

The Power of Passion and Perseverance: An Exploration of Turkish EFL Learners' L2 Grit

Gülcan YILMAZ

*Army Non-commissioned Officer Vocational School,
National Defense University, Balıkesir, Türkiye
ORCID: 0000-0001-6255-6475*

Tutku BAŞÖZ*

*Department of English Language Teaching,
Balıkesir University, Balıkesir, Türkiye
ORCID: 0000-0002-8212-9937*

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Although the number of studies on L2 grit has been increasing lately and prior research has emphasized the crucial role of grit in L2 achievement, L2 grit research in the Turkish EFL context is still in its infancy and it is remarkable that evidence on EFL learners' L2 grit levels remains scarce. Concerning this research gap, the current study aimed to investigate Turkish EFL learners' perceived levels of L2 grit. The variance in learners' L2 grit in terms of their grade level, the type of high school that they graduated from, and their self-perceived proficiency in English was also examined in the study. The present study, which employed a quantitative research design, was conducted with 500 EFL learners studying at a vocational school of a state university in Türkiye in the spring semester of the 2023-2024 academic year. The data were collected through a questionnaire including some demographic questions about the participants and the L2 grit scale and analyzed descriptively via IBM SPSS 21. The findings showed that EFL learners have a moderate level of grit for learning English. While grade level and the type of high school being graduated from were found to have no impact on EFL learners' grit for learning English, self-perceived proficiency in English was revealed to exert influence on their passion for and perseverance in attaining long-term proficiency in English. The results offer some practical implications that could be valuable for EFL instruction and developing learners' grit for learning English.

Introduction

Grit, which is a psychological construct introduced by Duckworth and her associates, is defined as the combination of passion and perseverance for long-term goals and has attracted interest in organizational, educational, and personal growth contexts (Duckworth et al., 2007). The concept of grit stems from the notion that sustained effort over an extended period is a key determinant of success. Originating from positive psychology, grit is part of a broader theoretical framework that highlights the development of character traits and qualities essential

* Correspondency: tutkubasoz@hotmail.com

for success and personal well-being (Duckworth & Gross, 2014). It contains two main components: perseverance of effort (PoE) and consistency of interest (CoI) (Duckworth et al., 2007). The former represents a person's ability to endure, put up significant endeavour to overcome obstacles, and remain dedicated to their objectives. The latter represents a person's capability to sustain a high degree of attention, passion, and interest in long-term goals over extended periods. This suggests a deep-seated passion and devotion that continue despite obstacles or diversions.

Initially established within the field of personality psychology (Duckworth et al., 2007), the concept of grit has recently been examined as a personality trait in the context of second language acquisition (SLA) and identified as a crucial psychological factor in predicting L2 achievement. It is defined as a specialized form of domain-specific grit which is closely associated with the academic perseverance of L2 learners (Sudina & Plonsky, 2021). To put it differently, it refers to a domain-specific personality trait described as a mixture of passion and perseverance towards acquiring an L2 (Teimouri et al., 2022). While general grit pertains to perseverance across various domains, L2 grit specifically addresses the challenges and unique experiences associated with second language learning, and this domain-specific nature makes L2 grit more relevant for predicting L2 achievement than domain-general perseverance does (Khajavy et al., 2021). L2 grit also comprises two primary components: perseverance of effort (PoE), which denotes the sustained and consistent effort a language learner exerts in studying a second language even when confronted with challenges and consistency of interest (CoI), which reflects learner's enduring engagement in language learning over time, notwithstanding potential alterations in circumstances or fluctuations in motivation (Sudina et al., 2021).

The investigation of the relationship between L2 grit and L2 achievement has gained prominence in SLA research. The effect of grit on learning behaviors and success among L2 learners was explored and existing research (e.g. Akyıldız, 2020; Botes et al., 2024, Ding et al., 2025; Elahi Shirvan & Alamer, 2022; Fathi & Hejazi, 2024; Luan et al., 2025; Sudina & Plonsky, 2021; Zhao & Wang, 2023) has consistently shown a strong correlation between L2 grit and L2 achievement. As Wei et al. (2020) mention, L2 learners who maintain a long-term interest in acquiring an L2 despite occasional setbacks tend to demonstrate greater advancement in linguistic proficiency since consistency of interest sustains learners' motivation even when confronted with challenges typical of L2 learning. The distinct relevance and predictive power of L2 grit in L2 learning is considered different from those of general grit (Teimouri et al., 2021). L2 grit which encompasses the passion and perseverance crucial to long-term success is considered to be a vital aspect of the process of acquiring an L2 (Teimouri et al., 2022). As Pawlak and associates (2022) state, grit plays a critical role in various aspects of language acquisition including motivational intensity and is effective in predicting long-term language achievement, particularly in challenging learning settings.

To date, several studies have attempted to scrutinize language learners' perceived levels of L2 grit. In a study (Yao et al., 2024), Chinese EFL learners were found to have a moderate level of grit for learning English. A similar finding was also reported by Alamer (2021), Dong (2024), Ebn-Abbasi et al. (2024), Lee (2022), and Wang & Ren (2024) who concluded that L2 learners have a moderate level of passion for and perseverance in attaining long-term proficiency in a second language. Conversely, other studies (e.g. Botes et al., 2024; Feng & Papi, 2020, Khajavy et al., 2021, Liu et al., 2022; Yang et al., 2024) have suggested that learners show a high level of grit for learning an L2. Moreover, Jalilzadeh and associates (2022) who carried out comparative research on EFL learners' grit in Iran, Türkiye, and Iraq, found significant differences in grit levels across the participants from these nations. Turkish EFL learners were



revealed to display lower levels of grit than Iranian learners and an important finding was that grit levels increase with learners' English proficiency levels irrespective of the learners' native language (Jalilzadeh et al., 2022). In a recent study (Olejarczuk, 2025), which was conducted in the Polish EFL context, learners were found to demonstrate a relatively low level of grit for learning English. In the Turkish EFL context, in a study (Akyıldız, 2020) which was conducted with 252 college learners, it was revealed that the students consider themselves gritty in studying English.

When the related literature is examined, it is seen that most research has focused on specific cultural contexts, such as Iranian or Chinese EFL learning settings, resulting in a deficiency in studies examining the functioning of L2 grit across a broader array of cultural and linguistic settings. Researchers (e.g. Wei et al., 2020) have recommended broadening the research to encompass a greater variety of multilingual and culturally diverse groups. Additionally, Teimouri and associates (2022) point out that most of the studies on grit, including those focusing on L2 grit, were carried out in Western contexts. Despite the growing agreement on the importance of L2 grit, empirical evidence on the impact of cultural variations on the development of grit in L2 learners from different cultural backgrounds remains limited.

It is a fact that the impact of L2 grit differs across cultural and educational settings and a restricted amount of research (e.g. Akyıldız, 2020; Kırmızı et al., 2023; Solhi et al., 2023; Taşpınar & Külekçi, 2018) has been carried out within the Turkish EFL setting. The investigations into L2 grit are relatively recent in Türkiye and that is the reason behind the fact that they are very intriguing in the EFL setting. As this construct is deeply influenced by the context, there is a great need to see its dynamics within the framework of EFL in Türkiye and to contribute to the underexplored areas in the literature. A deeper understanding of its manifestation in Türkiye can offer both theoretical insights and pedagogical guidance. Uncovering the EFL learners' L2 grit levels is also essential not only for language-teaching contexts and EFL teachers' practices but also for better theoretical understanding of the interplay of positive psychology constructs.

The present study is significant in that it addresses a notable gap in the SLA literature by exploring L2 grit among Turkish EFL learners, a context that has received limited empirical attention. While L2 grit has been widely studied in various educational settings, there is a lack of research specifically examining this construct within the Turkish EFL context. This study therefore set out to probe EFL learners' perceived levels of L2 grit. It also seeks to explore the variance in their L2 grit regarding grade level, the type of high school being graduated from, and self-perceived English proficiency. By examining these variables, it is expected that the study will provide a culturally grounded understanding of how passion for and perseverance in language learning shape EFL outcomes within the Turkish EFL setting. The current research not only contributes to the existing literature but also offers valuable insights for enhancing grit, language teaching practices, and informing educational policies in the Turkish EFL context. It attempts to obtain data which will help to address the research questions below:

- (1) What are EFL learners' perceived levels of their L2 grit?
- (2) Does grade level significantly affect EFL learners' L2 grit?
- (3) Is there any significant difference in EFL learners' L2 grit with regard to the type of high school being graduated from?
- (4) Is there any significant difference in EFL learners' L2 grit in terms of their self-perceived proficiency in English?

Method

Setting and participants

In this quantitative study, convenience sampling method was used to select the sample from which the data were collected (Wallen & Fraenkel, 2013). 500 EFL students enrolled in a vocational school of a state university in Türkiye in the spring semester of the 2023-2024 academic year participated in the study. English is a compulsory course in all departments, and they receive four hours of English classes per week. All the participants were male, with ages varying between 18 and 22 ($M=20.04$, $SD=2.54$).

Data collection instruments

In this study, a questionnaire was used to gather data on the participants' perceived levels of L2 grit. The first part of the questionnaire included a set of questions concerning the participants' age, grade level, the type of high school that they graduated from, and their self-perceived English proficiency level. In the second part of the instrument, the L2 Grit scale developed by Teimouri and associates (2022) was employed to determine the learners' grit levels in learning a foreign language. The participants were required to demonstrate how gritty they were to learn English. As seen in Table 1, all the items were measured using a 5-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 'not like me at all' to 5 'very much like me'.

Table 1. A summary of the questionnaire items

Scale	Items	Number of items	Type of scale
			5-Point Likert Scale
L2 Grit Scale	1-9	9	1=Not like me at all, 2=Not much like me, 3=Somewhat like me, 4=Mostly like me, 5=Very much like me

It is a language-domain-specific grit scale that specifically measures students' grit in L2 learning environments. The scale consists of two subcomponents: consistency of interest (CoI) and perseverance of effort (PoE). CoI measures changes of students' interest during L2 learning and PoE assesses how persistent learners are in achieving their L2 goals (Teimouri et al., 2022). In the scale, perseverance of effort is measured by the items numbered 1,3,5,6,9 and consistency of interest is measured by the items 2,4,7,8. A higher score from a participant for a situation listed in the items indicates that the participant is acting grittier in that particular situation. That is, higher scores correspond to higher levels of grit. The reference study indicated a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of $\alpha = .80$ for the scale (Teimouri et al., 2022).

To reduce any possible issues arising from the participants' limited English proficiency, such as misunderstandings or a total lack of comprehension, and to aid in their understanding of items in the questionnaire, the scale was translated into Turkish using translation and back-translation methods (Brislin, 1970). Initially, three different professionals specialized in



English performed the translation of the scale into Turkish. A Turkish language academic expert assessed the translations given by the professionals to ensure that they sounded natural in Turkish. The subsequent step involved a back-translation carried out by another set of three translators who possessed equivalent qualifications. This back translation was performed from the Turkish version without consulting the original English version in its initial form (Geisinger, 1994). Afterwards, the two translations were evaluated and consolidated into a single version by two academic specialists to ensure that they were equivalent. Next, three expert bilingual raters with at least a Master's degree in English were asked to evaluate the synonymy between the Turkish and English versions using a 10-point scale. The analysis of the raters' responses produced an average score of 9.7/10, indicating a high level of equivalence. In the final stage, another group of three expert raters with similar qualifications assessed the correspondence between the original English version and the back-translated English version. The results of their evaluation revealed an average score of 9.3/10, suggesting an acceptable level of meaning correspondence between the texts.

Consequently, it can reasonably be concluded that the Turkish version accurately represented the content included in the items of the original L2 grit scale. In this study, the internal consistency of the Turkish version of the scale was found to be $\alpha = .78$, which is considered an acceptable reliability coefficient (Büyüköztürk, 2009). Before conducting the main study, a group of volunteers participated in the pilot testing of the questionnaire. The purpose was to identify any potential issues with the scale intended for use in the main research. No problems were noted or reported during the administration of the questionnaire, which supports the face validity and clarity of the scale.

Data collection

Prior to initiating the data gathering procedure, the researcher sought permission from Balıkesir University Social Sciences and Humanities Research Ethics Committee. After the investigation, the commission confirmed that the study adhered to the ethical principles of Balıkesir University, and it was approved to be carried out as planned. Furthermore, approval for data collection was gained from the vocational school where the study was conducted.

The research took place between the 10th and 14th weeks of the spring term of 2023-2024 academic year. The data were gathered during the learners' usual class hours. Considering the ethical issues, the participants were asked to give their consent to participate in the study after being provided with an explanation of its main objectives. The participants were assured that their answers would be kept anonymous and confidential. After clarifying the participants' rights with respect to the study, the researcher provided them with an informed consent form. The learners who agreed to participate in the study received the questionnaire after signing the consent form. For each class, the survey instrument administration took about ten minutes. Throughout the process, the researchers were accessible in the classroom to clarify any point that the participants might find incomprehensible.

Data analysis

To find out whether parametric or non-parametric tests would be more suitable to analyze the available data, a test of normality was carried out using the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test and Shapiro-Wilk test. The findings indicated that the data were not normally distributed. As illustrated in Table 2, both the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test and Shapiro-Wilk test showed statistically significant values ($p < .05$), suggesting a non-normal distribution.

Table 2. Tests of normality

	Kolmogorov-Smirnov ^a			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
L2 Grit	.074	500	.000	.982	500	.000

a. Lilliefors Significance Correction

However, according to Pallant (2020), this is common in large samples, and the correct structure of distribution is visible in histograms or normal probability plots. Therefore, the Q-Q plot of the variable was examined. It was observed that it indicated a normal distribution with fairly straight lines. The following figure shows the finding for the variable.

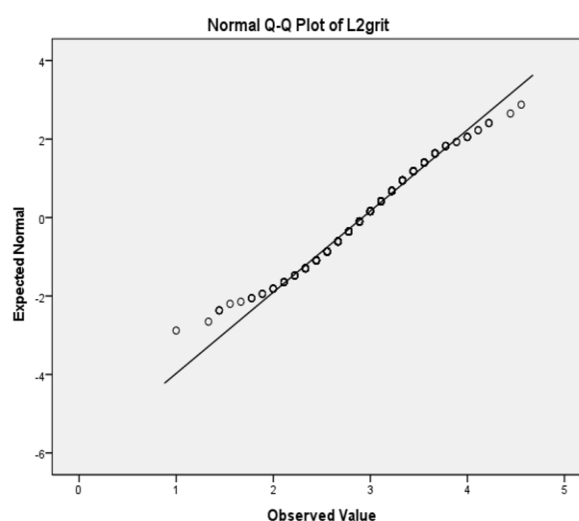


Figure 1. Normal probability plot of L2 grit

Although the numerical findings of the Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk tests demonstrated a non-normal distribution, when the graphical representations of the normal probability plot were examined, the data of the L2 Grit appeared to be normally distributed, as seen by the fairly straight line of scores in Figure 1. Moreover, the skewness and kurtosis values for the variable were between $[-2, +2]$ (skewness = $-.221$, kurtosis = 1.226). Thus, based on the plots and the values of skewness and kurtosis, the researchers decided to employ parametric tests instead of non-parametric alternatives. The data gathered from the questionnaires were analyzed descriptively through the IBM Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) 21. Before the analysis, all the negatively keyed items in the L2 grit scale were reverse-coded. To find an answer to the first research question, descriptive statistics such as frequencies, percentages, mean scores, and standard deviations were calculated. The next three questions concerning the impact of grade level, and type of high school being graduated from, and self-perceived English proficiency level on learners' L2 grit were analyzed through independent samples t-test and one-way analyses of variance, respectively.

Results and Discussion

Research question 1: What are EFL learners' perceived levels of their L2 grit?

The first research question of the study seeks to understand the learners' perceived levels of their L2 grit. For this purpose, descriptive statistics were employed. In accordance with Wimolmas (2013), the mean scores were classified into three groups using the formula 'maximum value of mean score (5.00) – minimum value of mean score (1.00)/number of categories (3). Hence, the mean scores which were between 1.00-2.33 were categorized as low L2 grit, those which were between 2.34-3.67 were recognized as moderate L2 grit and those between 3.68-5.00 were accepted to be high L2 grit. Table 3 displays the mean scores and standard deviations of each item in the L2 grit scale.

Table 3. Descriptive statistics: Mean scores and standard deviations of L2 grit scale items

Item Description	Mean*	SD
1. I am a diligent language learner.	3.24	1.13
2. My interests in learning English change from year to year.	3.26	1.21
3. When it comes to English, I am a hard-working learner.	3.05	1.15
4. I think I have lost my interest in learning English.	2.29	1.23
5. Now that I have decided to learn English, nothing can prevent me from reaching this goal.	3.51	1.18
6. I will not allow anything to stop me from my progress in learning English.	3.14	1.17
7. I am not as interested in learning English as I used to be.	2.64	1.38
8. I was obsessed with learning English in the past but have lost interest recently.	2.54	1.36
9. I put much time and effort into improving my English language weaknesses.	2.58	1.15
Total L2 Grit Score	2.92	.48

* 1.00- 2.33: Low; 2.34-3.67: Moderate; 3.68-5.00: High.

As presented in the table above, the participants' overall L2 grit mean score was determined to be moderate ($M=2.92$, $SD=.48$). All items, except for item four, indicated a moderate mean value. Item five had the highest L2 grit mean score ($M = 3.51$, $SD = 1.18$), showing that the participants were somewhat gritty to reach their goal once they had decided to learn English. Item two had the second highest mean value ($M = 3.26$, $SD = 1.21$), which indicated that the learners' interests in EFL learning were prone to change from year to year. The mean value of item one was also remarkable ($M = 3.24$, $SD = 1.13$), presenting the participants to some extent as diligent L2 learners. As for the mean value of item six ($M = 3.14$, $SD = 1.17$), it suggested that the EFL learners exhibited a medium level of passion and perseverance when it came to

making progress in learning English. As can be understood from the mean value ($M = 3.05$, $SD = 1.15$) of item three, the participants are somewhat hard-working EFL learners. As the mean value of item seven indicated ($M = 2.64$, $SD = 1.38$), the participants stated that they had not lost their interest in learning English. The mean score for item nine ($M = 2.58$, $SD = 1.15$) revealed that they were not very gritty in putting time and effort into improving their weaknesses in English. Considering the mean score of item eight ($M = 2.54$, $SD = 1.36$), it can be stated that the participants are still moderately obsessed with learning English. Item four which has the lowest mean score ($M = 2.29$, $SD = 1.23$) also showed that EFL learners had not lost their interest in learning English.

As aforementioned, the participants' overall L2 grit mean score was revealed to be moderate. This finding is consistent with that of Yao et al. (2024) who also found that learners possess a moderate degree of L2 grit. A similar finding was also reported by Dong (2024) who conducted a study with 205 students taking general English classes in a university setting. This result is further consistent with those reported by Alamer (2021), Ebn-Abbasi et al. (2024), Lee (2022), and Wang & Ren (2024) who reached the conclusion that learners have a moderate level of passion and perseverance in achieving long-term proficiency in an L2. However, the result of the present study does not support some findings from prior research that reported high mean scores. Liu et al. (2022), for instance, obtained a rather high mean score in grit among 1319 high school students. A possible explanation for this high L2 grit score might be the different educational level of the participants and the sample size.

Further contradictory findings that show high grit scores are those of Botes et al. (2024), Feng and Papi (2020), Khajavy et al. (2021), and Yang et al. (2024). Several factors may explain these differences. Firstly, the participants consisted only of male students in the current study whereas studies with high L2 grit mean scores included both male and female participants. Secondly, this inconsistency may be due to the fact that previous studies were conducted in various countries and the participants in each study had a different first language. Lastly, the discrepancy between the findings of this study and those of the earlier research with high mean scores may be attributed to differences in learners' motivation for L2 learning. Considering that establishing a specific objective can enhance L2 grit, it is remarkable that the participants of this study are EFL learners, and they do not pursue English language learning for professional purposes in contrast to the participants in earlier studies (Teimouri et al., 2022).

Research question 2: Does grade level significantly affect EFL learners' L2 grit?

An independent sample t-test was employed to find out if the grade level of the participants significantly affects their L2 grit. Both groups (first grade learners and second grade learners) equally consisted of 250 participants. The findings of the independent sample t-test are presented on the table below.

Table 4. The effect of grade level on EFL learners' L2 grit

	Grade	N	Mean	SD	MD	t	df	Sig.
L2 Grit	1	250	2.91	.48				
	2	250	2.92	.48	0.0102	.236	498	.813

As seen in the table, the findings revealed no statistically significant difference between first graders ($M = 2.91$, $SD = .48$) and second graders [$M = 2.92$, $SD = .48$; $t(498) = .236$, $p = .813$] in terms of their L2 grit. Given the very small effect size ($\eta^2 = .0001$), it can be suggested that grade had no significant effect upon the students' perceived levels of L2 grit.

These findings are consistent with those of Zawodniak et al. (2021), who also pointed out that the differences in the L2 grit mean scores of first and second graders were small and not statistically significant. They stated that these results were not surprising since the students were English majors who had consciously chosen to master the language for future professional purposes. Furthermore, to remain in the program, the participants must exhibit superior proficiency in all language skills and subsystems, regularly assessed through intensive course components and challenging end-of-year exams.

While similar results were obtained, the sample group in the current research differed from the sample group of Zawodniak et al. (2021) in that the participants were English majors and had a professional purpose for the future. However, both sample groups were comparable in terms of the academic performance required in their challenging end-of-year exams, taking into account that the participants in this study were required by school regulations to retake all the courses of that semester if they failed even a single course, which may explain why their grit for second language learning remained consistent throughout the two academic years.

Research question 3: Is there any significant difference in EFL learners' L2 grit with regard to the type of high school being graduated from?

The current study also attempted to investigate if there was any significant difference in the students' L2 grit in terms of the type of high school that they graduated from. In this respect, the mean scores of five high school types were compared using one-way analysis of variance. Descriptive statistics for the five groups can be seen in Table 5.

Table 5. The results of the descriptive statistics (ANOVA)

Type of high school	N	Mean	SD
Anatolian High School	379	2.91	.48
Vocational & Technical Anatolian High	47	2.95	.40
High School of Science	18	3.03	.52
High School of Social Sciences	12	2.75	.65
Other	44	2.92	.45
Total	500	2.92	.48

As illustrated in the table, 18 graduates of high school of science had the highest levels of grit with a mean value of 3.03 ($SD = .52$), while 12 graduates of high school of social sciences had the lowest mean score ($M = 2.75$, $SD = .65$). The mean score for 47 vocational and technical high school graduates' grit levels was 2.95 ($SD = .40$) while the one for 379 Anatolian high

school graduates' grit levels was 2.91 (SD = .48). Finally, the mean value for the grit levels of the students who graduated from schools other than these four schools was 2.92 (SD = .45).

Table 6. L2 grit differences with regard to the type of high school being graduated from

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.*
Between Groups	.598	4	.150	.639	.635
Within Groups	115.946	495	.234		
Total	116.544	499			

* $p < .05$

The results revealed that all high school types, despite having different means, ultimately represented a moderate mean value. The findings of the one-way ANOVA displayed no significant difference at the $p < .05$ level in learners' L2 grit level for the five high school groups [$F(4, 495) = .63, p = .635$]. Thus, it can be concluded that there was no difference in the learners' L2 grit levels concerning the type of high school that they graduated from.

It seems possible that these results are due to the fact that even though the number of English lesson hours varies across the types of high schools from which the participants graduated, the English curriculum is similar in all types of high schools since English is a compulsory course. Thus, this may have resulted in the participants developing similar levels of L2 grit. Another possible explanation for this could be that at the vocational school of the university where the current study was carried out, irrespective of their prior proficiency in English, each student was provided with the opportunity to start from the beginner level and address the deficiencies that they could not overcome in high school. This opportunity may have reduced the influence of the participants' high school type on their grit to learn English, potentially enabling them to attain similar levels of L2 grit.

This result aligns with that of previous research conducted by Ebn-Abbasi et al. (2022) who compared L2 grit levels among Iranian EFL learners in public high schools and private high schools. The results revealed no significant difference in L2 grit between the two groups, suggesting that factors beyond the type of institution, such as L2 motivation and other individual differences, play a more substantial role in the development of L2 grit. Likewise, the current finding is consistent with the study of Toar et al. (2024) in which the relationship between attitudes and grit levels among Indonesian senior high school students in EFL learning was examined. The study indicated that there was no significant variation in grit levels based on the type of high school attended. This further supports the notion that while educational environments and institutional factors can shape achievement to some extent, L2 grit appears to reflect more enduring personal characteristics.

Research question 4: Is there any significant difference in EFL learners' L2 grit in terms of their self-perceived proficiency in English?

The last research question aimed to explore whether there is any significant difference in EFL learners' L2 grit in accordance with their self-perceived English proficiency level. In this regard, the mean scores of five self-perceived proficiency levels were compared via one-way analysis of variance. Descriptive statistics for the five groups are presented in table 7.



Table 7. L2 grit differences in terms of self-perceived proficiency in English

Self-perceived proficiency in English	N	Mean	SD
Very poor	29	2.54	.56
Poor	142	2.77	.46
Moderate	225	2.97	.44
Good	79	3.03	.42
Very good	25	3.29	.54
Total	500	2.92	.48

As presented in the table above, the participants from all proficiency levels displayed a moderate level of L2 grit. 25 participants rated their English proficiency as very good and this group had the highest L2 grit mean score ($M = 3.29$, $SD = .54$). 29 of the participants rated themselves as very poor in English proficiency. The mean value of their L2 grit level was 2.54 ($SD = .56$), which was the lowest one among the five groups. 79 of the participants rated their proficiency in English as good with a mean score of 3.03 ($SD = .42$) while 225 who rated themselves as moderate in English proficiency had a mean score of 2.97 ($SD = .44$). Of the participants, 142 thought that they had a poor English proficiency, and they had a mean score of 2.77 ($SD = .46$). Therefore, considering the mean values of the participants' L2 grit levels and their self-perceived proficiency levels, a significant difference can be assumed in their L2 grit in terms of their self-perceived proficiency in English.

Table 8. Analysis of variance: L2 grit differences in terms of self-rated proficiency levels

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.*
Between Groups	12.428	4	3.107	14.772	.000
Within Groups	104.116	495	.210		
Total	116.544	499			

As seen in Table 8, the findings of the one-way analysis of variance also suggested that there was a statistically significant difference at the $p < .05$ level in L2 grit scores for the five self-rated proficiency groups [$F(4, 495) = 14.77$, $p = .00$]. The effect size, computed using eta squared was .10, implying that the real difference in mean scores between the groups was moderate (Cohen, 1988).

This result reflects that of the study carried out by Teimouri and associates (2022) who discovered that the students with greater grit perceive themselves as more proficient in English, reflecting the confidence fostered by their perseverance. This finding also seems to accord with that of Badiei et al. (2023) who showed that L2 grit and perceived English proficiency are moderately connected. This highlights that students' perseverance in and passion for L2 learning correspond with their confidence in L2 proficiency. A possible explanation for these similar findings might be that EFL students with high L2 grit levels welcome challenges and practise more. Thus, this enhances their language abilities and self-efficacy, which in turn, affects their self-rated L2 proficiency. It may be that gritty learners are more inclined to persist in language challenges and sustain their efforts, resulting in improved language skills and

higher perceived proficiency in English.

Although the result of the fourth research question is broadly consistent with earlier research, it differs from that of Akyıldız (2020) who found that L2 grit score shows no significant difference across proficiency levels. This inconsistency may be attributed to variations in contextual factors that influence L2 grit and perceived proficiency in English. This discrepancy may also be explained by the fact that grit is not a stable trait and varies depending on external factors. The participants of the current research was situated in supportive educational settings including English club activities, book reading activities, and self-study activities, which may have fostered their grit and differentiated it across self-perceived proficiency levels, whereas the participants of the study conducted by Akyıldız (2020) may have placed in environments in which factors such as teaching quality and resources had a greater impact than individual grit, thus reducing the observable effect of L2 grit.

Conclusions, limitations, and future directions

The findings of the current study provide practical insights that may benefit EFL instruction and support the development of learners' passion for and perseverance in mastering English. First, it was revealed that EFL students exhibited a medium level of L2 grit which highlights a need for reinforcement in this area. This implies that language teachers play a key role in enhancing learners' passion for and perseverance in learning English. Classroom practices that promote goal-setting, emphasize effort over outcome, and encourage learners to reflect on their progress can contribute to building grit (Duckworth & Gross, 2014). For example, teachers may incorporate long-term project work or foster reflective practices such as documenting personal progress in learning English, engaging in self-assessment activities, and participating in peer feedback sessions and facilitate learners' internalization of grit (Duckworth, 2016). Establishing realistic goals by segmenting English learning into manageable milestones can also maintain long-term engagement. Moreover, aligning tasks with learners' interests can reduce disengagement, even for those with lower grit levels (Oxford, 2016).

The current study has also clearly indicated no significant difference in EFL learners' L2 grit across grade levels, which suggests that grit is not influenced by study year in EFL contexts and highlights the importance of early grit-oriented interventions. Thus, educators should foster learners' persistence from the outset and provide consistent motivational support across grades to sustain their L2 grit (Wolters & Hussain, 2015). Teachers at preparatory or lower-year levels, therefore, have a unique opportunity to promote learners' L2 grit and L2 motivation from the outset. Moreover, institutional leaders and policymakers should prioritize the inclusion of grit-oriented pedagogies in early stages of language instruction. National education frameworks could provide guidelines for teacher preparation programs to include training on how to design classroom environments that encourage grit, particularly in younger or lower-level university learners (Zhao, 2022).

Another key outcome of this study that might offer inspirational implications in the realm of foreign language education is the significant relationship between learners' L2 grit and their self-perceived proficiency in English. It may be suggested that students' confidence in their English capabilities enhances their passion and perseverance for learning English. In this regard, EFL educators could enhance learners' confidence through formative assessment, constructive feedback, and self-assessment opportunities (Zimmerman, 2002). Besides, national policies promoting learner autonomy and self-efficacy in language education would



therefore be well-supported by initiatives that also recognize the role of grit in long-term academic achievement (Wang, 2021).

An additional practical implication is that educators can cultivate grit in L2 learners by enhancing their motivation to study English. They can motivate student success by demonstrating examples of gritty professionals or by sharing their personal language learning experiences (Solhi et al., 2023). Besides, EFL programs should incorporate engaging activities within digital learning settings to support perseverance and ongoing interest in L2 learning (Demir, 2024). EFL teachers and instructors can promote L2 grit by establishing achievable goals for their students, encouraging regular practice, and offering chances for self-reflection.

All in all, this study reinforces the notion that maintaining consistent effort is essential for achieving long-term language learning goals (Alamer, 2021). Educators should implement strategies that foster both passion for and perseverance in L2 learning, emphasize the importance of sustained interest during the demanding process of L2 learning, and encourage EFL learners to regard challenges as a natural part of their journey towards L2 proficiency. Thus, it is crucial for them to encourage students to see obstacles as opportunities for growth and persist despite difficulties (Liu et al., 2022). Undoubtedly, L2 grit plays a key role in determining EFL learners' success and ability to meet the challenges of today's world. EFL instructors must also develop a deeper understanding of this non-cognitive trait and design language learning environments that promote the development of this affective learner variable which is grounded in positive psychology.

In the present study, the generalizability of the results is subject to certain limitations. For instance, as the participants of the study are composed of only male students, the findings may not be generalizable to groups consisting of both genders and exclusively female participants. This quantitative study, in which the data were obtained only through a questionnaire, is also restricted by the absence of triangulation of data. Additional qualitative data such as interviews and observations could offer deeper insights into the underlying reasons for the participants' responses. Besides, the scope of this study was limited in terms of including only tertiary level learners. Consequently, the findings of the study may not be applicable to other educational levels.

Several recommendations can be made to guide future research. Future studies might explore additional factors affecting EFL learners' perceived levels of L2 grit in more diverse educational contexts. A greater focus on scrutinizing the longitudinal development of L2 grit over time could produce interesting findings that better account for its stability and changes throughout L2 learning experiences. What is now needed is a study which employs qualitative methods such as interviews and learner narratives to reveal the underlying motivations and challenges with passion for and perseverance in EFL learning. Besides, further research investigating the role of external factors such as instructional methods, teacher support, and peer influence could be conducted to offer a more comprehensive picture of what fosters and hinders EFL learners' L2 grit.

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