.658
11. competition	.767
12. motivated learning behaviour	.835

Since the Cronbach's alpha coefficients of the two scales, *topics* ( $\alpha = .59$ ) and *strategies* ( $\alpha = .52$ ), did not reach the 0.6 cutoff point, and fell below the minimum recommended threshold, they were excluded from further statistical analyses (Dörnyei, 2007). However, all remaining constructs proved to be reliable, as their Cronbach's alpha values demonstrated sufficient internal consistency, especially motivated learning behaviour, which is a criterion variable scale in this study. It yielded the highest reliability ( $\alpha = .835$ ), while the *intrinsic motivation* also displayed a strong reliability ( $\alpha = .817$ ).

One possible reason for the lower Cronbach's alpha values in the main survey concerns the sensitivity of Cronbach's alpha values regarding item numbers and sample characteristics. Since both the *topic* and *strategies* comprised fewer items, and as highlighted by DeVellis (2016) and Loewenthal (2004), scales with lower items seem to produce lower alpha coefficients regardless of acceptable inter-item correlations. In such cases, the quality of internal consistency seems to be underestimated, and not reflecting the quality of the scale as a measurement, but rather a limitation of the alpha coefficient. Additionally, contrary to the pilot survey, Cronbach's alpha values may be influenced by the heterogeneity of the sample. While all pilot surveys and main surveys were conducted in the Hungarian context, the larger sample

composed of different student cohorts may have increased the variance of interpretation, or in terms of engagement, with the tools used, especially when constructs are more subjective or abstract (for instance, topic relevance or strategy use) that might have led to reduced internal consistency (Field, 2018; Tavakol & Dennick, 2011).

In addition, several studies recognise that minor fluctuations in Cronbach's alpha values across studies are relatively common, and do not necessitate flawed measurement instruments since such fluctuations may reflect contextual, motivational, or situational differences in, or across cohorts (Dörnyei, 2007; Kimberlin & Winterstein, 2008). Nevertheless, the final decision to not analyse those two constructs was made to maintain the psychometric quality of the study, by only including variables that had sufficient internal consistency in the subsequent inferential analyses.

To sum up for this section, the reliability analysis results indicate that the majority of the scales seemed to be reliable, and appropriate for inclusion in further inferential analyses, such as descriptive statistics, correlations, and linear regression.

### *Comparative analysis of the scales*

In order to investigate the central tendencies and variability of pre-service teachers' responses on various motivational constructs descriptive analysis was conducted as a second step. The aim was to provide an overview of the participants' different motivational profiles in English writing with a special emphasis on the process writing approach. Notably, the participants ranked these motivational factors through their responses in the survey by offering a foundational view of their motivational orientation and preferences regarding English writing before proceeding to the subsequent statistical analyses. They can be observed as follows:

**Table 6** Comparative analysis of the scales

	<b>Construct</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Deviation</b>	
1.	assessment	4.27	.55	
2.	instrumental motivation	4.10	.65	*
3.	ideal L2 self	3.79	.71	*
4.	intrinsic motivation	3.55	.78	*
5.	pre-writing	3.49	.72	
6.	resilience	3.38	.69	
7.	significant others	3.20	.78	*
8.	difficulty	3.06	.90	
9.	competition	2.95	.80	
10.	motivated learning behaviour	3.87	.79	

\* The lines indicate a significant difference between the scales based on paired samples *t*-tests ( $p < 0.05$ ).

If we look at the first band of the table, the statistical results reveal that among the nine motivational dimensions and the criterion variable scale (*motivated learning behaviour*) measured in this study, *assessment* exhibited the most outstanding mean value ( $M = 4.27$ ), and may be considered the most motivating factor, which was ranked significantly higher than *instrumental motivation* ( $M = 4.10$ ), which was positioned as the second strongest motivator according to its mean value. The results indicate that Hungarian pre-service teachers in this quantitative study placed the highest value on their teacher's evaluation, constructive feedback, and structured grading, compared to their pragmatic and outcome-oriented goals. These findings closely align with the features of the *process writing approach*, which views *assessment* not as a final judgement, but as a continuous and formative process that drives students' improvement through recurring drafts and teacher's feedback when needed (Hyland, 1999, 2021). According to Ryan and Deci's (2018, 2020) Self-Determination Theory, feedback provides an essential source of competence support for students, enabling them to internalise extrinsic information into self-regulated persistence in their learning. In my dissertation, the result also resonates with the claim that teacher's assessment practices directly scaffold students' writing development, thereby functioning as powerful motivational mechanisms (Hyland, 2021), following the claim by Hyland and Hyland (2006) affirming that "Feedback is central to the development of effective learning" (p. 83). The outcome reflects my previous pilot study in Myanmar (Maung et al., 2022), which is also consistent with my comparative pilot studies in Myanmar and Hungary (Maung et al., 2025), both of which confirmed that assessment consistently ranked as the highest motivational factor in the contexts investigated.

Simultaneously, *instrumental motivation* emerged as the second most powerful motivator according to its mean value ( $M = 4.10$ ), which reflects that the participants placed their emphasis on pragmatic outcomes as the second priority, such as achieving grades, passing examinations, obtaining scholarships, or enhancing career prospects, compared to their value on teacher's assessment and feedback. Moreover, the statistical results yielded that there is a significant difference between the two constructs, *assessment* and *instrumental motivation*. Although *assessment* was rated more highly, instrumental motivation still exhibited a highly influential role in sustaining effort for the participants. The result was supported by Gardner and MacIntyre (1991), claiming that instrumental motives are pragmatic and benefit-driven for second or foreign language learners. The result also corresponds with Csizér and Dörnyei's findings in the Hungarian context in 2005, where students' instrumental goals proved to be

consistently dominant. More recently, Liu, Hau, and Zheng (2018) found that instrumental motives may strengthen students' effort, even among the students with lower intrinsic motives, while Sadik (2025), and Schiller and Dörnyei (2022) declared that instrumental orientation can enhance students' persistence in the long-term when they perceive clear benefits in their learning. In this dissertation, this finding complies with the broader L2 literature where instrumental goals frequently drive students' academic writing achievement. Moreover, it further strengthens the validity of my previous pilot studies (Maung et al., 2022; 2025), all of which observed that students' pragmatic focus was positioned near the top of motivational hierarchies measured in the two studies, as the instrumental motives relatively influenced the students' motivation to write better by connecting their efforts to future outcomes, for instance, passing the examination, achieving better grades, or future career goals, thereby encouraging their commitment and persistence to English writing.

If we go further in the table, we can see that the three constructs, the *ideal L2 self* ( $M = 3.79$ ), *intrinsic motivation* ( $M = 3.55$ ), and *pre-writing* ( $M = 3.49$ ), proved to be moderately powerful motivators in this study according to their mean values. Paired-samples t-test results indicate that there is a significant difference between the *ideal L2 self* and *intrinsic motivation*, while the difference between *pre-writing* and intrinsic motivation was not significant, claiming that participants' intrinsic enjoyment in English writing, and pre-writing activities were similarly influential within this statistical band. As, the *ideal L2 self* was also significantly different from the *instrumental motivation* in the first band, implying that the Hungarian pre-service teachers' pragmatic and outcome-oriented motives play a more influential role than their future vision of being excellent English writers. Based on the results in the second band, it can be generalised that the participants' idealistic future version of themselves as proficient writers act as a moderately powerful source of motivation for them, while intrinsic enjoyment and confidence in pre-writing activities, such as brainstorming, were less powerful yet still meaningful drivers of engagement in writing. Besides, the presence of *pre-writing* in the fourth band reflects the importance of *the process writing approach*, which includes planning, generating ideas, and outlining that contribute to a sense of control over the task the pre-service teachers are engaged in, even if they seem to be less influential than teacher's feedback and assessment (Flower & Hayes, 1981; Hyland, 2019, 2021; Saddler, 2023). These empirical findings echo Magid's (2014) and Kwon's (2023) report that vision-oriented motivation is potent, but frequently moderated by pragmatic demands. Studies in L2 writing also yield that pre-writing, drafting and editing support quality in writing, and increase students' confidence, but they are typically not the primary levers of motivation (Bailey, 2015; Hyland, 2021;

Saddler, 2023). These findings align with my comparative pilot results (Maung et al., 2025) described in the previous section, which displayed a similar pattern, with the *ideal L2 self* positioned as a moderately powerful motivator, and *intrinsic motivation* and *pre-writing* serving as lesser yet meaningful influences on the participants' writing performance.

If we move to the fourth and fifth bands of the table, the four motivational dimensions — *resilience*, *significant others*, *topic difficulty*, and *competition* turned out to be the least powerful motivators in this study according to their mean values (3.38, 3.20, 3.06, and 2.95) respectively. The paired samples *t*-test results indicated that there is a significant difference between *resilience* and *significant others*, whereas all other pairwise comparisons proved no significant difference between them. This implies that Hungarian EFL pre-service teachers' resilience is a stronger motivator compared to the other three constructs, while the latter ones, such as external forces, topic difficulty in writing, and competitive situations operated at similarly lower level of influence on their writing performance. Interestingly, the statistical data claimed that these dimensions represent the least motivating aspects in the pre-service teachers' motivational disposition in English writing in the Hungarian context, echoing what I had observed in my pilot study in Hungary (Maung et al., 2025). In other words, pre-service teachers seem to be less motivated by their emotional status since they struggled with writing tasks; by their social surroundings including their teachers, parents, peers, or classmates since they may view writing as a personal effort rather than being shaped by an external encouragement; by challenging writing topics that may make them feel uncomfortable or difficult; and by their stress in competitive situations in writing class.

These findings couple with empirical works of Cassidy (2016), Jowkar et al. (2014), Martin (2013) and Zhang (2022) on *resilience*, which emphasise its contextual and dynamic nature. Although *resilience* can support students' persistence, it may not be regarded as a stable trait, and it sometimes seems to be heavily influenced by stress, assessment pressures, and social support. Similarly, the low influence of *significant others* resonates with Csizér's (2020) and Kormos et al.'s (2011) research in the Hungarian context, which highlight that pre-service teachers often perceive writing as an *individual responsibility*, rather than placing emphasis on parental or peer encouragement.

Regarding *competition*, the statistical results from the Table 6 align with Fülöp and Györi's (2021) study of Hungarian and Japanese learners, which revealed that competitive situations in education are often regarded as an increased stress rather than motivation for learners. Furthermore, Fülöp et al. (2025) demonstrated that students in competitive climates frequently report lower well-being, which also echoed in Orosz et al.'s (2018) development of

the Multidimensional Competitive Orientation Inventory, asserting that competitive situations may create both positive and negative effects on students' learning depending on the context. From a theoretical perspective, Hyland's (2019, 2021) *process writing approach* seems to be a promising writing strategy that may explain these results due to the fact that it promotes teacher-student or student collaboration, teacher's feedback, and revision in writing over rivalry or task difficulty, hence de-emphasising competition and pressure as motivators. In this respect, Self-Determination Theory can also clarify why these motivational dimensions had limited power — they provide minimal support for autonomy, competence, or relatedness in learning, and therefore, they do not escalate into strengthened motivation (Ryan & Deci, 2018; 2020).

The mean value of the criterion variable scale, *motivated learning behaviour*, displayed a relatively high score (3.87), claiming that participants were actively engaged in their writing tasks as they perceived that learning to write well in English is crucial for them, and hence, they demonstrated a strong commitment in acquiring writing skills through consistent effort, determination, and pushing themselves to improve their performance under challenging circumstances. As discussed in the literature review, the findings were supported by Dörnyei and Ottó's (1998) affirmation that learners' motivated behaviours, such as persistence, planning, and the use of different learning strategies, perform as obvious signs of their internal motivation, and commitment to obtaining their academic achievements.

### *Relationship between the scales*

After calculating the descriptive analysis, the correlational analysis was carried out between the scales as well as the criterion measure scale in order to investigate what relationships characterise the dimensions related to English writing. The results are presented in Tables 7 and 8.

**Table 7** Correlations between the scales ( $p < 0.05$ )

	assess	pre-w	sign others	ideal	intrin	Instru	resil	comp	diff
1. assessment	—	.347	.483	.508	.424	.396	.393	.341	.167
2. pre-writing	.347	—	.351	.325	.305	.316	.301	.312	
3. sign others	.483	.351	—	.352	.362	.293	.295	.417	
4. ideal self	.508	.325	.352	—	.717	.611	.469	.419	.476
5. intrinsic	.424	.305	.362	.717	—	.380	.459	.379	.503
6. instrumental	.396	.316	.293	.611	.380	—	.304	.259	.299
7. resilience	.393	.301	.295	.469	.459	.304	—	.528	.553
8. competition	.341	.312	.417	.419	.379	.259	.528	—	.501
9. difficulty	.167			.476	.503	.299	.553	.501	—

**Table 8** Significant correlations between the scales and criterion measure scale (motivated learning behaviour behaviour [MLB]) ( $p < 0.05$ )

	assess	pre-w	sign others	ideal	intrin	instru	resil	comp	diff
mlb	.450	.424	.364	.613	.568	.467	.389	.406	.401

According to the data described in Tables 7 and 8, the highest significant correlations can be found between

1. intrinsic motivation and the ideal L2 self (0.717),
2. the ideal L2 self and motivated learning behaviour (0.613),
3. instrumental motivation and the ideal L2 self (0.611),
4. intrinsic motivation and motivated learning behaviour (0.568),
5. difficulty and resilience (0.553).

Several conclusions can be drawn from the five strongest correlations listed above. The highest correlation result was observed between *intrinsic motivation* and *ideal L2 self* (0.717), which indicates that when Hungarian pre-service teachers in EFL teacher education in this study are intrinsically motivated, they are also motivated by a strong vision of themselves as successful writers in English. That is, the participants who enjoy the writing process for their own sake are more likely to imagine themselves as proficient academic writers in the future. According to the statistical data, the strongest relationship in this correlational analysis demonstrates that students' enjoyment of learning the target language is closely related to their imagination of being professional teachers or scholars in the future. For instance, in an EFL writing class, students who enjoy pleasure in drafting essays or writing assignments might frequently visualise themselves writing confidently in their professional contexts, including preparing teaching materials or publishing articles. In this regard, Lamb (2017) argued that future self-images have the potential to influence how students engage with daily tasks, whilst Magid (2014) observed that a strong ideal self vision may encourage students' intrinsic involvement in writing activities to a great extent.

As the second strongest correlation result, we can see that there is a relatively strong relationship between the *ideal L2 self* and *motivated learning behaviour* (0.613). This correlational result suggests that pre-service teachers in this study, who visualise themselves as excellent writers in English, tend to invest continuous effort in developing their writing skills since they might believe that their professional identity is associated with writing academically and confidently. Consequently, they demonstrate a greater tendency to commit to habits, such as pre-writing, drafting, editing, revising, and actively seeking feedback from their teacher or

peers. The finding was supported by Dörnyei's (2009) declaration that the *ideal L2 self* renders the motivational drive to regulate L2 learners' behaviour, as well as echoed by Hessel's (2015) observation that the motivating capacity of the *ideal L2 self* depends on the extent to which it is elaborated and supported. In L2 writing classes, this may be obviously found in students who imagine themselves as future English teachers or academics. They are inclined to engage more persistently in writing activities, not just because of external influences, but because of their behaviours that are consistent with their envisioned future selves (Csizér, 2019; Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2021). The findings suggest that Hungarian teacher educators' writing pedagogies should support pre-service teachers in articulating, and reflecting upon their long-term aspirations by connecting immediate classroom writing practices to the professional identities they pursue to become.

The third highest correlation result, between *instrumental motivation* and *ideal L2 self* (0.611), indicates that the participants' pragmatic goals are strongly associated with their imagined future selves as writers. To be exact, Hungarian pre-service teachers in this study, who prioritise pragmatic outcomes (for example, passing examinations with higher grades, achieving scholarships to study abroad, or improving career prospects), are also those who imagine themselves as excellent academic writers in the future. The results demonstrate the compatibility between the participants' pragmatic orientations and broader self-guides that align with their practical objectives with self-concepts in the long-term since they perceive writing not only as an immediate requirement but also as a pathway to professional achievement in their lives. This aligns with Csizér and Dörnyei's (2005) observation that instrumental motives are specifically influential in the Hungarian educational context, whereas Taguchi et al. (2009) noted that the *ideal L2 self* and *instrumental motivation* often harmonise with each other in exam-oriented systems. For instance, when students recognise that acquiring academic writing skills is crucial for achieving scholarship opportunities to study abroad or for accessing academic careers, their *instrumental motivation* strengthens their *idealised future vision of themselves* as proficient writers. This correlational finding suggests that teacher educators in the Hungarian context may enhance pre-service teachers' motivational disposition in English writing, by explicitly linking writing tasks, which focuses on the stages of writing, with both short-term practical benefits and long-term professional identities.

If we move to the fourth strongest correlational result according to the data driven from Tables 7 and 8, it can be observed that there is also a connection between pre-service teachers' *intrinsic motivation* and *motivated learning behaviour* (0.568), claiming that participants who feel enjoyment in writing are also those who prolong their engagement through consistent

effort. Their intrinsic satisfaction seems to offer the foundation for perseverance in cognitively demanding activities, such as brainstorming, revising and editing drafts, as well as experimenting with textual organisation, and integrating feedback. The result was confirmed by Noels et al.'s (2019) finding that students' intrinsic motivation is coupled with their persistence and deeper processing in L2 learning, as well as by Ushioda's (2021) claim that when learners feel enjoyment in learning, they contribute to their own behaviours more effectively. Since the *process writing approach* encourages using multiple drafts and reflection in writing, thereby *intrinsic motivation* seems to play a significant role to convey students' effective participation (Bailey, 2015; Hyland, 2019). In other words, students who enjoy expressing their own ideas in writing have a greater tendency to engage in the process of revision and feedback, which in turn leads to a better long-term progress. Hence, the finding recommends that Hungarian teacher educators should design teaching writing activities to foster pre-service teachers' enjoyment and ownership of writing in the target language, thereby encouraging them to invest their continuous effort to ensure writing skills development.

Further examination of the correlational data indicate that the relationship between *difficulty* and *resilience* (0.553) appears to have the fifth highest correlation, revealing the fact that the participants in this study are more likely to exhibit resilience in coping when they encounter challenges in writing. Instead of being demotivated, they are more inclined to face those challenges with determination, as they view them as an opportunity to enhance their writing abilities. This exemplifies Martin and Marsh's (2008) description of academic buoyancy, which recognises students' academic resilience while facing demands in classrooms every day, whereas Murayama and Elliot (2012) argued that performance-approach goals may be beneficial when they are complied with effective coping strategies. In English writing contexts, students who encounter difficulties in composing essays or research term-papers may develop persistence and self-confidence if they view those challenges as opportunities to develop their writing performance. For example, students who struggle initially with argumentative writing may learn to revise and refine their drafts until they meet academic standards through resilience. Based on this result, it is recommended that Hungarian EFL teacher educators do not avoid assigning challenging writing tasks, but instead, they should provide immediate support and constructive feedback to students by encouraging them to see the challenges as stepping stones in their development as proficient writers.

Collectively, the findings confirm that Hungarian pre-service teachers' engagement in English writing appears to be a multifaceted construct, incorporating several motivational and affective factors, such as enjoyment in English writing, visualisation of themselves as

outstanding writers in the future, pragmatic goals, motivated learning behaviour, and resilience in the face of difficulty — all encourage one another by creating a dynamic motivational system. If teacher educators design effective writing curricula that can support these motivational dimensions simultaneously by connecting writing tasks with future professional identities, by aligning them with practical benefits, by fostering enjoyment, and reframing challenges as opportunities, pre-service teachers' motivation in English writing can be strengthened in order to achieve academic success, and prepare them effectively for their future professional roles.

### *Linear regression*

After computing the correlational relationship between the scales, I also wanted to explore which dimensions of English writing contribute the most to the motivated learning behaviour of pre-service teachers in the Hungarian teacher education programmes in the EFL context. Hence, I performed a linear regression analysis with *motivated learning behaviour* being the dependent variable. The results are presented in Table 9.

**Table 9** Results of regression analysis of the motivational scales with motivated learning behaviour as the criterion variable (significance level  $p < 0.05$ )

Variable	$\beta$	t	p
1. ideal L2 self	.373	4.179	<.001
2. pre-writing	.233	3.571	<.001
3. intrinsic motivation	.230	2.594	.010
R <sup>2</sup>			.46

The findings reveal that 46% of the variance in motivated learning behaviour could be explained by the three dimensions — *ideal L2 self*, *instrumental motivation*, and *pre-writing* activities. If we compare the  $\beta$  coefficients of the three scales, it can be seen that *ideal L2 self* ( $\beta = 0.373$ ) exhibited the strongest impact compared to the other two scales — *pre-writing* ( $\beta = 0.233$ ), and *intrinsic motivation* (0.230), and hence, it may be concluded that the *ideal L2 self* plays the most significant role in motivating pre-service teachers in the Hungarian context. The findings align with Dörnyei's (2009) declaration, which posits that “The ideal L2 self is a powerful motivator to learn the second language because it is a desire to reduce the discrepancy between one's actual and ideal selves” (p. 29). The  $\beta$  coefficient exhibits that the Hungarian participants' rich and elaborate imagination of themselves as future competent English writers was one of the major drives, pushing them toward maintaining learning behaviours to actualise their future self-guide (Markus & Nurius, 1986). The finding was validated by Csizér's (2020)

and Taguchi et al.'s (2009) studies in different contexts that the *ideal L2 self* confirms its paramount role in the context of L2 writing motivation. The strength of this future self guide is probably in its potential to deliver a clear, personal, and emotionally appealing goal that organises, and nurtures effective learning strategies, such as *pre-writing* activities.

On the other hand, *pre-writing* ( $\beta = 0.233$ ), and *intrinsic motivation* ( $\beta = 0.230$ ) also contributed significantly to the motivated learning behaviour of the pre-service teachers in the context, however, their impact was relatively lower compared to that of the *ideal L2 self*. The results suggest that although students' initial writing activities, as well as their personal enjoyment and satisfaction they gained from the activities itself do influence their motivated learning behaviour in writing, but they played less important roles compared to the pre-service teachers' visualisation of themselves as strong academic writers in the future.

Although *pre-writing* displayed the moderate predictive power among the three dimensions, it still made a statistically significant contribution to improving pre-service teachers' motivated learning behaviour toward English writing through the process approach. In other words, it suggests preliminary pre-writing activities, such as brainstorming, outlining, and planning make the students more motivated in general. The findings proved to be coupled with Hyland's (2003) process-oriented writing model, which emphasises that pre-writing activities perform an essential role in developing students' own ideas, scaffolding to understand regarding their tasks, and nurturing confidence before they produce their final written product. As Hyland (2021) affirms, "pre-writing activities help students explore a topic, develop a purpose, and consider the audience before drafting" (p. 150); these activities create a motivational starting point for students to enter the writing cycle. According to him, encouraging collaborative and reflective pre-writing tasks not only supports students' metacognition but also provides them with autonomy in their writing. Consequently, their general motivational level may be strengthened, which, then might improve their writing proficiency in the EFL teacher education context investigated.

According to the linear regression results, *intrinsic motivation* ( $\beta = 0.233$ ) emerged as the weakest predictor of motivated learning behaviour, in comparison with the *ideal L2 self* and *pre-writing*. However, it still contributes to motivating the pre-service teachers' learning behaviour in developing writing. The results posit that students' personal enjoyment and satisfaction, which were derived from engaging in writing tasks, contribute somewhat meaningfully to their willingness to commit continuous effort, activate their learning, and remain consistent in developing their writing proficiency. In practice, pre-service teachers who genuinely enjoyed composing essays, expressing their own ideas in writing, or reflecting on

their written texts, had a willingness to persist in revising drafts and seeking feedback from others, even though the tasks seemed to be demanding. The finding confirms Deci and Ryan's (1985, 2018, 2020) self-determination theory, which highlights the fact that students' intrinsic enjoyment fosters autonomy and persistence in learning, and by Noels et al.'s (2001) conclusion that intrinsically motivated learners exhibit deeper processing, and longer-term engagement in learning the target language. In EFL/ESL contexts, it means that enjoyment of the process itself, rather than focusing only on the outcome, may act as a positive driving force by nurturing continuous effort beyond external factors. (Hyland, 2019, 2021). Therefore, it is recommended for EFL teacher educators in the context investigated to design writing tasks that encourage students' curiosity, self-expression, and personal satisfaction in writing owing to the fact that these aspects may enhance the students' motivated learning behaviour in their own learning, and remain committed to improving their L2 writing over time.

### *Independent samples t-test*

#### *Gender differences in motivational disposition in English writing*

After analysing the regression analysis, I computed independent samples *t*-tests as I was curious to explore gender-based differences in motivational dispositions towards English writing in the Hungarian EFL teacher education context. The results of the analysis support the study's broader aim to recognise how individual characteristics are related to motivated learning behaviours in developing English writing skills.

The results revealed that, among the nine scales and the criterion variable scale (motivated learning behaviour) measured, there is a significant difference between male and female participants in four dimensions: *pre-writing*, *ideal L2 self*, *instrumental motivation*, and *motivated learning behaviour*. The results also revealed that female students ranked significantly higher scores in all the four aspects than the male students. The results can be seen in Table 10.

**Table 10** Gender differences in motivational disposition toward English writing

Scales	Female		Male		<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
pre-writing	3.60	0.67	3.12	0.75	3.590	<0.001
ideal L2 self	3.86	0.68	3.55	0.78	2.214	0.028
instrumental motivation	4.20	0.57	3.77	0.80	3.512	<0.001
motivated learning behaviour	3.96	0.73	3.47	0.88	3.258	0.001

Notes: Gender differences are statistically significant at  $p < 0.05$ .

Based on the data above, the mean values for both female and male participants indicate that female participants appear to be more motivated in English writing compared to male participants in terms of pre-writing activities, such as brainstorming and outlining. Secondly, the female participants reported stronger motivational influence by their visualisation of themselves as future proficient English writers than the male participants in the context investigated. Moreover, they were more strongly influenced by their instrumental motivation, such as academic achievement or career success, than male participants within the EFL writing context. Additionally, the findings reveal that female participants exhibited stronger motivation in their learning behaviour, such as strong persistence and consistent effort, in developing writing performance if we compared to male participants. The findings comply with Kormos and Csizér's work in 2007, which observes that female learners seem to be more motivated by their instrumental and integrative motivational aspects in learning an L2.

#### *Motivation differences based on English as a first vs second foreign language*

As a next step, I wanted to find out whether the participants' motivational disposition varied depending upon whether English was their first or second foreign language, and hence, I conducted independent samples *t*-tests over the nine motivational dimensions and the criterion measure scale (motivated learning behaviour). The results revealed that there were no significant differences between the participants who studied English as their first foreign language ( $n = 124$ ) and those who studied English as their second foreign language ( $n = 23$ ). The findings highlight that the motivational profiles of EFL pre-service teachers in the Hungarian context are not strongly influenced by English being their first or second foreign language, particularly in the area of writing. These findings resonate with Csizér and Dörnyei's (2005) conclusion that motivation in language learning in the Hungarian setting is more closely associated with learners' contextual and pragmatic aspects than with linguistic sequence or simple exposure to the target language.

#### *Motivation differences by participation in extra writing courses*

At this stage, I conducted independent samples *t*-test analyses to determine whether participation in extra writing courses after school has an impact on the participants' motivational disposition in writing activities. The analysis was carried out between the participants who responded to the survey that they attended extra writing courses ( $n = 34$ ), and those who responded that they had not attended ( $n = 113$ ). The results proved that there were no significant differences between the two groups regarding the motivational dimensions of

pre-service teachers in English writing, including the criterion variable scale (motivated learning behaviour), implying that joining extra writing courses after school did not have an impact on the participants' motivational profiles in acquiring writing skills in this study. Since the exploration of the motivating effects of different aspects of English writing on non-formal writing instruction, in other words, joining extra courses after school among EFL pre-service teachers in the Hungarian context, remains an unexplored niche, the findings contribute to new insights into this unexplored area.

I was also curious to inquire what they usually do to improve their English writing; therefore, I asked the participants an open-ended question at the end of the questionnaire (see Appendix B). Participants reported that they write in their free time (for example, writing short stories, diaries, articles, journals) as a practice, while some participants practise writing incorporating with extensive reading in English. Some students depicted writing as a hobby, and exhibited their enjoyment in writing regardless of whether it is a story or an essay. Some students responded that they engaged in activities; such as consuming English language media, that is, films, YouTube videos; focusing on language aspects (for instance, learning new vocabularies, practising paraphrasing, proofreading); and seeking teacher's feedback. It is also worth noting that some respondents believe their teachers' feedback is a catalyst to improve their writing performance. Overall, their responses to this open-ended question somewhat aligns with the results of my questionnaire study, which proposed that students who valued their teacher' assessment and feedback, and their efforts to become better writers in their everyday lives were directed toward independent practice, self-regulated strategies, and in some cases, enjoyment of writing even in their free time (see Table 11).

**Table 11** Activities participants usually do to improve their English writing

Activities	Responses
Practice writing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Writing short stories and diaries,”</li> <li>• “Writing articles,” “journals”</li> </ul>
Reading in English	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Reading novels,”</li> <li>• “Learning how famous authors wrote”</li> </ul>
Seeking teacher’s feedback	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “I show my work to my teacher to get feedback”</li> </ul>
Writing as a hobby	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Enjoy writing short stories in my free time”</li> </ul>
Consuming English media	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Watching movies, “YouTube videos,”</li> <li>• “Consume everything in English”</li> </ul>
Language focus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Learning vocabulary,” “Paraphrasing,”</li> <li>• “Proofreading”</li> </ul>

#### 4.3 Study 3: Pilot interviews with EFL pre-service teachers and teacher educators

As a next step, I developed the semi-structured interview guides based on the quantitative results, and then they were piloted, aiming to evaluate the clarity, thematic relevance, and sequencing of interview questions before carrying out full-scale interviews.

##### 4.3.1 Participants

Four participants were purposively selected: two EFL teacher educators for interview questions aimed at teachers, and two EFL pre-service teachers for the questions intended to students. Two EFL pre-service teachers were randomly selected based on their participation in the previous quantitative study, and who confirmed a willingness to yield their insights into developing English writing skills and motivational dispositions, while two EFL teacher educators were voluntarily chosen based on their willingness to participate in the pilot interview study.

Each participant was interviewed individually in a quiet setting via a secure video conferencing platform. Interviews were video recorded ensuring ethical protocols, such as informed consent, voluntary and anonymous participation, and confidentiality which were strictly adhered to. The video recordings were, then, transcribed.

### 4.3.2 The instrument

Based on the literature review and theories presented in Chapter 2, two semi-structured interview guides — one for the pre-service teachers, and one for the teacher educators — were constructed to address the research questions of the study. While creating the guides, I aimed to create flexible questions for the participants, and to ensure the questions to be open-ended so that the participants could provide detailed and unrestricted answers. According to Dörnyei (2007), in the interview guide for pre-service teachers, I inserted an introduction, a biographical section (for example, on their age, the university they were studying, English writing skills). The first part of the main section elicited answers about their motivational disposition in English writing in connection with using the *process writing approach*, and the final part of the main section explored their perceptions on their teachers' (teacher educators') motivational strategies required in strengthening their motivation to improve their English writing performance through the approach. The interview guide for the teacher educators also followed Dörnyei (2007), encompassing an introduction, biographical section (for instance, questions on their age, the university they were working at, teaching experience, English writing training courses they offered). The first part of the main section inquired about their motivation to use the *process writing approach* in teaching, the second part of the main section explored their motivational strategies required in strengthening pre-service teachers' motivation to improve their English writing performance through the approach, and the final part of the main section investigated their perceptions on how these strategies could be effectively developed during the improvement of teacher education and continuous professional development of EFL teacher educators at Hungarian teacher training institutions.

I followed ethical standards, ensuring the participants' anonymity, voluntary participation, and confidentiality regarding the introduction and biographical sections. Both the interview guides were framed within the theoretical framework of Dörnyei's (2007) L2MSS and several other constructs including resilience and competition, as well as Hyland's (2003, 2021) *process writing approach*.

### 4.3.3 The development process

Ensuring the validity and alignment with the research objectives of this doctoral study, I followed a structured and systematic approach in performing the development process which involved seven steps based on Prescott's (2011) model. Following him, I emphasised minimising the ambiguity and improving the clarity of the interview questions, and took the following seven steps.

- Reviewing the relevant literature
- Brainstorming and outlining the two interview guides (one for pre-service teachers, and one for teacher educators)
- Conducting a self-interview and self-evaluation
- Formulating the research questions
- Drafting and editing the initial interview guides
- Refining based on experts' feedback
- Finalising and publishing the interview guides after conducting four pilot interviews (two with pre-service teachers, and two with teacher educators)

### *Reviewing the relevant literature*

Since it is crucial to identify key themes, theories, and constructs, which will be framed in the interview guides, a thorough review of existing literature related to Hungarian teacher education programmes, motivation in language learning, English writing, teaching writing strategies, and qualitative interviewing was performed. This review yielded a solid academic foundation in constructing the interview guides, and ensuring alignment with the study's objectives, revealing an unexplored niche in the field. This initial step also played a primary role in shaping the questions, and designing the interview items.

### *Brainstorming and outlining the two interview guides*

Since the participants were categorised into two sub-samples, pre-service teachers and teacher educators, I decided to create two separate interview guides. I started the development of the guides with a brainstorming phase, in which I drew on my personal experience as both a language learner and a teacher educator, to identify relevant key themes, challenges, and motivational factors. Ensuring theoretical grounding, the brainstorming phase was guided by the relevant literature. Then, the outlines of the interview questions were created to organise the flow of the questions in a logical and meaningful way, where the outlines acted as the foundations for the first draft of each guide.

### *Conducting a self-interview and self-evaluation*

In this step, I carried out a self-interview to check the clarity, consistency, and relevancy of the questions in order to improve the quality of the interview guides. This reflective process examined issues such as whether the questions were too broad; whether the topics were

repetitively described; and whether the terms used in the interview questions could be misunderstood by the participants. Then, I made adjustments to sharpen the focus of the questions, which means that broad questions were revised into more specific tones, overlapping questions were merged or eliminated, and follow-up questions were added where needed. I also prioritised to improve the flow of the questions by reorganising their overall sequence, and to ensure suitability for both types of participants, especially in connection with English writing, the *process writing approach*, and motivation in language learning.

### *Formulating the research questions*

As a fourth step, I formulated two research questions for the study. For the guide for the pre-service teachers, the following two questions were formulated: *Is the instrument dependable for the exploration of EFL pre-service teachers' motivation on the use of the process writing approach in English writing in the Hungarian teacher education context?* and *What characterises pre-service teachers' motivation on the use of the process writing approach toward English writing in the context investigated?*, whereas in the guide for teacher educators, the following three questions were designed: *Is the instrument dependable for the exploration of EFL teacher educators' motivation to use the process writing approach in their teaching?*, *What characterises EFL teacher educators' motivational strategies required in strengthening pre-service teachers' motivational disposition to improve their English writing performance through the process writing approach at the Hungarian teacher education context?*, and *What characterises on how these strategies be effectively developed during the improvement of teacher education and continuous professional development of EFL teacher educators at the context explored?* These questions played the foundational role for the interview guide. Additionally, I attempted to ensure that every single question was coupled with the study's objectives.

### *Drafting and editing the initial interview guides*

Based on the insights from the above procedures, the initial interview guides—one for pre-service teachers, and one for teacher educators—were created. I also maintained a clear and conversational tone in the questions, and ensured that they were aligned with the objectives of the present doctoral study. Subsequently, I reviewed and edited the guides, following the initial drafts, in order to refine wording, and improve consistency in all sections. All of the questions were ensured to be suitable for diverse participants with varied experience in English writing, language learning, and teaching writing.

### *Refining based on experts' feedback*

As it is important to ensure credibility and dependability in the interview guides, feedback was sought from a fellow PhD candidate, and two experts—my supervisor, and the co-supervisor. These three reviewers provided constructive feedback on wording, sequencing of the items, and content relevance. Certain questions were needed to improve precision, eliminate ambiguity, and to avoid redundancy. For example, the question “*How do the teaching strategies employed by a teacher educator impact their students' learning?*” were refined to “*How does a teacher educator's teaching strategy affect their students?*” in order to ensure the clearer version of the question, and to elicit the more focused answers from the participants, aligning more effectively with the study's objectives.

### *Conducting four pilot interviews and finalising the interview guides*

After refining the interview questions, the instruments were ready to be piloted (see Appendix). Four pilot interviews—two with EFL pre-service teachers and two with EFL teacher educators—were conducted in order to evaluate the practicality and clarity of the refined interview guides, aiming to assess whether the questions elicited rich and relevant responses from the participants, and whether the structure of the interview guides conveyed a smooth conversational flow. For instance, the question “*How motivated are you to use the process writing approach in your English writing tasks?*” was supported by a follow-up question “*Why do you think so?*” to encourage the participants' deeper reflection and explanation regarding the question. The information of two categorised pilot participants can be seen in Tables 12 and 13.

**Table 12** Demographic data of pilot pre-service teacher participants

<b>Participant</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Nationality</b>	<b>Year of study</b>	<b>University</b>	<b>Context</b>
PPT 1	female	20	Hungarian	4 <sup>th</sup> year	A	pre-service teacher enrolled in the undivided English teacher education programme
PPT 2	male	xx	Burmese	2 <sup>nd</sup> year	A	pre-service teacher enrolled in the undivided English teacher education programme

**Table 13** Demographic data of pilot teacher educator participants

Participant	Gender	Age	Nationality	Years of exp	University	Context
PTE 1	male	27	Ukrainian	4	A	Specialises in academic writing and applied linguistics; taught academic writing courses
PTE 2	male	xx	Hungarian	37	B	University professor in ELT methodology and practicum supervision; extensive experience in materials development

While conducting the pilot studies, it was observed that both of the pre-service teachers were unfamiliar with the term, *process writing approach*, as it being a technical term although they were using the stages of process writing (for example, brainstorming, drafting, revising) in their writing tasks. This brought me to deliver a short description of the *process writing approach* before carrying out the main interviews, ensuring shared understanding. Apart from that point, the pilot interview results proved that all the semi-structured interview questions were contextually relevant, easily understandable, and supportive to gain rich data. Additionally, the pilot results revealed that no further modifications were needed. As regards the pilot process, I conducted, recorded, and transcribed a total of four interviews—two with pre-service teachers, and two with teacher educators—as described above, proving that the two interview guides were ready to conduct further main interview sessions, ensuring the instruments’ validity and usability.

#### 4.4 Study 4: Qualitative interviews with EFL pre-service teachers and teacher educators

After obtaining the polished version of the semi-structured interview guides, I conducted qualitative interview sessions with participants in order to answer the following main research questions, and subsequent questions.

RQ: How can EFL teacher educators improve pre-service teachers' English writing performance through the process writing approach in a more motivating manner at Hungarian teacher training universities?

SQ1: What are the perceptions of EFL pre-service teachers of *the process writing approach* at Hungarian teacher training universities?

SQ3: What are the perceptions of EFL teacher educators of *the process writing approach* at Hungarian teacher training universities?

SQ4: What are EFL educators' motivational strategies required in strengthening pre-service teachers' motivation in English writing to improve their writing performance through *the process writing approach* at Hungarian teacher training universities?

SQ5: How can these skills be effectively developed during the improvement of teacher education and continuous professional development of EFL teacher educators at Hungarian teacher training universities?

##### 4.4.1 Data collection and analysis

To initiate gathering data, I reached out to EFL teacher educators, regardless of their being native or non-native, who taught English writing courses at public universities in Hungary, via email and inquired if they would be willing to take part in the interview study. As EFL teacher educators were one of the main targets of my research, I made sure to explain the reasons that inspired the research, making it clear that their participation was utterly voluntary and anonymous, as well as promising that confidentiality would be kept through the use of pseudonyms. The email also outlined data processing, estimated interview duration, sought their consent for audio and video recordings, and promised them the freedom to withdraw at any stage without any consequences. Through email invitations, 10 EFL teacher educators from three Hungarian teacher training institutions expressed their willingness to participate in my qualitative interview study.

Regarding the Hungarian EFL pre-service teachers, I approached all the participants who had provided their email address in my previous quantitative survey, expressing their willingness to participate in the follow-up interview series, through emails. In the emails, I

explained the purpose of the interview study, and informed them that their participation was utterly voluntary and anonymous, as well as assured them that confidentiality would be maintained through pseudonyms. They were informed about data handling procedures, the estimated duration of the interview, and were also requested their consent for audio and video recordings, promising their right to withdraw their participation at any time without any repercussions. Among them, 10 EFL pre-service teachers from three teacher training institutions responded to my email showing their willingness to engage in the interview sessions.

A total of 20 semi-structured interviews were conducted between December 2022 and the end of May 2023. Each participant group was composed of 10 EFL pre-service teachers and 10 EFL teacher educators. All the interviews were held online either via Microsoft Teams or Zoom, depending on each participant's preference. The interviews that involved pre-service teachers lasted about 45 minutes, while interviews with the teacher educators varied in length from about an hour to an hour and a half, depending on the richness of their responses. All of the participants were either enrolled in or teaching in English language teacher education programmes at public universities in Hungary; therefore, the interviews were conducted entirely in English. Both audio and video recordings were made after participants confirmed their consents.

The recordings of the interviews were carefully reviewed after they were conducted to evaluate the natural flow of the conversation, and the quantity and quality of participant responses were checked, as recommended by Dörnyei in 2007, in terms of examining qualitative interview quality. Additional observations from the earlier pilot phase further improved the construction and relevance of the interview guides by rephrasing ambiguous questions, changing the order to improve clarity and eliminating redundant items. The revised changes ensured that the final version of the two interview guides accurately captured the participants' motivation on the use of the process writing approach in English writing in the Hungarian higher education context. After the completion of the pilot phase of the data collection, no major changes were made to the guide; the format and content were appropriate for data collection indicating that the interview guides were suitable, and validated for the purposes of the study.

All 20 interview recordings were transcribed verbatim, so that I could have as thorough and accurate an analysis as possible. I read over the transcripts closely multiple times to develop a solid familiarity with the data. The transcripts were, then, manually coded with thematic codes, in order to identify patterns and insights. The responses were coded based on

motivational dimensioned I measured in the quantitative part of this study, apart from the criterion measure scale (*motivated learning behaviour*). For instance, a response, such as “*I enjoy the writing process*” was coded as evidence of *intrinsic motivation*. The initial codes were, then, organised into larger thematic categories based on the coded data to start to view patterns emerging in the dataset. The qualitative analysis followed the thematic analysis method outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006) as well as Creswell’s (2009) data analysis template for qualitative data. This methodical and reflective process allowed me to gain a rich, deeper, and layered investigation of the participants’ motivational disposition related to the *process writing approach*. Table 14 describes the information of the pre-service teacher participants in the Hungarian EFL teacher education context, whereas Table 15 presents the emerging themes of the interview study with pre-service teachers, which are categorised into concepts discussed in the literature review of the dissertation.

**Table 14** Demographic data of pre-service teacher participants (qualitative study)

Participant	Gender	Age	Nationality	Year of study	University	Context
PT 1	female	20	Hungarian	2 <sup>nd</sup> year	B	BA level English major student who aimed to continue teacher training phase
PT 2	female	25	Hungarian	final phase	B	already have a BA degree in the area of pedagogy and speak English at least C1 level (Instructor of English – MA Programme)
PT 3	female	26	Hungarian	final year	A	pre-service teacher enrolled in the undivided teacher training programme, already accomplished both

						of the teaching practices
PT 4	female	21	Hungarian	1 <sup>st</sup> year	A	pre-service teacher enrolled in the undivided teacher training programme
PT 5	female	20	Hungarian	1 <sup>st</sup> year	C	pre-service teacher enrolled in the undivided teacher training programme
PT 6	female	26	Hungarian	final year	A	pre-service teacher enrolled in the undivided teacher training programme and going to get MA degree
PT 7	female	19	Hungarian	1 <sup>st</sup> year	A	pre-service teacher enrolled in the undivided teacher training programme
PT 8	female	25	Hungarian	final year	A	pre-service teacher enrolled in the undivided teacher training programme
PT 9	female	19	Hungarian	1 <sup>st</sup> year	A	pre-service teacher enrolled in the undivided teacher training programme
PT 10	female	20	Hungarian	2 <sup>nd</sup> year	A	pre-service teacher enrolled in the undivided teacher

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training  
programme

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**Table 15** Emerging themes of the interview study categorised into concepts discussed in the review of related literature (pre-service teachers)

difficulty	assessment	Topics	pre-writing	strategies	significant others	ideal L2 self	intrinsic	instrumental	resilience	competition	motivation to PWA
-challenges with abstract topics	specific and constructive written feedback	<b>motivated (+)</b> -topics about their own experiences or opinions	-pair brainstorming was most preferred	-giving autonomy in writing	<b>family</b> -parents who spoke English were role models	-imagined themselves as fluent English users	-enjoyment came from seeing progress	<b>career goals</b> -more job opportunities	-re-trying tasks until they got them right	-found competition motivating	-mixed feelings toward pre-writing
-participants preferred everyday topics	-positive feedback encouraged risk-taking in writing	- argumentative topics	-helped to overcome thought blocks	-assigning relevant, student-centred topics	-siblings' success in English	teaching abroad	-participants mentioned "writing gave them joy"	<b>academic goals</b> -proficiency certificates (IELTS, C2 exam)	(+) -comments like "you can do better next time" supported	-participants felt stress and self-doubt	-pair-brainstorming was comfortable and helpful
-higher engagement with personalised topics	-colour-coded comments motivated	-open-ended topics <b>demotivated (-)</b>	-outlining was helpful before actual writing	-using visualised real-world examples during instruction (articles, blog-posts)	<b>peers (+)</b> -positive peer comments in group tasks were helpful	natural in English writing like native speakers	-intrinsically motivated when they could choose their own writing path	<b>scholarship opportunities</b> -one missed a scholarship due to weak writing skills	<b>motivational recovery</b> -time management strategies improved resilience	-led to both increased motivation and performance anxiety, depending on the context	-using drafts
-discouraged brainstorming	-delayed or absent feedback demotivated to participants	-unfamiliar or politically sensitive topics	-concept maps were too messy	- encouraging feedback	(-) -peer's negative comments and competition created anxiety than motivation	-to publish articles in English, to further study in an English-speaking country as a long-term goal	-participants described self-expression as "empowering"	-3 out of 10 tried to write better to apply for Erasmus programmes	(-) -bouncing back from poor feedback from teacher or peer	-giving time to revise drafts	-revising drafts were found intellectually satisfying and motivating
				-avoiding strategies such as over-correcting grammar		-linked writing with expressing their future professional identity					
				-allowing to use multiple drafts and revising them							

#### 4.4.2 Results and findings of interview study with pre-service teachers

*(Addresses SQ1: What are the perceptions of EFL pre-service teachers of the process writing approach at Hungarian teacher training universities?)*

*SQ2: Which are the most motivating aspects of process writing for EFL pre-service teachers?*

*And SQ4: What are EFL teacher educators' motivational strategies required in strengthening pre-service teachers' motivation in English writing to improve their writing performance through the process writing approach at Hungarian teacher training universities?)*

#### *Pre-service teachers' motivation to use the process writing approach in their English writing*

As we can see in the above Table 14, the qualitative findings reveal that the pre-service teachers were largely positive about the process writing approach, and characterised it as an approach to writing that involved emotional and cognitive engagement. Their responses emphasised their appreciation of the writing processes, including pre-writing, drafting, editing, revising and feedback, which collectively built motivation and an observable path forward. The participants did not seem to view writing as a solo or linear task, but rather enjoyed that one could move back to a previous stage to make more progress, and not feel stuck, lining up with Hyland's (2003, 2021) theory of writing as a developmentally and socially situated approach.

Most participants informed through the interviews that their motivation increased when writing activities included pre-writing activities, particularly brainstorming in a pair-work. The students perceived these kinds of activities as supportive and idea-generating, especially for students who were experiencing difficulties in starting their compositions. PT 1 commented:

I like it when we brainstorm before we start. When I talk with others, I get more ideas, and then I don't feel stuck anymore. It helps me feel more prepared. (PT 1)

This reaction illustrates how the social aspect of *process writing* promotes a sense of readiness and helps to diminish writing anxiety. It is also supportive of Deci and Ryan's (2020) self-determination theory (SDT), discussed in the literature review, in that it fulfils

the need for relatedness and competence, which may also be regarded as the two significant factors of intrinsic motivation.

Moreover, participants noted that also the teacher-led pre-writing tasks, such as guided planning, topic scaffolding, or sample analyses, gave them greater confidence to start since these pre-writing activities allowed them to anchor their ideas and thoughts before composing text. PT 8 noted as follows:

Sometimes we look at similar texts in class or do planning together. It makes it easier to understand what's expected, and that helps me get started. (PT 8)

In this situation, the process writing approach worked not only as a deployment of stages in a mechanical procedural sense, but as a motivational scaffold to provide structure, clarity and accessible stages of achievement. The pedagogical conditions demonstrated here are consistent with an autonomy-supportive learning environment, which, as discussed in the literature review, increases motivation in both intrinsic-oriented and context-related ways, particularly for tasks like writing that involve multiple steps (Deci & Ryan, 2020; Reeve, 2009).

Several participants identified the drafting and revising stages of *process writing* as the most empowering. For example, PT 1 highlighted her engagement through the revision process and noted how the revision process furthered her understanding of structure and logic:

I like it very much that we are given the opportunity to write a draft, and then we get feedback, and then we can rewrite and fix things. I usually have a lot of thoughts at the beginning, but organising them is difficult for me. So, when I know I will have a chance to revise it, it takes the pressure off and makes me more motivated to write in the first place. (PT 1)

Her remark uncovers an important understanding: drafting and revising boost both confident competence and emotional safety. Dörnyei (2005) has identified this competence and emotional safety as a central to the learning experience part of his L2 Motivational Self System. Students write without the anxiety of perfectionism, knowing that improvement is part of the writing process.

The participants agreed that using drafts while writing plays a significant role in highly motivating them, and reduces their anxiety, recognising that a first attempt would not be perfect and the final product. Several students indicated that their work could be

revisited through feedback, and hence, they felt a sense of control over their written products, and saw developments in their writing. As PT 9 explained,

I feel less pressure when I know it's just a first draft. I can focus more on my ideas and less on getting everything perfect at once. Then I can edit it later and improve. It's more motivating that way. (PT 9)

This emphasis on the *process*, instead of perfection, complies with Hyland's (2003, 2021) *process writing*, focusing on developmental learning rather than summative evaluation on their written assignments. The students gained confidence that the *process writing approach* supported their writing skills development, particularly when they could revise their drafts through the approach, based on their teacher comments, or peer feedback.

Pre-service teachers also reported that collaborative peer engagement assisted them in repositioning their writing from a socially isolated activity to a common sense of learning together. Group brainstorming and peer collaboration were also described as highly motivating for students, especially for students who enjoy socialising and the co-construction of ideas. According to PT 7,

Brainstorming in groups helps me because others give me ideas I didn't think of, and sometimes they show me a new perspective on the topic. I feel that we are not alone in this task and that gives me the courage to start writing. (PT 7)

This follows a traditional understanding of the *process writing* strategy that emphasises collaborative dialogue and audience awareness (Hyland, 2003), and is connected to Deci and Ryan's (2018, 2020) notions of relatedness, which means the need to feel connection to others, in that students feel socially organised rather than isolated when they collectively plan.

That said, students varied regarding their preferences for independent, pre-writing, making evident that the *process writing* must have flexibility to accommodate individual learner's motivational styles. While not all participants preferred group brainstorming, seven out of 10 participants valued the option of being able to brainstorm collaboratively, specifically in the early coping or generating aspects of planning, which are daunting for several learners. The conditions of process writing accommodate both independent learners and those who learn socially. PT 7 stated that

In the beginning, I feel very confused and have too many ideas. If I talk to someone, just one person, it helps me to organise them. It's like I can see what matters more. I don't always need help later, but the first step is hard to take alone. (PT 7)

One of the more powerful points was when PT 10 stated that she felt like she was able to build up gradual development through the *process writing*, and it enhanced her feeling of competence and accomplishment:

When I see how my writing improves after each draft, I feel proud. It's like I'm building something, and each step shows me that I'm not stuck anymore. That keeps me going. (PT 10)

This shows how the *process writing approach* helps students see their own progress, thus enhancing what Dörnyei (2005) refers to as the ideal L2 self — a picture of oneself as a successful language user, where students' vision can be actualised through progress. The approach affords visible, achievable milestones, and by doing so, it promotes motivational resilience and commitment over the long term.

All in all, the process writing approach was determined to be very motivating for most pre-service teachers, as it supports:

- Collaborative idea generation (relatedness)
- Drafting without stress to be perfect (autonomy)
- Revising and finalising based on others' constructive feedback (competence)
- Tracking one's own growth over time (self-efficacy)

These motivating elements position the *process writing approach* not only as a strategy to improve their writing skills, but as a powerful educational experience, that is consistent with the participants' psychological needs, academic goals, and professional identities.

In conclusion, the results suggest that pre-service teachers understand *process writing* to be a scaffolding, student-centred approach which diminishes anxiety, builds confidence and allows for personal expression. As the learners use drafts, collaborate with each other, obtain feedback from peers and teacher, and subsequently revise their text, they are empowered to express their ideas, develop their skills, and compose written texts related to their academic and career aspirations. Furthermore, a number of participants made statements regarding the structured nature of the writing stages contributing to measurable improvements in their writing. They perceived that cognitive process of writing such as pre-writing, drafting and revising (Hyland, 2003; 2021), et cetera, not only lowered

the barrier to writing but also meaningfully improved the organisation, elaboration and completeness of their written performance in English. Overall, these constructive motivational and developmental trajectories align neatly with the principles of Hyland's (2003) process writing model, Dörnyei's (2005) L2 Motivational Self System, and Deci and Ryan's (1985, 2020) self-determination theory, confirming the theoretical frameworks established in the literature review, answering the subsequent research questions of my doctoral study (SQ1 and SQ2).

*Teacher educators' motivational strategies required in strengthening pre-service teachers' motivation in English writing through the process writing approach*

In this section, I focus on the motivational strategies that pre-service teachers thought were influential in their learning opportunities to improve their writing performance. In order to build a more nuanced understanding of how EFL teacher educators support their students' writing skills development in English writing in a more motivating manner, the comprehensive results from Table 15 provide qualitatively analysed perspectives of various classroom practices, ways of providing feedback, and relationship-based measures by which teachers either intentionally or unintentionally strengthened their students' motivation to write as part of the process writing in the Hungarian EFL teacher education context.

*(a) Difficulty*

The level of challenge in writing topics presented was an important factor affecting pre-service teachers' motivation. Participants had noted that moderate attempted challenges might sustain interest and growth, but too much complexity without proper scaffolding can disengage and frustrate students. This is in accordance with Deci and Ryan's (1985, 2000) Self-Determination Theory that suggests perceived competence is key to sustaining intrinsic motivation. When students perceive that the task is too difficult, their perceived competence levels decline, which ultimately can diminish motivation and persistence.

Several participants stated that if they were writing about very abstract or unfamiliar topics their feelings of being disconnected from the writing process increased. As PT 3 stated

Sometimes, the topics we get are very theoretical or academic, like discussing economic policies or ethical dilemmas. I don't always have enough background to write confidently, and I get demotivated even before I start. (PT 3)

Her statement claims a common concern of students — when students do not have a background knowledge or relatable entry points to these topics, their engagement declines. This finding emphasises the significance of the accessibility of the topic as motivational scaffolding, that is the overarching assertion by Hyland (2003) that writing topics should be cognitively suitable, while also being relatable to students' prior linguistic and experiential capacities.

However, it is not only straightforward topics that motivate students. Many participants expressed that they find a topic challenging and engaging if the teacher supported with enough context, examples, and classroom discussion. For instance, PT 10 shared her concept that

When we discussed the topic in class beforehand or had a debate, I felt much more prepared and confident. Then, even if the topic was complex, I wanted to write because I already had ideas. (PT 10)

This example reinforces the pedagogical value of pre-task support, which acts as a bridged scaffolding within before the learning opportunity. Using a scaffolding approach, students have more acceptable cognitive and social entry points for complex topics. This also relates back to Dörnyei's (2005) notion of the learning experience as a core building block in the L2 Motivational Self System, which contends that successful classroom experiences ultimately shape students' future engagement.

From the motivational perspectives, the results from the interview data suggest that teacher educators should critically examine the difficulty of writing tasks, and to use brainstorming, discussions, and relatable content as pre-scaffolding before writing. Assigning topics that have an appropriately complexity can create the opportunity to sustain motivation while reinforcing students' beliefs in their writing ability. Moreover, it is notable that these findings also indirectly correspond with the qualitative findings from some teacher educators in the results (see Table 18), who emphasised the importance of scaffolding, clarity in topic representation, and real-world context to give students meaningful entry points into writing prompts. This will be discussed later in the next section of presenting the qualitative findings from the teacher educators' interview data.

*(b) Teachers' assessment and feedback*

All participants in the interviews strongly emphasised the impact of teachers' assessment and feedback on their motivation in writing. Feedback was both an emotional and cognitive task, and it influenced the pre-service teachers' desire to write and revise what they had produced. This underscores the importance of the learning experience together with Dörnyei's (2005) L2 Motivational Self System, particularly the impact of teacher behaviour on motivating them. Similarly, having autonomy and competence achieved through affirmation indicates alignment with Deci and Ryan's (2020) Self-Determination Theory as it relates to feedback that is autonomy-supportive to keeping or enhancing motivation through a sense of competence.

The participants uniformly indicated that positive feedback helped them build self-confidence, and encouraged deeper engagement in writing activities. PT 6 explained:

When my teacher says something like 'I can see a great improvement in your structure', or even gives a small compliment, it makes me want to keep writing and trying. It feels like they see your effort, not just your mistakes.  
(PT 6)

This indicates the emotional charge that students have for formative comments and their desire to be acknowledged as learners in progress. They do not only attend to correctness, but want feedback that encourages them, and that recognises they are making progress. This is particularly coupled with Hyland and Hyland's (2006) assertion that praise, hedging, and scaffolding as part of the feedback experience are instrumental for motivating development of writing.

However, some participants identified a sense of demotivation that was connected to vagueness, as well as critical feedback. PT 4 recalled that

There were times when the teacher just crossed out half my sentences and wrote 'awkward' or 'rephrase,' but didn't explain why. I felt lost and didn't know how to get better. (PT 4)

This type of feedback does not provide actionable support, and reduces student agency directly undermining the autonomy and competence enjoyed in SDT. This also highlights the comparative, the didactic, corrective-only assessment, and developmental assessment. In addition to the actionability motivating strategies, only pointing out things without providing expertise to help is insufficient.

Students also acknowledged the value of dialogic feedback, where they could respond or think about the comments about their writing. PT 1 mentioned that

Sometimes, we were allowed to revise after feedback and submit again. That made me more careful and motivated because I knew I had a chance to learn and fix things. (PT 1)

This demonstrates the process writing cycle, which means that feedback is not an outcome only, and what follows feedback is the next steps toward improved performance. Hyland (2003) reminds us that feedback must be a part of the drafting process, not a summative part of the cycle. When students see assessment as a contributing factor to learning, motivation is the likely outcome.

Overall, these findings demonstrate the importance of personalised, constructive and encouraging feedback as motivating factors toward pre-service teachers' writing development. Teacher educators should emphasise process-based assessment measures that indicate clear direction, acknowledgement of students' effort, and the opportunities for revision. This is potentially not just to support writing development, but also intrinsic motivation, and a sense of learner competence as outlined within both SDT and L2MSS.

### *(c) Topics*

The choice of writing topics was identified by the pre-service teachers as a powerful motivator, reporting that writing topics that involved interesting, real-world, personal appeal, and student-centred context increased their levels of interest and performance, in other words, they were motivated by these aspects. On the other hand, topics that were overly narrow or uninspiring usually dampened their motivation. These findings are consistent with Dörnyei's (2005) description of the L2 learning experience which describes the contextual nature of content, and classroom tasks as potentially enhancing both student interest and levels of motivation. Additionally, this also reflected Hyland's (2003) argument that writing instruction should incorporate meaningful writing topics that connect to students' previous or lived experiences and aspirations.

During the interview sessions, several participants articulated a clear preference for authentic and real-world topics that were personally relevant to them. For example, PT 5 commented that

I enjoy writing when the topic is something connected to my life or the world around me. Like writing about my future plans or problems young people face today. Those make me think and feel that I'm saying something important. (PT 5)

This comment indicates that personal relevancy is a potential motivator for student engagement in writing. For these students, when they viewed the writing task as open to their own opinions rather than merely repeating theoretical constructs, they felt that they owned the task, and that the task had value to them. This connects to Deci and Ryan's (2000) description of autonomy which describes student engagement when they have individualised input into the content and learning objectives achieved.

Conversely, several participants described that monotonous or repetitive topics led to decreasing their motivation in writing. PT 3 noted,

Sometimes we get topics like 'Describe your university library' or 'The importance of clean water', which feel like homework just for the sake of writing. I don't feel motivated when the topic is too general or already done a hundred times. (PT 3)

This highlights the potential for the negative and demotivating effects of topics that contribute to topic fatigue, and the lack of personal meaning for them. This also highlights a missed opportunity for teacher educators to frame writing prompt contexts as purposeful frameworks for critical thinking, personal expression, or even creativity, the aspects related to intrinsic motivation, and creating one's ideal L2 self.

Pre-service teachers also appreciated being given choices among multiple topics, which allowed them to pick the most relevant topic for their own interests and strengths. For instance, PT 2 added that

When we are allowed to choose between three or four topics, it feels better because you can go with something that inspires you. I usually pick the one that matches my personal experience. (PT 2)

This supports the results from the above table (Table 14) which indicated that the pre-service teachers favoured teacher-guided flexibility, which means that they enjoyed being given a few limited options rather than being given the instruction to write what they want. This strategy balances pedagogical focus with learner autonomy, again connecting with core ideas in SDT, and supported by classroom studies on choice-oriented writing instruction.

In light of a motivational strategy regarding writing topics, teacher educators should, therefore, focus on the following:

- Ensuring topics that have a personal relevance with pre-service teachers
- Offering autonomy to choose topics
- Designing writing tasks that connect the pre-service teachers' identities and future selves

These factors support learners to actively engage in the writing process by making it feel more purposeful, which is important to develop writing competency (Hidi & McLaren, 1991), and strengthen their motivation in writing in the long run.

#### *(d) Pre-writing*

According to the results from Table 14, pre-writing activities were perceived by the pre-service teachers in this study as a highly valued motivating strategy, especially for the way they are perceived to mitigate writing anxiety, activate the previous knowledge, and psychologically prepare the learner before engaging in writing. This viewpoint is strongly supported by Hyland's (2003, 2021) *process writing* in which planning and generating ideas, in other words, pre-writing activities, represent two fundamental stages that support learners' engagement and success. These activities also support what Deci and Ryan (2000) refer to as perceived competence; when learners feel they are properly prepared for a task they are more likely to commit to the task and be engaged.

Several participants indicated that the pre-writing activities, such as brainstorming, idea-mapping, or pair discussions had an impact on how they organised their thoughts and their overall motivation. As PT 10 stated:

When we start with some brainstorming, I feel more organised. I can think better, and it gives me a direction before I begin writing. If we just start straight with the task, I often feel lost and less motivated. (PT 10)

This quote not only illustrates pre-writing as a cognitive organising tool in structuring thoughts, but also acts as an emotional regulator to the extent that pre-writing reduces uncertainty, and initiates the early commitment to the task. When used consistently, these strategies seem to be an excellent way for students to establish a consistently appealing way to set a trajectory for writing habits, which can hopefully become sustainable over time.

Several participants indicated that they liked to participate in an interactive pre-writing activity, for instance, group discussion, guided questioning or some visual prompts. Regarding this, PT 2 explained that

Sometimes we get a picture or a quote to discuss before writing. It opens our minds, and we hear others' opinions. That makes me excited to share my own ideas too. (PT 2)

Such responses point to the social and collaborative possibilities within the pre-writing tasks. In relation to Deci and Ryan's notion of relatedness, when doing interactive pre-writing activities, students have an opportunity to feel connected to others while preparing for the individual task of writing. They are not isolated in front of a blank page, however, they have already preceded the writing phase by vocalising or arguing ideas with peers. However, a few participants felt like some pre-writing activities were repetitious and not connected to the final writing task. PT 3 noted that

There were times when we did a pre-task that had nothing to do with the final writing. It felt like a waste of time and didn't help me focus. (PT 3)

This argument adds to the notion of task alignment; for pre-writing to act as a motivation, it needs to be negotiated clearly to structure or content of the forthcoming task. The teacher educator had to be sure that those activities keep the purpose of the writing task, and the writing objectives tightly aligned to the previous tasks with a healthy blend of novelty in the pre-writing tasks, in order to not be repetitive.

As a summary, pre-writing tasks may enhance pre-service teachers' overall readiness, confidence, and commitment to writing, particularly when the tasks are clearly structured, collaborative, and meaningfully aligned with the writing prompt. These activities address both Hyland's (2003, 2021) process of writing, and offer teacher educators a flexible motivational strategy to engage students in all aspects of teaching writing.

#### *(e) Strategies*

Pre-service teachers recognised their teachers' teaching strategies as the main factor either fostering or undermining their motivation to perform writing tasks. The results demonstrate a significant range of both motivating and demotivating strategies, which exemplifies how learner beliefs, emotions, and willingness to engage with writing can be

influenced by classroom interactions. The findings also strongly affirm Dörnyei's (2005) learning experience construct of the L2 Motivational Self System, as well as Hyland's (2003, 2021) declaration that writing pedagogy should be scaffolded, process-oriented, and learner-centred.

In this regard, participants identified the importance of structure, encouragement, and relevancy in their teachers' teaching writing strategies. PT 1, for example, said:

I really like when our teacher broke down the tasks and told us exactly what each paragraph should contain. It made me more confident, and I could focus better on the content because I knew the expectations. (PT 1)

Her remark highlighted the fact that not only do explicit instruction and clarity improve students' task performance, but they also reduce cognitive overload and uncertainty, which motivates students by increasing their sense of perceived competence (Deci & Ryan, 2000). When students understand the writing process, they are better prepared to navigate its stages, and bring the learning outcomes into their writing.

Other students noted the motivational value of teacher encouragement and praise, especially when teachers acknowledged their effort, as opposed to only demanding perfection. PT 3 recounted that

It really motivates me when the teacher says I've improved or that I had an interesting idea. It makes me feel that my voice matters, and I want to write more. (PT 3)

These strategies demonstrate a student-centred teaching philosophy that incorporates learners' voice, growth, and effort. These awesome affirmations may create self-confidence, echoing Dörnyei's idea of rapport in terms of positive teacher behaviours as being some of the strongest situational influences on the students' motivational disposition toward English writing. Conversely, some of the participants reported that when the teacher overly focused on grammar correction or strict assessment criteria, they feel less motivated to write. PT 8 stated:

In one class, our teacher only focused on grammar and red lines. I lost interest because content didn't matter, only mistakes. (PT 8)

This perspective points to a shift away from a meaning-focused approach, and more towards a form-focused means to overcome inhibition, allowing for risk-taking and

creative engagement within the process of writing. Pre-service teachers who viewed themselves as that they could only receive a reward through accuracy were not likely to engage much more deeply with the task than they needed to. In fact, Hyland (2003, 2019) warns against this traditional way of viewing writing, suggesting that teachers should foster process-oriented, and content-driven instruction that supports learners' development over time.

Notably, the interviewees appreciated multi-draft assignments, and time for revision, which is directly related to the process approach. As PT 4 expressed,

I liked that we could submit a first draft and then improve it. It helped me see where I needed to develop, and I didn't feel punished for not being perfect. (PT 4)

This highlights the fact that it is crucial for teacher educators to provide such developmental learning experiences to sustain learners' motivation. Not only does revision improve the product when compared to the first draft, but it tracks development, while allowing each student to improve both engagement and self-efficacy.

To summarise, pre-service teachers are ultimately the most motivated when their teachers implement process-based, encouraging, and structured strategies that recognise effort, provide clear guidance, and focus content alongside form. On the other hand, strategies that are overly corrective, rigid, and don't allow for engagement and novelty may result in lower levels of self-confidence and motivation to engage for students. The findings suggest that not only do motivational strategies begin with what the teacher communicates to students, but how the teacher teaches, revealing a major priority for teacher training and reflective pedagogy, particularly in the area of writing in order to improve students' writing performance within the Hungarian EFL context.

#### *(f) Significant others*

Another strong element that affected the pre-service teachers' motivational aspects in English writing was the influence of significant others, including teachers, peers, family members, or role models. While this motivational dimension is not confined to the activity of classroom instruction, it captures the complicated social environment in which motivation is constructed. Dörnyei's (2005) L2 Motivational Self System, particularly the ideal L2 self and the ought-to L2 self reflects how social expectations, support, and encouragement were salient factors for influencing the motivation of L2 learners.

Connected to the relatedness aspect of the Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan, 2020), this component is identified as a basic psychological need in sustained motivation.

A common theme that emerged within the participants' responses was the importance of teacher recognition. Several participants referred to how a teacher's approval, encouragement or criticism could significantly elevate or decrease the participants' motivation level. For example, PT 9 stated —

When a teacher says, 'I trust you to do well,' or compliments my ideas, I feel like I want to prove them right. Their opinion really matters because they are experts. (PT 9)

This captures the role of teachers as not just facilitators of learning, but as emotional anchors for shaping students' confidence and willingness to try. It also reveals that student-teacher relationships can serve the role of an external motivator whereby the student sees the teacher as reinforcing their ability to internally self-regulate.

Through the interview data, peers also functioned as a motivating force for pre-service teachers, especially in collaborative writing activities or shared cognitive exercises. PT 6 reflected:

When we worked in pairs, I got inspired by my classmate's way of thinking. It motivated me to be more creative and also made the writing less lonely. (PT 6)

Such interactions also create a sense of an academic community, where peer dialogues can clarify and expand students' thinking, associating with the social constructivist ideas of *process writing*, where knowledge and meaning in writing development are co-constructed. Interestingly, connotations of family support, while seemingly less direct, emerged as a powerful motivator. As PT 4 pointed out,

My parents always encouraged me to learn English because they believe it will help me get a better job. So, I always try to do well in writing because I want to make them proud. (PT 4)

Although the family may not be directly engaged in the academic activity, family expectations and emotional support relate to the notion of the ought-to L2 self — motivation derives from desires or obligations required to pursue others' hopes (Dörnyei, 2005). This supports how cultural and familial circumstances are relevant in terms of academic motivation even for higher education students.

In conclusion, the findings suggest that motivation in English writing may not only be determined by internal factors or classroom instructional strategies, but influenced by broader social contexts. Therefore, teacher educators need to be aware that their feedback, interpersonal presence, and the classroom environment they implement play a significant role in the learners' perceptions of being seen, valued and supported, which means the key motivators for sustained effort, progress, and development for the learners.

*(g) Ideal L2 self*

The construct of the ideal L2 Self, which is a part of Dörnyei's (2005, 2009) L2 Motivational Self System, was deeply reflected in pre-service teachers' perceptions of English writing in the interview data. Based on the results presented in Table 14, participants perceived a rich image of themselves as proficient users of English in the future, especially as articulate, confident and professionally successful. This self-image served as a motivational compass, and kept students engaged with their writing development despite challenges, as the learners reframed writing as a means of imagining and developing a future identity, not merely an academic exercise.

Several participants directly connected their writing efforts with personal aspirations involving academic success or international career goals. PT 10 described that

I really want to work internationally, maybe in publishing or editing, so writing well in English is essential for me. When I write, I imagine presenting my ideas clearly, maybe even publishing something. It pushes me to take it seriously. (PT 10)

We can see a clear example of an ideal L2 self in PT 2's vision of herself as a future proficient user of English. She has framed language mastery not as an abstract skill, but part of her identity. This motivation is internally regulated, goal-oriented, and driven by concrete aspirations, while other participants described their relation of the writing experience to their future roles as teachers of English, indicating that the ideal L2 self can be simultaneously global, and local in professional competence. PT 5 shared her opinion as follows:

Since I'm training to be an English teacher, I think it's important to be good at writing, not just speaking. If I can't write well, how can I teach my students to do it? I want to be someone who sets a good example. (PT 5)

In her perception, PT 5 presented an example of a pedagogical vision of herself as a teacher who is both competent and credible in the classroom. The ideal L2 self, in her view, seems to be framed with a sense of responsibility and professional integrity, and corresponds with Dörnyei's assertion that future self-guides frequently reflect roles or values in specific contexts.

On the other hand, several students also linked English writing to their global citizenship and intercultural aims. For instance, PT 8 shared the fact that

When I write in English, I feel like I'm joining a global conversation. I imagine myself working abroad, maybe doing a Master's, and writing is part of that dream. (PT 8)

This remark further supports the conceptualisation of a connecting, vivid, and emotionally engaging ideal L2 self to promote learners' persistence and effort in writing, particularly in cognitively and emotionally demanding mode of communication. Students, who can conceptualise themselves operating in the international, academic, or intercultural dimensions of their worlds, are likely able to approach writing better as a bridge to their imagined futures, rather than as a barrier.

In summary, the findings strongly validate a substantial relationship between the ideal L2 self as a primary driving force in the writing experiences of pre-service teachers since, according to them, the ideal L2 self seems to elevate their self-regulation, long-term investment, and goal-directed learning behaviour in developing writing skills.

#### *(h) Intrinsic motivation*

Intrinsic motivation emerged as a strong major theme in the responses of pre-service teachers. According to Deci and Ryan's (2020) Self-Determination Theory, intrinsic motivation is fostered when people meet three psychological needs, autonomy, competence, and relatedness. These findings indicate that students are more motivated to engage meaningfully, creatively, and self-expressively in the writing process when they find English writing to be meaningful to them. The interview data revealed that several students were enthusiastic about writing in English as an expressive and enjoyable personal task, especially when they were allowed to choose a topic, or allow them to reflect their identity through writing. PT 2 described an idea that

When I can write about something I care about or something from my own experience, I enjoy it. It feels like I'm putting part of myself into the writing, not just following a formula. (PT 2)

This expression of personal investment aligns with the autonomy part of self-determination theory. With autonomy, students are more able to experience flow, which means, writing with interest, focus, and intrinsic enjoyment, when they could freely choose topics or make rhetorical choices, or reflect their identities directly in their writing. By doing so, participants also reported satisfaction from becoming proficient, and improving their ability in writing, and seeing improvement in the tangible form of their writing. PT 10 noted:

Sometimes I compare my earlier essays with what I can write now, and it feels so good. I know I've improved. That motivates me to write more, even if it's not for a grade. (PT 10)

This type of motivation directly relates to the need of competence, which is the belief that one is gaining proficiency and feeling capable. When students feel that they have mastered a challenging activity such as academic writing, then they are able to develop intrinsic motivation to continue to put forth effort, despite the absence of external reward.

Several students also talked about the satisfaction of being creatively fulfilled in writing, particularly through narrative, opinion-based or reflective genres. For example, PT 1 mentioned that

I love when we're allowed to be creative. For example, writing a letter, a blog post, or a personal story. It's more fun and I can be myself. That's when I feel most motivated. (PT 1)

These creative writing assignments provide engagement and ownership, which can support both autonomy and self-expression. Conversely, some students identified formulaic or rigid writing tasks as demotivating, arguing the fact that instructional design should align with their psychological needs, intrinsic interest can be sustained. Interestingly, some students stated fundamentally that writing provided them a sense of mental clarity or emotional release. We can see PT 5's opinion as follows:

Sometimes writing helps me organise my thoughts or reflect on things. It's like therapy in a way. When I write something I'm proud of, it feels really rewarding. (PT 5)

Such comments signify the effective and metacognitive functions of writing, where students apply the process of writing, not just to accomplish an academic requirement, but as a way to know themselves better. This intrinsic motivation supports students' long-term engagement in writing (Hyland, 2003, 2021).

In summary, intrinsic motivation was obviously one of the most dominant factors in students' engagement with the *process writing approach*. With autonomy, acknowledgement, and opportunity for creative expression, students are much more inclined to write for pleasure, mastery, or expressing themselves, strongly affirming Ryan and Deci's (2020) Self-Determination Theory, and highlighting the fact that it is crucial for teacher educators to design writing tasks to tap into the pre-service teachers' internal drives, not just external regulations.

*(i) Instrumental motivation*

Apart from the intrinsic motivation, the interview data also reveal that the participants recognised English writing as an entry point to success, employability, and security in their future (see Table 14). Interestingly, nearly all participant discussed how English writing competence would mean for them in terms of their career goals. While participants also referred to the process of writing as a skill they needed, simultaneously, they viewed writing well in English as an outcome of the skill for professional credibility. For example, PT 9 exemplified her opinion that

To be honest, one of my biggest motivations to write well in English is that I know it's going to be expected of me later ..... whether I'm teaching, applying for scholarships, or even just sending professional emails. (PT 9)

This practical outlook demonstrates how writing was anchored in the students' imagined their future selves. Writing quality was not positioned as a sub, isolated skill learned in the classroom, but as career competency, considering how instrumental motivation might support students' consistent effort through challenging tasks. Other participants also positioned source of writing motivation to particular pathways such as translation, international communication, or business. PT 2 noted:

English writing is not only about school. I want to work with international clients or maybe in translation. So, if I can't write well, it limits my opportunities. That's why I push myself.

This connection between future mobility and writing competence demonstrates the planned and positional aspects of instrumental motivation. According to Dörnyei (2005, 2009), such goal alignment provides a clear rationale for effort, particularly in the absence of immediate reward. Moreover, other participants mentioned the credentialing function of writing, especially as it pertained to passing university requirements, producing academic texts and eligibility for internships. For example, PT 3 explained,

If I want to apply for Erasmus or write a thesis, I have to know how to write well in English. It's not optional. (PT 3)

This representation is more in alignment with a short- to mid-term instrumental goal structure, focused on academic success and recognition. While not intrinsically motivated, these types of goals may still strengthen the participants' motivational disposition in English writing, particularly in a structured and outcome-based learning environments.

Overall, these findings support the conclusion that instrumental motivation is an important motivating factor in pre-service teachers' engagement with writing in English. Ultimately, they are either pursuing professional engagement, academic recognition, or cross-cultural relationships, therefore, they recognise writing as a critical skill for future employment or success, and one they cannot ignore. These findings also support the need for writing instruction to be deliberately and explicitly linked to goal setting and real-world contexts, so that learners can relate classroom tasks to their larger life goals.

#### *(j) Resilience*

As regards the motivational aspects of resilience, participants often expressed how writing could become cognitively and emotionally challenging, especially when they encounter vague or unclear feedback, poor grades, or thought block, but rather than withdrawing, most of the participants created effective alternatives to continue progressing. Jázmin stated clearly her reflection of resilience as follows:

There were times I got stuck, like I didn't know how to continue, and it made me really nervous. But then I took a break, or asked for help, and somehow, I always came back. I tell myself, 'You've done it before, you'll do it again.'

What we see in Jázmin's dialogues are executive motivational strategies, where learners purposely take action to maintain effort, and to overcome temporary demotivation

(Dörnyei, 2005), through metacognitive resilience acting as an emotional regulator that behaves as a tool for sustained engagement. Additionally, the *process writing approach*, such as drafting and revising, also seemed to foster a growth mindset that strengthened their resilience. For instance, PT 4 remarked that —

Knowing that my first draft doesn't have to be perfect actually gives me courage. If I mess up, I can fix it later. That keeps me going. (PT 4)

This aligns with Hyland's (2003, 2021) suggestion that process approach normalises struggle as a part of learning. Accepting the opportunity for feedback and revision supports psychological safety, and would encourage learners' persistence later. These observations can be linked with Deci and Ryan's (1985, 2020) Self-Determination Theory, particularly how perceived competence enhances intrinsic motivation.

In summary, resilience was not only an individual trait, but a product of sound instructional design and teacher support. As students begin to interpret struggle as temporary or feedback as improvement, they exhibited the kind of motivational stability necessary for writing improvement over time. The findings imply that embedding opportunities for manageable failure, recovery, and reflection within classroom practice seem to be essential for the development of this academic resilience for the participants in the target context.

#### *(k) Competition*

Competition as a motivational construct in English writing showed varied responses from the pre-service teachers' interview data. Some respondents thought of competition as something that motivated them to become better performers, whereas others thought of competition as draining or even discouraging, especially while working in groups. This varying response demonstrates the complexity of competition and its role in shaping some motivational dispositions, particularly in academic writing task they were involved in, where the act of comparing was typically not overt. Some respondents even considered competition as a form of external pressure that improved their performance. In this regard, PT 4 emphasised that

In some classes, I want to write better than others ..... not in a bad way, but because it helps me stay focused. If I know someone who writes really well, it inspires me to try harder, too. (PT 4)

Her comments suggest that competition fostered productive rivalry for some students as competing with their peers seems to foster self-improvement. This is similar to what Fülöp and Gyóri (2021) explored in the Hungarian education context, where competition is often not viewed as hostile or destructive, but rather a driving force for self-enhancement, as long as students perceived that the tasks assigned by the teacher are cooperative and task oriented. In these cases, the findings from (Table 14) reveal that students experienced some negative emotions about competition, but observed that it was productive to try to outperform or match their peers. Yet, for other interviewees, competitive situations brought negative emotional consequences for them, especially when they felt that the classroom environment is judgmental or high-pressure. It is noteworthy to remember what PT 1 said

I don't like it when everything turns into a contest. It makes me nervous, and I start comparing myself, and then I just feel like I'm not good enough.

This statement illustrates how competition can jeopardise self-esteem, and lead to avoidance behaviour, especially among students who may already struggle with self-confidence in writing. In addition, a few participants mentioned that competition was only motivating with supportive peer engagement or constructive feedback. In this way, disagreement about the contextual framing of competition mattered as much as that of the task itself. However, students seemed to respond positively if they could perceive the competitive situation as a friendly or informal setting. According to PT 6,

When we share our writings in class, I feel some pressure to do well, but it's also nice to see what others wrote. Sometimes it gives me new ideas or shows me I'm doing okay. (PT 6)

This extracts a preference for a collaborative comparison rather than a contest, which Fülöp et al. (2025) referred to as constructive competition, which increases motivation while decreasing emotional instability. When the writing tasks are grounded in mutual respect, students are more likely to participate without feeling threatened. Finally, some participants rejected the competition altogether as they prefer an individualistic and progress-oriented environment. This idea was supported by PT 3, claiming that

I just want to get better myself. Competing doesn't help me ..... I think it's better when I can focus on improving without thinking about others. (PT 3)

Her words reflect an intrinsic goal orientation, where learners determine success through personal mastery rather than outperforming another's work.

In conclusion, the findings confirm that competition seem to have a dual effect, to be exact, it may serve as both positive and negative motivations for students in writing — it can motivate to the participants in the Hungarian context if they are fostered in a supportive environment, however, it can demotivate the participants who have anxiety in learning. In conclusion, the findings shed light on the fact that it is essential for EFL teacher educators to carefully balance challenging tasks with encouragement in teaching writing, and to apply motivational strategies based on their students' varied, personal dispositions and emotional responses while promoting a supportive and stress-free environment where the students' can learn to write well, and improve their writing abilities.

After thoroughly discussing the results and findings, which emerged from the interview data of pre-service teachers, the interpretation and discussions, based on the results of the interview data with EFL teacher educators in the Hungarian teacher education context, will be presented in the following section. Table 16 reveals the information about the teacher educator participants in the context investigated.

**Table 16** Demographic data of teacher educator participants (qualitative study)

Participant	Gender	Age	Nationality	Exp years	University	Context
TE 1	female	xx	Hungarian	30	C	university professor, training BA English studies students, and teachers of English language and culture
TE 2	male	49	Hungarian	31	A	university professor, teaching English studies and pedagogies, extensive experience in teaching academic writing (both foundational and advanced)
TE 3	female	50	Hungarian	24	A	university professor, teaching English studies and pedagogies,

						extensive experience in teaching academic writing
TE 4	female	28	Hungarian	7	A	university lecturer, teaching English studies and academic writing courses
TE 5	female	46	Hungarian	24	A	university professor, teaching English studies, taught advanced English academic writing courses
TE 6	female	35	Native	13	A	university lecturer, teaching English and American studies as well as academic writing
TE 7	male	xx	Hungarian	15+	A	university professor, teaching academic skills and advanced academic writing courses
TE 8	male	33	Hungarian	11	D	university lecturer, teaching English language modules, academic skills, and academic writing
TE 9	male	29	Native	8	A	university lecturer, teaching applied linguistics, English and American studies, and academic writing
TE 10	male	38	Native	14	A	university lecturer, teaching English and American studies, extensive experience in teaching advanced academic writing

**Table 17** Emerging themes of the interview study with teacher educators, categorised into concepts discussed in the review of related literature

motivation to use PWA	skills development
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• strongly favoured PWA</li> <li>• recursive and evolving process, benefit students cognitively, emotionally by drafting, revising, and mentally processing ideas</li> <li>• fosters deeper learning</li> <li>• use of drafts improved students' motivation and outcomes</li> <li>• pre-writing (brainstorming, mind mapping, and idea discussions) encouraged students' thinking</li> <li>• peer review and collaborative feedback were mostly emphasised</li> <li>• important to give time and space for editing and reflection; brought confidence</li> <li>• PWA provided a dramatic shift in student engagement and writing quality</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• expressed a strong desire for CPD, more formal trainings are welcomed</li> <li>• workshops, peer collaboration, and reflective teaching practices are valued</li> <li>• curriculum reform — to include practical strategy training</li> <li>• institutional support is critical for innovation and sustaining motivated-focused pedagogy</li> <li>• CPD as part of ongoing self-growth rather than just policy compliance</li> </ul>

**Table 18** Emerging themes of the interview study categorised into concepts discussed in the review of related literature (teacher educators)

difficulty	assessment	topics	pre-writing	strategies	significant others	ideal L2 self	intrinsic	instrumental	resilience	competition
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-balancing writing topics' difficulty</li> <li>-ensuring task adjustments based on students' level</li> <li>-moderate topic difficulty was essential in encouraging students' critical thinking and active engagement</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-formative assessment and multi-stage feedback</li> <li>-reader-response style, promoting revision rather than correction</li> <li>-peer and teacher feedback</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-giving autonomy in choosing topics</li> <li>-controversial or thought-provoking themes</li> <li>-integrate academic alignment with department-specific content</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-brainstorming, mind mapping, and idea discussion</li> <li>-develop students' ideas and reduce anxiety</li> <li>-teachers' clear instruction, students' synthesising ideas before drafts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-scaffolding</li> <li>-reader-focused teaching</li> <li>-genre exposure and task modeling</li> <li>-providing time to revise drafts</li> <li>-creating collaborative classroom environment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>teacher feedback</b></li> <li>-central motivational role</li> <li>-mentors who build confidence and expression</li> <li><b>peer feedback</b></li> <li>-supportive and motivated classroom environment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-helped students imagine future roles</li> <li>-aligned with students' academic and professional aspirations</li> <li>-identity building through reflective writing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-interest-driven topics brought enjoyment and persistence</li> <li>-safe, humorous, comfortable and encouraging environments support internal motivation</li> <li>-cognitive development-key motivator in academic writing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-linking tasks with mimic real-world applications (research writing or presentation)</li> <li>-grades, thesis defences, and professional success</li> <li>-academic publishing and teaching-oriented writing tasks</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-breaking large writing tasks into smaller stages</li> <li>-peer support and teacher's flexibility</li> <li>-viewed struggles as normal, emphasised growth over perfection</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-collaboration rather than competition</li> <li>-self-comparison and internal benchmarks are recommended</li> <li>-optional contests and publications as motivational outlets</li> </ul>

#### 4.4.3 Results and findings of interview study with teacher educators

*(Addresses RQ: How can EFL teacher educators improve pre-service teachers' English writing performance through the process writing approach in a more motivating manner at Hungarian teacher training universities?)*

*SQ3: What are the perceptions of EFL teacher educators of the process writing approach at Hungarian teacher training universities?*

*SQ4: What are EFL educators' motivational strategies required in strengthening pre-service teachers' motivation in English writing to improve their writing performance through the process writing approach at Hungarian teacher training universities?*

*And SQ5: How can these skills be effectively developed during the development of teacher education and continuous professional development of EFL teacher educators at Hungarian teacher training universities?)*

#### *Teacher educators' motivation to use the process writing approach in their teaching*

Table 17 presents the results emerging from the interview data of the teacher educators. According to the results, teacher educators demonstrated strong engagement in the potential use of the process writing approach, and described its several benefits for learners' cognitive and emotional development in the learning of L2 writing. The teachers all also concurred that process writing promotes deeper learning, and greater quality of writing and engagement by students, especially during the stages of drafting, revising, and peer and teacher feedback. They also highlighted that the frequent recursive elements of the process writing, including pre-writing exercises such as brainstorming or mind-mapping, contributed to students expressing their ideas more actively, and engaging more with, and developing their ideas. The participants in this study also emphasised that allowing students to use drafts, and giving them time to reflect, revise or enhance their drafts not only led to confidence, but also brought competence, confidence and development in their students' motivation and academic outcomes. TE 4 explained her experience in teaching writing in such a way that

Process writing is not just about improving the end product, it's about improving the student's relationship with writing. When they brainstorm, draft, and revise, they start thinking critically and ownership of what they do. (TE 4)

Regarding the process writing, TE 8 also shared his experience highlighting that students seem to be more engaged if they were allowed to apply the process of writing rather than focusing on emphasising their end product.

I've seen really dramatic changes in students writing once we started using process-based methods. They feel freer, more confident. When they are not judged only on the end result, they take risks and develop. (TE 8)

These findings reflect Hyland's (2003) idea of process writing as a developmental and student-centred approach, and are also aligned within Deci & Ryan's (2020) self-determination theory, where autonomy and competence-building contribute significantly to learner motivation. Teacher educators' positive beliefs and observations about student growth serve as a strong motivational driver for adopting and sustaining this approach in their pedagogy.

In my interview study, all of the teacher educator respondents expressed their strong support for implementing the process writing in classrooms, highlighting its developmental and reflective nature, which supports students' deeper learning while engaging with writing since they viewed writing itself not as a one-shot product but as a cognitive and emotional activity, which provides opportunities for students to explore, revise, and grow. The teacher educators confirmed that the stages of process writing, such as brainstorming, drafting, and revising, are crucial for fostering students' motivation and critical thinking. TE 6 reflected that

The biggest difference the process approach made was in students' ownership of their writing. When they brainstorm and revise, they become more critical and aware of their ideas ..... and that's something a one-shot essay can't offer. It makes writing a habit, not a hurdle. (TE 6)

Simultaneously, TE 2 mentioned the motivational effects of process writing focusing on the pre-writing phases:

When we give them space to think and discuss before writing, their anxiety drops. They start to trust their voice. Even weaker students who were usually quiet began to contribute more. (TE 2)

Their reflections echoed process writing as a student-centred approach, emphasising that, when students participate in meaningful, and reflective tasks that encourage their own reflection and growth, writing skills development is most effective and efficient (Hyland,

2003; 2019). Based on their claims, it may be interpreted that the process writing seems clearly to support students' autonomy and competence, the psychological needs explained by Deci and Ryan (2020), by providing opportunities for students to control their ideas while they are absorbing writing skills, and building confidence.

Additionally, some participants reported that their students felt more comfortable, and cognitively engaged in writing through this approach, if they received peer feedback, and opportunity for collaborative editing. TE 4 and TE 5 described their experience that

When they have to give feedback to each other, they don't just write better. They read better too. They're learning from one another, not just from me. (TE 4), and

Collaborative feedback sessions build trust and engagement. Students seem to take writing more seriously when it becomes a shared effort. (TE 5)

According to the teacher educators' voices through the interview series, it was explored that they are motivated to incorporate the *process of writing* in their teaching, as they observed positive changes in students' attitude, as well as confidence and quality in writing, which in turn encourages them to continuously apply the approach in the teacher education context I explored.

### *Motivational strategies required in teaching writing*

In this section, I will thoroughly present the results and findings emerging from the semi-structured interview series with the teacher educators (See Table 18).

#### *(a) Difficulty*

Teacher educators deliberately selected writing topics that were reasonable in difficulty from the student's perspective so that they both challenged and positioned students to engage them. Most critically, teacher educators noted they assigned personally relevant but cognitively challenging tasks, usually connected to an academic or professional context, which demanded that students engage in critical reflexive practice or evaluative judgment (or, even propose solutions)—tasks that challenged their cognitive capacity while still enable students to draw upon cognitive resources and have the motivation to engage. For example, TE 4 noted:

I usually give argumentative or problem-solving topics because I want them to think and not just write... Topics that they can relate to but also that make them think a bit more. (TE 4)

Similarly, TE 6 discussed important linking difficulty with the personal and academic relevance of the students:

If the topic is too easy, they don't take it seriously. If it's slightly difficult but interesting, like writing about issues they face as university students or about future job scenarios, they really engage. (TE 6)

This supports Hidi and McLaren's (1991) position that topic interestingness and optimal cognitive challenge play a role in helping students' writing motivation. According to Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan, 2020), such challenges can also fulfil learners' need for competence. Specifically, when students' situated cognition enables them to feel like success is possible through their efforts, students have the intrinsic motivation to engage in the writing process. In this sense, Hyland (2019) pointed out that only tasks that are perceived by writers as giving agency (and evaluative thinking) to be more motivating, leading to greater engagement. Teacher educators' explicit manipulation of topic difficulty represents a conscious awareness of how the challenge associated with writing might be able to develop engagement and motivation for writing in pre-service EFL teachers.

#### *(b) Teachers' assessment and feedback*

All participants emphasised the role of feedback and assessment as a motivating factor in the writing process. Their views indicated a move away from traditional error correction to formative, multi-stage, and student-centered feedback. Teacher educators believed feedback should not serve as a final judgement but should be viewed as a form of learning tool that emphasises reflection, revision, and autonomy. TE 10 explained how she views her feedback practice as empowering students.

I provide formative assessment and that includes several stages. Not just final correction but showing where and how they could improve. It is a part of the writing journey, not just a grade. (TE 10)

Her feedback practice is a form of feedback that resembles a reader-response style, where the focus is on dialogue rather than correction. Elaborating on this, TE 7 provided an example of how she engages with feedback through the lens of guidance not judgement.

It's not about correcting every mistake. I try to respond as a reader, not a teacher. It makes them want to revise and take ownership. (TE 7)

The reader-response style of feedback recontextualises the student and teacher dynamic and equalises the partnership through writing development; this style supports the aspect of autonomy suggested in Deci and Ryan's (2020) Self-Determination Theory (SDT). When students feel they are part of the writing process, they are more motivated to take charge of their own learning. In this way, feedback becomes less of an evaluative document and more of a learning opportunity that increases competence and leads to intrinsic motivation.

Moreover, TE 2 also highlighted the benefits of collaborative peer feedback stating this each student's collaborative feedback on their writing not only strengthened and built their self-confidence, but their motivation as well. When students read each other's work, they are really learning more. They understand how to make suggestions, and accept them, and that is important for them to feel they are a part of a community. The process of reading, and understanding peer feedback aligns with findings of Guilloteaux and Dörnyei (2008) where they demonstrated that motivation depends heavily on classroom extra factors, particularly when students feel a sense of social support. Peer-interaction substitutes relatedness, which is another aspect of SDT, that may heighten all engagement between students to the writing task.

Some teacher educators noted that there needs to be a move towards a multi-stage and feedback development. TE 1 illustrated the importance of progression by stating;

Students revise based on the feedback I give them ..... not just once but across two or three drafts. That process shows their development and keeps them motivated. (TE 1)

This finding supports the model of Bayat (2014), in that the process writing approach that included formative assessment produced drastic improvements in the learners' writing skills, as well as their motivation as learners. Hyland's (2003) claim also suggests that feedback and strategic scaffolding are important components of the writing process, "build learners' confidence and help develop greater textual control" (Hyland, 2003, p. 23).

Overall, formative assessment, peer interaction, and multi-stage feedback were not only suggested as practical pedagogical approaches, but as motivational scaffolding which supported autonomy, competence, and relatedness, which are the three foundational needs

of Self-Determination Theory. These assessment approaches illustrate how there can be a move from product-based grading to process-based developmental, which is in-line with the goals of the *process writing approach*, and developing process-oriented assessments were seen as a major impact by most of the participants within the confines of this study to improve motivation as well as writing performance in their Hungarian EFL contexts.

*(c) Topics*

The use of writing topics emerged as a significant motivational strategy employed by EFL teacher educators to promote engagement and quality writing (level of writing) for pre-service teachers. The participants all made clear the importance of choosing topics that were personal, socially meaningful, and provisionally cognitively appropriate, which allowed students to access their own experiences and voice. For example, TE 1 noted that

I try to choose topics that are somehow related to their lives, their environment, or what they are experiencing as young people... things that provoke a reaction. (TE 1)

As a further example, TE 7 shared,

In my courses, I focus on topics like intercultural differences, stereotypes, education systems... because these are topics they have opinions on. It makes them more eager to write and share. (TE 7)

These findings support Hidi and McLaren's (1991) argument about the motivational value of topic interest and relevance, being a critical aspect in developing students' commitment to writing. Furthermore, teachers' offer for the choice of multiple but purposeful topics supports students' autonomy, and fosters intrinsic motivation, which is consistent with Self-Determination theory (Deci & Ryan, 2020). The student-centred practices are also in accordance with Hyland's (2003) process writing pedagogy, which related to the importance of meaningful content maintaining cognitive engagement over a considerable period of time. Thus, the selection of topics was not just a procedural issue but rather a motivation factor used by teacher educators to support student voice, autonomy, and writing quality.

*(d) Pre-writing*

Moving beyond writing in order to engage in writing was emphasised repeatedly by the teacher educators as one of the most useful motivational strategies that helped to support and develop students' English writing performance, particularly through the process writing approach both in the classroom and online. Participants highlighted how pre-writing activates based on background knowledge, generates ideas, and provides plans for writing which all serve to build up students' confidence, clarity of thought and motivation prior to the writing process itself. TE 6 elaborated thoroughly on how the use of visual prompts and brainstorming tasks encouraged students to be more original and confident in their writing.

In pre-writing, I usually use pictures, comics, or a video clip without sound, and I ask students to imagine what's going on. That makes them think and gives them vocabulary and ideas without pressure. Sometimes, I ask them to brainstorm words they associate with the picture, and we put it on the board. They don't even realise they are planning for writing. They just do it. Then we move on to what could be the message or point of view. They engage more when they already feel prepared. (TE 6)

In a similar way, TE 5 described how talking first with their partners or groups helps students to overcome their writing anxiety and encourages students to build ideas collaboratively;

Many students are afraid to start writing because they think they don't have good ideas or their English is not enough. So, I ask them to talk to a partner about the topic first. Even the shy ones speak more when it's just talking. From there, they write down their ideas. And suddenly, they have a list. That gives them the feeling that they can actually write. The fear goes away a bit. (TE 5)

These descriptions resonate with Hyland's (2003) insight into the role of pre-writing as an important step in the process writing approach, which allows students to explore, organise and develop ideas prior to drafting. This role of pre-writing is not only to scaffold the writing process but also is of great value in terms of reducing anxiety and increasing perceived competence, two key factors of motivation (Deci and Ryan (2018; 2020). Teacher educators provided entry points into writing tasks that were structured yet flexible, helping students individualise their ideas and feel they were prepared to engage in writing

tasks. Therefore, in this case, pre-writing was not only a preparatory stage in the writing process, but also a motivating catalyst that connected thinking and writing.

(e) *Strategies*

Participants identified the strategies they use, which supports learner autonomy, engagement, and confidence throughout the writing process. One notable point, frequently mentioned, was the importance of *scaffolding* in the early stages of writing. According to TE 1's reflection, it can be explored as follows:

I don't just say 'Write! I scaffold the task ..... show samples, provide outlines, and check their understanding step by step. (TE 1)

This stepwise approach helped her students to gradually internalise expectations for writing in a non-stressful manner. Moreover, an important strategy they pointed out, was to provide time for revision of drafts, as teacher educators believed that revising drafts gave the pre-service teachers time to reflect as writers, and positively contributed to motivation and quality of writing. TE 5 highlighted that

If we want better writing, we must give them time to rethink and rewrite. Without that, they don't learn much. (TE 5)

Their reflection complies with Bayat's (2014), and Hyland's (2021) declaration that providing time for multiple drafts also created space for students to reflect on their writing, and improve by writing process. Moreover, the participants also highlighted the importance of creating collaborative environment in the classroom. According to TE 8,

When they share ideas with peers, the classroom feels alive. They learn not just from me but from each other. (TE 8)

He continued that collaborative learning allows students for peer support, and lowers anxiety while increasing engagement (Bernaus & Gardner, 2008; Godwin-Jones, 2018), especially for those students who may be hesitant writers.

In this Hungarian context, scaffolding, providing time to revise drafts, and creating a collaborative learning environment were highly motivating to students, and supportive strategies that allowed pre-service teachers to develop their writing abilities, and build confidence in academic writing, using the *process writing*.

*(f) Significant others*

Teacher educator participants frequently mentioned that pre-service teachers are highly influenced by their friends, family, and teachers, themselves, as an external motivating factor, which means, *significant others*, that either facilitated or impeded engagement in English writing. Several participants reflected that classroom peer dynamics could become a strong motivational power in writing, when they were managed appropriately. TE 6 claims that

When they know their classmates will read their writing or give feedback, they often try harder. There's a kind of peer pressure, but in a positive sense.  
(TE 6)

This aligns with prior research indicating that peer support in an L2 context can be a motivating force through social comparison and encouragement, for example, Clément et al.'s (1994) study reported that group cohesion, peer support in fostering self-confidence, and motivated learning behaviour in L2 writing environments can play a great impact on students' development. When students perceive that they are part of a supportive learning cohort, their anxiety decreases, and their willingness to communicate and to write better increases. This was clearly mirrored by the teacher educators in this study.

In addition to peers, the interviewees also highlighted the role of parents, and family encouragement, which plays a significant role in improving students' performance. TE 1, for example, noted how some students drew positive energy from family validation.

Some students mentioned their parents were impressed when they wrote something in English. That gave them a sense of pride and purpose. (TE 1)

The finding couples with Noels' (2001) work, where the perceived approval and encouragement from important others can bolster learners' integrative orientation, and internalisation of language learning objectives. Acknowledging the role of *significant others*, it can be concluded that these social influences may contribute to an emotionally supportive, and achievement-oriented environment for students in a favourable way, while acquiring writing skills.

*(g) Ideal L2 self*

The teacher participants widely agree that assisting students in developing their ideal L2 selves, for example, how they see themselves in the future as competent users of

English, would be a strong motivating force in encouraging writing. Some participants felt that writing tasks connected to their personal goals, and aspirations would be taken more seriously, especially when the writing task was associated with their future role or roles connected with English. TE 4 confessed that

It's important that students have an image of themselves as competent users of English in the future. I often encourage them to imagine how they would write or communicate in English in their desired careers or studies. When they can picture that clearly, they are more motivated to work on their writing. (TE 4)

Similarly, TE 5 also added the following:

“I usually ask them to think about why they need English in the future, what kind of job they want, where they want to work, with whom they will communicate. This helps them to take writing tasks more seriously because they start to see their own goals and how English writing fits in there. It connects their classroom tasks with their personal dreams.” (TE 5)

On the other hand, TE 9 responded that

Some students say, ‘If I want to be an English teacher, I have to write like one.’ That kind of thinking helps us motivate them more easily. (TE 9)

Given their experiences, it is reasonable to conclude that promoting the *ideal L2 self* in students, by helping them visualise themselves as future proficient writers, may encourage their intrinsic motivation towards writing. Importantly, this finding completely aligns with what I investigated in the previous quantitative study, where the highest correlation result indicated that there the strongest relationship was between students’ ideal selves and intrinsic motivation. Furthermore, the teacher educators’ comments also clarify that when learners can connect writing in the classroom with personally relevant plans, or future career opportunities, their interest, motivation, and commitment to the process of writing are more noticeably fulfilled. Based on these findings, it is recommended for teacher educators to implement activities, or prompts that will engage students’ ideal L2 Selves, including writing topics related to their personal goals, reflective assignments related to their future careers, and role-based writing simulations in order to strengthen their motivation through the process writing. This will not only personalise students’ learning, but will also fulfil the purpose and direction into the students’ writing skills development.

*(h) Instrumental motivation*

The interviewees also frequently acknowledged the fact that *instrumental motivation*, such as students' awareness of external and practical purposes for writing, act as a significant role in motivating students to write better with a pragmatic focus. Most of them observed that pre-service teachers were more committed to writing tasks when the tasks were clearly connected to their practical life goals, such as passing language exams, fulfilling job requirements, or achieving scholarship opportunities. We can see TE 6's reflection as follows:

I think what works for many of them is the idea that if they want to pass a language exam or get a scholarship, they must write properly. This is a big motivator. They see writing not just as an academic thing, but something they must master for real-life goals. (TE 6)

On the other hand, TE 3 also commented that

Most of my students mention that they need to write well for their future jobs or further education. So if we clearly say 'this essay task is similar to what is expected in a B2 exam or an application letter,' then they take it seriously. They see value in it. (TE 3)

Their reflections emphasise the importance of linking writing tasks with students' specific, and practical objectives regarding writing skills acquisition. Based on these findings, it may be interpreted for the current context that aligning teaching writing tasks with real-world expectations can enhance students' development, especially among those driven by pragmatic goals. It is, therefore, recommended to the teacher educators that writing tasks should be regularly designed in relation to students' external aspirations, such as the pragmatic benefits that I described above, to escalate their *instrumental motivation* more effectively.

*(i) Resilience*

Some teacher educators emphasised the role of resilience in strengthening students' motivation during the writing process. They observed that resilient students tended to respond to feedback constructively, cope better with writing difficulties, and persist through the multiple stages of revision inherent in the process writing approach. On the one hand, TE 9 reflected on this by stating that

Some students don't give up even when their first drafts are criticised or marked with lots of comments. They come back stronger, revise with more care, and I see real development in their next versions. (TE 9)

On the other hand, TE 7 also shared his experience that

You can see who is resilient when you give feedback that's not sugar-coated. Some get discouraged quickly, but others ask questions, try again, and really want to improve. It's about their mindset. They don't see writing as a one-time thing, but as something they can grow in. (TE 7)

We can obtain valuable insights from their responses that resilience is one of the major psychological contributions that can help pre-service teachers coping strategies when they face challenges during writing. Therefore, it may be concluded that encouraging students' resilience through teachers' supportive feedback, and yielding opportunities to revise their drafts can nurture the students' development in writing in the long-term. Additionally, it is also recommended for teacher educators to create classroom climates, that normalise setbacks, and encourage persistence, as well as to frame challenges, as such aspects are essential for students to improve their writing performance in this Hungarian context.

*(j) Competition*

While answering my questions related to this motivational aspect, the teacher educators commonly agreed that competitive attitudes among students, especially in academic settings, can influence their writing motivation either in a positive or negative way, depending on how the teacher sets the classroom climate. The participants argued that a healthy level of competition can enhance students' learning, but excessive, or poorly framed competitive situations among students may increase unfavourable outcomes, such as anxiety, and demotivation to write. TE 4 shared her insight in such a way that

Some students are very competitive, if they know others are writing better.....they try harder. But if they feel too much pressure, they just shut down. So we try to frame it as personal improvement, not a race. (TE 4)

Similarly, TE 9 stressed that

What works well is peer comparison when it's about learning, not about grading. If students see how others approached the same writing task, they reflect more. It motivates some of them to do better next time. (TE 9)

Their confessions shed light on the fact that when *competition* is framed in a constructive means, such as comparing ideas among students, instead of grading, it becomes a positively influential strategy, especially in collaborative writing tasks. According to Fülöp and Györi (2021), and Fülöp et al. (2025), encouraging personal development, and self-competition is better than academic rivalry among students, supporting a more balanced and motivating classroom environment. Based on the findings, fostering a comfortable and more balanced competitive situations may strengthen students' motivation to write better without stress, since such classroom manners can lead individual progress, rather than performance-based comparison among students. Therefore, teacher educators in the Hungarian context are recommended to facilitate collaborative, and reflective writing activities through *process writing*, that nurture a healthy, competitive classroom climate, instead of generating excessive pressure, or negative emotional impact among students.

#### *Skills development of Hungarian EFL teacher educators*

Further exploration based on the findings from the interview data consistently emphasised that the Hungarian EFL teacher educators strongly value collaborative reflections, institutional support, and curriculum reform for their continuous professional development (CPD) in teaching writing pedagogies (See Table 17). Their responses clearly comply with *SQ 5*, which examines how such skills can be effectively developed during the improvement of teacher education, and EFL teacher educators' CPD in the context investigated.

Some participants identified a gap between formal CPD opportunities and, what they actually need in the classroom, urging more experience-based support with a special focus on teaching writing. On the one hand, TE 3 reported the limited opportunities of mandatory CPD events, necessitating more relevant and inspiring content as follows:

I think we still lack real professional development opportunities. There are mandatory events, but they don't help in real classroom problems. What I would need is something very practice-based, like strategies for how to motivate pre-service teachers in writing classes, or workshops where we can learn from each other's teaching experience. (TE 3)

On the other hand, some teachers expressed the need for curriculum reform at the institutional level, so that they can prepare themselves to deliver effective writing pedagogies to students. Interestingly, TE 6 also highlighted her concern in such a way that

We are required to teach academic writing, but the training for us is minimal. Writing pedagogy needs more space in our training system. For example, understanding how to scaffold writing or give constructive feedback is something many educators learn by doing, not through formal training. That should change. (TE 6)

In addition to those aspects, collaborative reflections were also recognised as one of the major needs for their CPD. In this respect, TE 2 shared his informal dialogue with other colleagues in the past, acknowledging that such reflections are more practical, and inspiring for teachers rather than top-down initiatives, offering an example that, he could have learned the *process writing* as a new strategy through such collaborative actions with fellow EFL teachers. We can observe from TE 2's remark that —

I see professional development as ongoing reflection. I regularly talk with colleagues about what works in class. These discussions are much more useful than a top-down training. We inspire each other. Someone tries a new strategy with process writing and shares it. That's how I've learned the most in recent years. (TE 2)

These findings convey valuable insights that teacher educators' professional development should be grounded in practical pedagogy, peer learning, and institutional support, rather than formal training courses. Based on the findings, it can be concluded that teacher educators can significantly enhance pre-service teachers' writing skills in a more motivating manner, through bottom-up teacher collaborations, workshops that are focused on sharing teaching writing pedagogies incorporating how to teach English writing through the *process approach*, and curriculum developments by including this effective writing strategy.

#### *Newly emerging theme from the teacher educator participants*

While I was collecting qualitative data from both pre-service teachers, and teacher educators in the Hungarian context, Artificial Intelligence (AI)-assisted writing tools were also emerging. Examples include ChatGPT, QillBot, and Gemini, which appeared particularly in higher education settings globally. Although exploring AI-assisted writing tools was not the primary intention of this doctoral study, the timing of the interview data collection coincided with the emergence of these technical writing tools. Consequently, some teacher educator participants voluntarily inserted their comments on the use of AI-assisted writing tools, compared to the human-driven approach of *process writing* during

the interview sessions, although the pre-service teachers did not add their perspectives on AI-writing tools. Given the relevance and significance of these insights, the topic was incorporated as a newly emerged theme in presenting the qualitative findings. These discussions not only offered valuable insights on the impact of AI-assisted writing tools in L2 writing instruction, but also highlighted the importance of the *process writing approach*, as well as showcased teacher educators' concern nowadays, in the context I investigated. Consequently, a corresponding small section on AI writing tools in comparison with the process approach, was also inserted to the literature review of my dissertation to contextualise, and support the inclusion of this theme (See Chapter 2).

If we continue the results and findings of this section, it was observed that the participants expressed their concerns about the impact of AI writing tools on students' cognitive engagement, authenticity, and motivation in writing, focusing on the comparison between the developmental phases of *process approach*, despite acknowledging some benefits of AI in academic contexts. Some participants yielded an insight that AI tools could potentially diminish pre-service teachers' cognitive development. For example, TE 10 stressed that

Students are becoming dependent on AI-generated text that they skip the hard parts of writing.....thinking, organising, struggling. These are essential in *process writing*. If we let AI take over, the reflective stages like brainstorming, revising become meaningless. (TE 10)

His concern reflects the idea that the *process writing approach*, by its nature, emphasises recursive thinking, idea generation, and student ownership — all of which may be compromised if students are over reliant on AI-generated ready-made products. TE 2 also shared his opinion by commenting that

With process writing, students develop a sense of ownership. But if they paste their ideas into ChatGPT and get the final version in seconds, they lose the connection with what they are writing. It becomes passive consumption, not active construction. (TE 2)

On the other hand, TE 4 also imposed a clear comparison between the pedagogical contributions of *process writing*, and the support offered by AI writing tools.

AI can give perfect grammar, yes, but that's not the point of writing. The point is to think, argue, explore your thoughts. With process writing, students grow as thinkers. AI can't do that for them. (TE 4)

Similarly, TE 8 also expressed his concern about such technologies as follows:

The danger is that students start using AI as a crutch. It does the thinking for them, but our job is to help them learn to think, not just to get the grammar right. (TE 8)

In this essence, it may be examined that the teacher educator participants considered AI-assisted writing tools as a helpful instrument for students to enhance vocabulary, or generate ideas to some extent. However, most of them believe it as a potential threat to students' cognitive development, and reflective practices that the *process writing* can render, since the approach creates opportunities for implementing autonomy, encouraging critical thinking, and motivating students to write better (Hyland, 2019; 2021), all of which the teacher educators valued in their teaching writing in the Hungarian context (see Table 19).

**Table 19** Newly emerging theme of the interview study with teacher educators regarding AI-assisted writing tools versus the Process Writing Approach (PWA)

AI writing tools	PWA
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• skips cognitive stages of writing</li> <li>• loss of student agency; personal connection to writing tasks, reduce autonomy</li> <li>• potential of passive learning; over-reliance on AI-generated texts</li> <li>• support vocabulary advancement and idea generation to some extent</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• focuses on reflective stages, such as brainstorming, drafting, editing and revising (Hyland, 2003; 2021)</li> <li>• fosters students agency; personal connection to writing tasks</li> <li>• encourages active learning and engagement in writing</li> <li>• implements deeper cognition, and emotional expression of ideas</li> </ul>

## 5. Discussions

This section interprets the mixed methods findings of this doctoral research by situating them into wider educational contexts, and highlighting their practical relevance, where Section 5.1 outlines the major implications, obtained from the pre-service teachers' and teacher educators' voices, and Section 5.2 presents the limitations of the study.

### 5.1 Implications of the doctoral study

Under this section, I will discuss the contributions of my research in terms of four aspects – pedagogical, research, societal, and policy-making implications.

#### Pedagogical implications

The quantitative findings highlight the essential role of EFL teacher educators in shaping pre-service teachers' writing skills development in a more motivating manner through the combination of constructive feedback and identity-building strategies with the *process writing approach*. Given the teacher educators' role as the primary facilitators of teaching writing, it is essential for them to design writing tasks by aligning practical, and motivational practices, balancing the structure, support, and learner autonomy. The quantitative findings indicate that pre-service teachers were most motivated when they received continuous, and constructive feedback from the teacher, confirming the pedagogical essence of the teacher's engagement, while they are acquiring English writing skills. Additionally, since the *ideal L2 self* plays the most important role in motivating students' motivated learning behaviour, writing tasks should be carefully designed to support students' visualisation of themselves as successful English writers, and as teachers in their future career, as they will become classroom practitioners in the future. Therefore, equipping them with both the motivational practices, and the pedagogical strategies to foster quality teaching is essential. Moreover, writing assignments linked with real-world scenerios, and future aspirations can not only strengthen students' motivation to be a better writer, but also prepare them to nurture motivational strategies in their future classrooms, creating a powerful impact on English writing instruction beyond their own learning.

The qualitative findings also remark the pedagogical contributions of *process writing* as an effective method for enhancing students' motivation, fostering autonomy in classrooms, and gaining writing competence, since they benefited significantly from the recursive nature of the writing approach, that is to say, during brainstorming, drafting,

editing, and revising stages, which fostered deeper cognitive abilities, and personal enjoyment in writing. Teacher educators also identified the importance of pedagogical strategies, such as scaffolding, students' peer feedback, and selecting writing topics aligning with real-world scenarios in strengthening students' motivation, and building confidence in L2 writing. These valuable insights suggest that writing instruction in teacher education context should shift from a product-oriented approach to a more student-centred process-oriented pedagogy, as it acknowledges writing as a developmental activity, that conveys opportunities for reflective practices.

### Research implications

Both the quantitative and qualitative findings contribute to the growing body of research on L2 writing motivation by its empirical evidence on how motivational dimensions, such as teacher assessment and *feedback*, *instrumental motivation*, and the *ideal L2 self*, influenced pre-service teachers' motivation to become a better writer through the *process writing approach*. According to the quantitative findings, it was investigated that the pre-service teachers had positive impressions of Hyland's (2003; 2019; 2021) model of *process writing*. Therefore, it will be valuable to further investigate it for multi-dimensional process writing models, linking with the different motivational constructs I measured in this study. Importantly, this research shed light on the sensitivity of motivational constructs to contextual and methodological variables, as we observed slight discrepancies in internal consistency values between the pilot and main survey, particularly in scales with fewer items. These outcomes display a need for further research to explore in a more varied institutional, and cultural contexts, with larger and more diverse samples. In this respect, comparative and longitudinal studies are recommended as they could yield deeper insights into how motivational profiles shift over time, and in response to teaching practices in L2 classes. Based on these findings and methodological reflections, this study aims to serve as a foundation for future research by exploring how to strengthen students' motivation in English writing, with a particular emphasis on the *process approach*, in different teacher education programmes beyond the EFL contexts.

Furthermore, the qualitative findings also justify a need for further research into how stages of *process writing*, and motivational strategies interact in different cultural or institutional contexts, as my present study focused only on the Hungarian EFL teacher education context. The teacher educators' reflections also highlighted an increasing tension

between AI-assisted writing and human-driven approach of *process writing*. Hence, further research is recommended to inquire how the application of *process writing* influences students' cognitive abilities, confidence, and academic integrity, compared to AI writing tools.

### Societal implications

The findings of this doctoral study bring significant societal implications, specifically in the context of EFL teacher education. Both the quantitative and qualitative observations suggest practical means of how to enhance students' writing performance in a more motivating manner, which leads to improved quality teaching among teacher educators, and pre-service teachers. Since the pre-service teachers may become English teachers at schools in Hungary later, equipping them with effective teaching writing strategies, focusing on how to motivate young learners in the area of L2 writing is crucial, provided that their influence on the learners' language development in the future depends on how they are being trained today. They will transfer those skills into their own classrooms, and teach their students, by assisting them to be successful in absorbing writing skills, and consequently, it may ultimately convey desirable educational outcomes to the society as a whole.

### Policy-making implications

The findings of the qualitative study with teacher educators highlight that policy-makers from the Hungarian teacher education context should prioritise the integration of practical, and strategy-based training courses in English writing instruction, focusing on the *process writing approach*. The findings suggest that they should implement policies, in terms of three aspects — *scaffolding, providing effective feedback, and motivating learners through the stages of process writing*, that encourage the professional development for EFL teacher educators, that are appropriate, collaborative, and aligned with what they actually need in classrooms. Importantly, institutional support is strongly encouraged through policies that promote resource allocation for teachers, time for peer collaboration, and recognition of innovative teaching writing practices. The qualitative findings also claim that even well-designed CPD programmes may have a limited impact on EFL teachers if there is no access from institutional backing, in light of the fact that coordinated institutional policy efforts, coupled with curriculum reform, teachers' professional

development, and institutional-level support play a crucial role in equipping them in order to enhance students' writing skills in a more motivating, and pedagogically sound manner. In turn, the teacher educators' skills can be effectively developed during the improvement of teacher education, and professional development in the Hungarian context investigated.

## 5.2 Limitations of the doctoral study

Although my research renders several benefits, and conveys positive implications to the Hungarian EFL teacher education context, there are certain limitations that should be acknowledged. The quantitative phase of the study exhibits some limitations regarding the generalisability of the findings owing to its small sample size, and the study's emphasis on ELTEd programmes in the Hungarian teacher training universities. In addition, the results may not fully reflect the motivational profiles of pre-service teachers in other educational contexts, or countries, as the survey participants were from Hungarian institutions, providing the fact that it is necessary to conduct further research with a broader and more diverse participants.

Moreover, the qualitative phase of the study also encompasses certain limitations. It may limit the transferability of the findings to other educational, or cultural contexts, due to the fact that my study was geographically and contextually restricted to teacher educators and pre-service teachers from Hungarian teacher training institutions. Despite purposive sampling enabling for deeper thematic examination, the sample size may not represent the full range of perspectives within the broader EFL teacher education community. Furthermore, the use of self-reported interview data may bring the potential bias regarding the qualitative participants' social desirability or selective memory. This may have influenced the participants' responses despite efforts to enhance the study's credibility and trustworthiness.

Despite the limitations above, it may not be denied that my doctoral study conveys several insights and opportunities for both Hungarian EFL teacher educators and pre-service teachers in order to improve their personal and professional development, with a special focus on the process writing approach, to achieve the desirable educational outcomes. Additionally, the findings of my doctoral study may inform practices in similar and broader educational contexts, contributing to skills development of teachers and students beyond the immediate scope of this dissertation.

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## Appendices

### Appendix A

#### Informed Consent and Description of Research (online study)

You are about to participate in a research coordinated by Prof Dr János Győri (Doctoral School of Education at Eötvös Loránd University in Budapest Hungary, [gyori.janos@ppk.elte.hu](mailto:gyori.janos@ppk.elte.hu)) and Dr Csaba Kálmán (Doctoral School of Linguistics at Eötvös Loránd University in Budapest Hungary, [kalman.csaba@btk.elte.hu](mailto:kalman.csaba@btk.elte.hu)). The research is carried out by highly qualified professionals and their assistants. The aim of this study is to find out EFL teachers/teacher educators' motivational strategies and students' motivational dispositions in English writing and the process writing approach in Hungary. The objectives of this research are targeted at gathering data on EFL students and EFL pre-service teachers, and their teachers (EFL teachers/teacher educators) and exploring how the teachers' motivational strategies and the students' motivational dispositions address and conceptualise effectiveness in English writing through the process writing approach.

Participation is utterly voluntary and anonymous. Performing the various tasks and filling out the questionnaires is harmless without any detrimental after-effects. It is possible to suspend participation so that it should not be tiresome. It is also possible to terminate participation at any time and to decline from answering questions without having to give reasons for this. Monetary compensation is due/not due for participation.

Questionnaires have to be filled out during the study to explore Hungarian EFL students' motivational dispositions in English writing which will last for about 15 – 20 minutes. Here is the Qualtrics online questionnaire link:

[https://elteppk.eu.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV\\_6PVkn1JkIOxAo8C](https://elteppk.eu.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_6PVkn1JkIOxAo8C). At the beginning of the online questionnaire, your willingness to participate in the questionnaire is asked. If you say “No”, the questionnaire will be ended there. You will be able to go on to the questions only if you answer “Yes”.

Semi-structured interview sessions regarding EFL teachers'/teacher educators' motivational strategies and students' motivational dispositions in English writing and the process writing approach will last for about 1 hour.

The results of this study will later be used in publications and will also be presented at scientific conferences. If requested, written, verbal or poster information will be provided on these events.

All information (including video and/or audio material, if it was part of the research) collected during this process will be handled strictly confidentially. Data obtained during the research is stored as a coded information in a secured virtual drive on a secure computer (an online questionnaire and voice recordings) is kept in a locked chest also in a coded format. The individual codes are provided by the assistant in charge, and these are accessible and known only to her/him. Data of the research are analyzed statistically during which no personal identification is possible. The document with the rules regulating personal data processing (General Data Protection Regulation, GDPR) is attached with its enclosures.

We would like to truly thank you for your willingness to participate in the online survey and interview.

Ei Phyo Maung (doctoral candidate, ELTE PPK), [maung.ei@ppk.elte.hu](mailto:maung.ei@ppk.elte.hu)

Prof Dr János Győri (Supervisor, ELTE PPK), [gyori.janos@ppk.elte.hu](mailto:gyori.janos@ppk.elte.hu)

Dr Csaba Kálmán (Co-supervisor, ELTE BTK), [kalman.csaba@btk.elte.hu](mailto:kalman.csaba@btk.elte.hu)

## Appendix B

### The final version of the questionnaire

Dear Prospective Teachers,

My name is Ei Phyoe Maung. I am a doctoral candidate in Teacher Education and Higher Education Studies (EDiTE Programme) of Eötvös Loránd University, Budapest, Hungary. I am asking you to help me with the pilot study of my research. Please answer the following questions related to **EFL Pre-service Teachers' Motivational Disposition in English Writing: The Hungarian Context**. Read the following items carefully and please **SELECT** your answer which shows your personal opinion in the questionnaire below. For example, if you enjoy the writing process very much, you should select 'strongly agree'. Please give your opinions and responses frankly and honestly because your honesty is very important for me to be successful in my research. As I value your privacy, your responses will be anonymous, and I will never show them to anyone. They will only be used for research purposes.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me via my email ([maung.ei@ppk.elte.hu](mailto:maung.ei@ppk.elte.hu)), or my supervisor, Prof Dr János Győri ([gyori.janos@ppk.elte.hu](mailto:gyori.janos@ppk.elte.hu)), or my co-supervisor, Assistant Prof Dr Csaba Kálmán ([kalman.csaba@btk.elte.hu](mailto:kalman.csaba@btk.elte.hu)).

Your participation is highly appreciated!

**ALL MY QUESTIONS ARE ABOUT ENGLISH WRITING (NOT YOUR MOTHER TONGUE OR ANY OTHER LANGUAGE).**

	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
1. It's important to me what my parents think of my writing skills.	1	2	3	4	5
2. I like expressing my ideas through writing.	1	2	3	4	5
3. I feel confident to write if the teacher gives me enough time to revise my first draft.	1	2	3	4	5
4. I am willing to to at learning to write well in English.	1	2	3	4	5
5. I always welcome competitive situations in writing activities.	1	2	3	4	5
6. I get motivated when I hear positive feedback from my teacher.	1	2	3	4	5
7. I feel satisfied when I can express my thoughts in the writing task.	1	2	3	4	5
8. It's important to me what my friends think of my writing skills.	1	2	3	4	5
9. Writing about a topic which is connected to my hobby inspires me.	1	2	3	4	5
10. It is very important for me to learn to write well in English.	1	2	3	4	5
11. If the ideas in a group writing task seem less attractive, I have an ability to modify our group's way of thinking.	1	2	3	4	5
12. I feel motivated in a competitive situation in the writing class.	1	2	3	4	5
13. I want to be a recognised writer.	1	2	3	4	5
14. I'm encouraged to improve in future writings when I hear a positive comment from my teacher.	1	2	3	4	5
15. I enjoy the writing process.	1	2	3	4	5
16. If my teacher gives me enough time to do a writing task, it makes me more active.	1	2	3	4	5
17. Writing is my favourite free time activity.	1	2	3	4	5
18. I enjoy writing assignments related to my family.	1	2	3	4	5
19. It's important for me to know what better writing skills my friends have than me.	1	2	3	4	5
20. Being able to write well can make me pass examinations.	1	2	3	4	5
21. I feel confident that I can cope with my writing in a challenging topic.	1	2	3	4	5
22. I'm motivated when my teacher assigns us group work to brainstorm before writing.	1	2	3	4	5
23. I feel stressed in a competitive situation in the writing class.	1	2	3	4	5
24. My teacher's recognition of my efforts encourages me to write better.	1	2	3	4	5
25. Improving my writing is very important to me.	1	2	3	4	5

26.	It's important for me to get enough time to brainstorm before writing.	1	2	3	4	5
27.	It discourages me when I have to write about a challenging topic.	1	2	3	4	5
28.	I have an ability to handle pressure well even when I'm assigned to write a challenging task.	1	2	3	4	5
29.	Sharing ideas and thoughts with my friends before writing a task encourages me to write better.	1	2	3	4	5
30.	I enjoy testing myself in competitive writing tasks.	1	2	3	4	5
31.	Writing very well makes me achieve better grades in every subject.	1	2	3	4	5
32.	I enjoy writing assignments related to my lessons.	1	2	3	4	5
33.	It's important for me to make a good impression on my classmates with my writing.	1	2	3	4	5
34.	I enjoy writing about a topic which is not too easy for me.	1	2	3	4	5
35.	I'm encouraged when my teacher assigns us pair work to brainstorm before writing.	1	2	3	4	5
36.	I enjoy writing assignments related to my school.	1	2	3	4	5
37.	It's important to me how my teacher evaluates my writing skills.	1	2	3	4	5
38.	If my teacher grades the writings, I am inspired to write better.	1	2	3	4	5
39.	I enjoy brainstorming before writing.	1	2	3	4	5
40.	Being able to write academically can help me get better opportunities to study abroad.	1	2	3	4	5
41.	I am often highly motivated when I write.	1	2	3	4	5
42.	It's sure that I can improve my friend's willingness to participate in a group writing task.	1	2	3	4	5
43.	I believe that I can be a better writer due to competitive situations.	1	2	3	4	5
44.	It's important to me to get my teacher's recognition of my writing performance.	1	2	3	4	5
45.	I am motivated to write if the writing task is very challenging.	1	2	3	4	5
46.	I get motivated when my teacher assigns us to brainstorm alone before writing.	1	2	3	4	5
47.	I like to get helpful feedback from my teacher on my writing.	1	2	3	4	5
48.	A topic related to my ambition makes me work harder.	1	2	3	4	5
49.	If I face some problems in a writing task, I will never give up.	1	2	3	4	5
50.	Being able to write very well is important to get achievements in other subjects.	1	2	3	4	5
51.	It'll help me in my career if I can write academically.	1	2	3	4	5
52.	I'm motivated when I revise my drafts before the actual writing.	1	2	3	4	5

53.	Competitive situations allow me to bring the best out of myself.	1	2	3	4	5
54.	When the topic is challenging, I feel uncomfortable to write.	1	2	3	4	5
55.	I am motivated to write when my teacher assigns us collaborative writing tasks.	1	2	3	4	5
56.	I feel confident if I use drafts before the actual writing.	1	2	3	4	5
57.	Learning to write well in English is one of the most important aspects in my life.	1	2	3	4	5
58.	I am more likely to succeed in my studies if I can write well.	1	2	3	4	5
59.	I enjoy writing through brainstorming.	1	2	3	4	5
60.	Being able to write academically will help me get a scholarship.	1	2	3	4	5
61.	I am motivated by writing a challenging topic.	1	2	3	4	5
62.	Being a better writer will help me become a skillful academic writer in the future.	1	2	3	4	5
63.	I enjoy competition as it allows me to discover my abilities.	1	2	3	4	5
64.	It'll be easier for me to write a research term paper if I can write very well when I become a senior student.	1	2	3	4	5
65.	I feel comfortable when the teacher gives us a few-minute break while writing.	1	2	3	4	5
66.	I am really doing my best to learn to write well in English.	1	2	3	4	5
67.	I am determined to push myself to learn to write well in English.	1	2	3	4	5

**68. Is there anything else you would like to mention in connection with what motivates you in English writing?**

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

**Please answer the following questions, too.**

69. Are you *male* or *female*?

.....

70. How old are you?

.....

71. Which university are you studying in?

.....

72. Is English your first or second foreign language?

.....

73. Have you every joined extra courses about English writing to improve your writing skills after your school time?

.....

.....

74. What do you usually do to improve your English writing?

.....

.....

.....

**Thank you very much for filling in the questionnaire!**

## Appendix C

### A short description of the process writing approach

This approach to teaching writing focuses mainly on the writer and the writing processes which stress on the creativity of the individual writer and the classroom practices to create students' good writing rather than their final products. This is a learner-centred approach in which the teacher's role is to help students write better by aiding them in the actual process of writing (Hyland, 2021; Maung et al., 2025; Tribble, 1996). Badger and White (2000) acknowledge that the process writing is associated with linguistic writing skills which means that planning, drafting, editing, revising, etc., rather than focusing on structure of the text and sentence patterns which means linguistic writing knowledge. One advantage of this writing approach is that students' thinking skills are mainly emphasised and as a result, students' creativity in texts may be anticipated (Hyland, 2021; Maung et al., 2025). Furthermore, Tribble (1996) and Hyland (2021) imply that the process writing is the most appropriate approach for beginner level writers as it is majorly concentrated on the process and stages of writing despite this approach is time-consuming for teacher and learners since the teacher needs to take time to become familiar with the writing stages to their students, and they need efforts to facilitate the class and give individual feedback. Nevertheless, it cannot be denied that this writing approach prioritises students' creativity and thinking skills by concentrating on the actual writing processes which may lead to their better writing performance. Due to these reasons, this writing approach has become one of the major scopes of the doctoral research, which follows Hyland's (2021) five stages of the process writing:

- (1) pre-writing,
- (2) drafting,
- (3) revising,
- (4) editing and
- (5) publishing.

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- Tribble, C. (1996). *Writing*. Oxford University Press.

## Appendix D

### The final version of the interview guide for pre-service teachers

I'd like to thank you for your willingness to participate in the interview. The purpose of my study is to explore what role motivation plays in English writing, which motivational strategies work well for teacher educators in teaching writing, and to discover your opinions on the use of the process writing approach during writing. There are no right or wrong answers. Only your opinion matters. Please answer the following questions honestly and frankly. Your participation is utterly voluntary and anonymous. All your answers will be used only for research and publication purposes, and the recording, the transcript and the data will not be shown to other participants, and if I quote some of your words in a publication, it will be done with a pseudonym. This interview is going to last approximately one hour.

All my questions are about English writing (not your mother tongue or any other language).

It is also possible to withdraw consent and terminate your participation at any time without any reason and without any consequences.

Are you okay with me recording (or not) our conversation today by my mobile phone?  
Yes/No

If yes: Thank you! Please let me know if at any point you want me to turn off the recorder or keep something you said off the record.

If no: Thank you for letting me know. I will only take notes of our conversation.

Before we begin the interview, do you have any questions? [Discuss questions]

If any questions (or other questions) arise at any point in this study, you can feel free to ask them at any time. I would be more than happy to answer your questions.

### **Biographical section:**

1. How old are you?
2. Which university are you studying in?
3. Is English your first or second foreign language?
4. How long have you been learning English here in your university?
5. Does your university provide English writing training courses? If yes, how and what kind?
6. Are you fond of writing English tasks? Why (not)? What do (not) you enjoy about them?
7. What do you think of your English writing skill?
8. What do you usually do to improve your English writing?

## I. main section

- Pre-service teachers' motivational disposition in English writing to use the process-writing approach
  1. What motivates you in English writing in general?
  2. How motivated are you to use the process writing approach in your English writing tasks? Why do you think so?
  3. Why do you (not) enjoy sharing your ideas and thoughts with your friends before writing a task?
  4. What kind of pre-writing activities do you think motivate you to write better?
  5. How do you feel if your teacher assigns you the pre-writing activities before writing?
  6. How does using drafts affect you while writing?
  7. Do you think taking time to edit and revise your draft is important in English writing? Why / Why not?
  8. What kind of brainstorming style do you enjoy? Alone or in pair work or in group work? If alone / in pair work / in group work / why?
  9. How do you feel if your pair or someone from your group refuses to brainstorm together before writing? In what way can you persuade them to cooperate with you?

## II. main section

- What are EFL teacher educators' motivational strategies required in strengthening pre-service teachers' motivational dispositions to improve their English writing performance through the process writing approach at Hungarian teacher training universities?
  1. How motivated are you to improve your English writing skills? Why do you think so?
  2. What kind of writing topics do you welcome from your teacher?
  3. What kind of topics do you find inspirational?
  4. Whose opinions matter in your English writing? Why?
  5. How does positive feedback from your teacher affect your English writing work? Can you mention what kind of feedback you like most?
  6. What role does time play in your English writing work?
  7. In what way does being able to write academically affect you now and later?
  8. How do you feel if you face competitive situations in your writing class?
  9. What are your coping strategies when you're assigned to write a challenging task?
  10. How does using drafts affect you in your texts before the actual writing?

11. How important is improving your writing for your future? Why is it (not) important for you?
12. Are you interested to express your own ideas through writing? Why / Why not?
13. Do you usually push yourself to learn to write well in English? Why / Why not?

## Appendix E

### The final version of the interview guide for teacher educators

I'd like to thank you for your willingness to participate in the interview. The purpose of my study is to explore what role motivation plays in English writing, which motivational strategies work well for EFL teachers in Hungarian universities in teaching writing, and to discover your opinions on the use of the process writing approach during writing. There are no right or wrong answers. Only your opinion matters. Please answer the following questions honestly and frankly. Your participation is utterly voluntary and anonymous. All your answers will be used only for research and publication purposes, and the recording, the transcript and the data will not be shown to other participants, and if I quote some of your words in a publication, it will be done with a pseudonym. This interview is going to last approximately one hour.

All my questions are about English writing (not your mother tongue or any other language).

It is also possible to withdraw consent and terminate your participation at any time without any reason and without any consequences.

Are you okay with me recording (or not) our conversation today by my mobile phone?  
Yes/No

If yes: Thank you! Please let me know if at any point you want me to turn off the recorder or keep something you said off the record.

If no: Thank you for letting me know. I will only take notes of our conversation.

Before we begin the interview, do you have any questions? [Discuss questions]

If any questions (or other questions) arise at any point in this study, you can feel free to ask them at any time. I would be more than happy to answer your questions.

### **Biographical section:**

1. How old are you?
2. Is English your first or second foreign language?
3. Which university are you working at now?
4. How long have you been teaching English here at your university?
5. What was your motivation to become an EFL teacher educator in your university?
6. How many years of teaching experience do you have?
7. Do you provide English writing training courses to students in your university? If yes, how in what form?

### I. main section

- Teacher educators' motivation to use the process-writing approach in their teaching

1. Tell me about your philosophy of teaching English writing.
2. What is your approach in teaching writing?
3. How motivated are you to use the process writing approach in teaching writing to the students in your writing class? Why do you think so?
4. What pre-writing activities would you consider while assigning a writing task to your students?
5. Do you let your students use drafts while writing? If yes, how? If no, why not?
6. How will you encourage your students to share ideas and thoughts among them before actual writing?
7. Do you think giving students enough time to edit and revise their drafts can lead them to produce a high-quality writing product? Why / Why not?

## II. main section

- What are EFL teacher educators' motivational strategies required in strengthening pre-service teachers' motivational dispositions to improve their English writing performance through the process writing approach at Hungarian teacher training universities?
  1. Do you think motivating students continuously is important in teaching English writing? Why / Why not?
  2. How do you motivate your students? Can you give me some motivational strategies that you think work well in teaching writing?
  3. How do you assess your students' writing performance? Do you think teachers' assessment is helpful in motivating students to improve their writing abilities? Why / Why not?
  4. What is your opinion about instrumental motivation? What do you feel are the best suggestions to strengthen your students' instrumental motivation?
  5. What are some strategies that you think motivate students' ideal selves?
  6. What kind of writing topics do you usually give to your students? Can you give me some examples?
  7. How challenging writing topics do your students enjoy? How do you know that?
  8. How important is it to express to your students your opinion about their writing performance?
  9. Can you suggest me some coping strategies that are helpful for your students if they face problems in their writing tasks?
  10. What kind of pre-writing activities motivate your students?
  11. How would you encourage your students to strengthen their intrinsic motivation? Why?
  12. Do you think that competitive situations motivate students in English writing? Why / Why not?

### III. main section

- How can these strategies be effectively developed during the improvement of teacher education and continuous professional development of EFL teacher educators at Hungarian teacher training universities?
  1. How does a teacher educator's teaching strategy affect their students?
  2. What do you feel are the biggest challenges that EFL teacher educators are facing today in teaching writing?
  3. Have you ever participated in any training that improved your motivational strategies in teaching writing? If yes, how? If not, why?
  4. Do you think attending these training sessions can improve your teaching writing strategies? Why / Why not?
  5. If you were a policy maker from the Ministry of Education, what activities would you include in the curriculum to improve teacher educators' motivational strategies in teaching English writing to their students?