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Unraveling the Interplay of Grit, Motivation, and Achievement among EFL Learners

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ABSTRACT

The present study aimed to explore the relationships among EFL learners' L2 grit, L2 motivation, and L2 achievement. The study also investigated the role of L2 motivation and L2 achievement in predicting L2 grit. In this quantitative study, which was conducted with 500 Turkish EFL learners, the data on L2 grit and L2 motivation were collected through a questionnaire, whereas the data on L2 achievement were obtained from the composite scores of the term. The data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, Pearson product-moment correlation, and simple standard regression analyses. The results showed a positive and statistically significant correlation between L2 grit, L2 motivation, and L2 achievement. Notably, the largest statistically significant correlation emerged between L2 grit and L2 achievement, whereas the smallest one was between L2 motivation and L2 achievement. Besides, both L2 achievement and L2 motivation contributed to the prediction of EFL learners' grit, with L2 achievement demonstrating greater predictive power. The findings suggest practical implications for EFL instruction and for promoting learners' grit.

Keywords: L2 grit; L2 motivation; L2 achievement; EFL learners; individual difference variables

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Introduction

A new trend in educational psychology, termed positive psychology (PP), has paved its way in Second Language Acquisition (SLA) and has recently drawn the attention of many researchers (Albert et al., 2024; Derakhshan et al., 2024). The rise of PP within SLA has generated interest in various non-cognitive factors in research concerning second language (L2) learning (Alamer, 2021; MacIntyre & Mercer, 2014; Wang et al., 2021) and teaching (Oladrostan et al., 2024; Sadeghi & Pourbahram, 2024). Regarded as a key component of positive psychology (Seligman, 2011), grit has been considered to be an individual difference (ID) variable which is described by Duckworth et al. (2007) as “perseverance and passion for long-term goals” (p.1087). It has received growing interest from scholars following its introduction by Duckworth et al. (2007). They stated that the construct encompasses persistently tackling difficulties, sustaining endeavor and passion over extended periods notwithstanding setbacks, adversity, and periods of stagnation in progress. Conceptualized as a higher-level construct, grit consists of two inherent components, namely perseverance of effort (PoE) and consistency of interest (CoI). It represents a blend of commitment and resilience crucial for accomplishing long-term objectives despite obstacles or failures.

Originally introduced within the discipline of personality psychology (Duckworth et al., 2007), the concept of grit has been studied currently as a personality construct from the perspective of SLA. It has been investigated in L2 learning and teaching and proposed as a significant psychological factor for predicting L2 success. Sudina and Plonsky (2021) defined language-specific grit as a specialized form of domain-specific grit which is linked to the academic perseverance of second language learners. This construct has been examined within the realm of L2 learning to explore its effect on learning behaviors and success among L2 learners, and it has been found to be strongly linked to achievement in EFL (Akyıldız, 2020; Botes et al., 2024, Elahi Shirvan & Alamer, 2022; Fathi & Hejazi, 2024; Sudina & Plonsky, 2021; Zhao & Wang, 2023).

Previous investigations in social psychology have acknowledged grit to be a key predictor of achievement within diverse groups in both academic and non-academic domains. Likewise, educational psychologists have displayed significant interest in the construct of grit and its impact on students' academic success. Research (e.g., Strayhorn, 2014) has consistently shown that learners with higher levels of grit typically perform better than their counterparts in achievement tests. Taking into account the inherent challenges of SLA and the key role of ongoing determination in acquiring an L2, the concept of grit and its connection with L2 proficiency have attained considerable relevance in SLA, and researchers (e.g. Khajavy et al., 2021; Teimouri et al., 2022) have recently examined this construct from the perspective of L2 learner psychology.

L2 motivation is defined as the internal and external forces that initiate, sustain, and direct learners' efforts towards acquiring a second language and it is widely acknowledged as a key predictor of L2 learning achievement (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2009). Foundational theories, such as Gardner's socio-educational model (1985), highlight the roles of integrative and instrumental motivation, whereas self-determination theory (Deci & Ryan, 2013) emphasizes autonomy, competence, and relatedness as essential psychological needs promoting intrinsic motivation. Dörnyei's contributions which consist of the three-level framework (Dörnyei, 1994), the Process Model of L2 Motivation (Dörnyei & Otto, 1998), and the L2 Motivational Self System (Dörnyei, 2009) conceptualize motivation as dynamic, evolving across time and affected by individual self-concept, learning contexts, and social expectations. This dynamic perspective is further supported by Kruk (2016), who indicates that L2 motivation fluctuates not only within a single class session but also across successive lessons. More recent perspectives, such as Dynamic Systems Theory (Liu, 2024) and Directed Motivational Currents (Muir & Dörnyei, 2013), emphasize the nonlinear, fluid nature of motivation and powerful role of vision-driven, sustained motivational surges. All in all, these theoretical developments offer a comprehensive understanding of L2 motivation, indicating how cognitive, emotional, and

contextual factors dynamically interplay to influence learners' engagement and achievement in L2 learning.

L2 achievement represents the measurable outcomes of L2 learning, typically assessed through standardized tests, course grades, proficiency benchmarks, or performance-based assessments (Brown, 2004). It refers to the extent to which learners can effectively use the target language across various skills such as speaking, listening, reading, and writing (Bachman & Palmer, 1996). Research has shown that L2 achievement is affected by a complex interplay of cognitive, affective, and contextual factors, including language aptitude (Skehan, 1998), motivation (Gardner, 1985), self-efficacy (Kitikanan & Sasimonton, 2017), learning environments (Dörnyei, 2009), self-concept (Erten, & Burden, 2014), and grit (Teimouri et al., 2022).

Numerous studies have emphasized the crucial role of L2 grit in learning English as a second language and the number of studies (e.g. Alamer, 2021; Teimouri et al., 2022) on the role of grit in L2 achievement has been increasing lately. The relationship between L2 grit and L2 motivation has also been explored in some studies (Feng & Papi, 2020; Kırmızı et al., 2023; Paradowski & Jelińska, 2024; Sun et al., 2024; Teimouri et al., 2022; Wu, 2024). Nevertheless, it is remarkable that existing research has often examined these variables separately or in pairs and there is little available literature (Chen et al., 2021; Pawlak et al., 2024; Teimouri et al., 2022) on the interrelationships between L2 grit, L2 motivation, and L2 achievement.

Despite the studies carried out in numerous L2 learning settings, L2 grit research in the Turkish EFL context is still in its infancy. Some researchers (Akyıldız, 2020; Jalilzadeh et al., 2022; Taşpınar & Külekçi, 2018) have shown an increased interest in exploring the relationship between L2 grit and L2 achievement whereas others (Demir, 2024; Kırmızı et al., 2023; Solhi et al., 2023) have examined the interplay between L2 grit and L2 motivation. However, no single study exists which has investigated all three variables - L2 grit, L2 motivation, and L2 achievement - simultaneously within the Turkish EFL context. This study therefore set out to probe the relationships between Turkish EFL learners' L2 grit, L2 motivation, and L2 achievement. Understanding these relationships is crucial for gaining insights into non-cognitive attributes in L2 learning and for developing effective language learning strategies. Determining the associations between EFL learners' grit, motivation, and achievement is essential for language-teaching contexts, for EFL teachers' practices, and for better theoretical evaluation of the interplay of positive psychology constructs.

Literature Review

L2 Grit

Grit is a psychological construct introduced by Duckworth et al. (2007) and it is described as the amalgamation of passion and perseverance for long-term objectives, encouraging individuals to remain attached to their commitments (Duckworth, 2016). The concept of grit, which emerged in psychology and is based on the belief that constant effort over a long period of time is a crucial predictor of success, has gained attention in organizational, educational, and personal development settings (Duckworth et al., 2007).

The notion of grit has caused a paradigm shift in the perception of success, enabling researchers to consider perseverance and passion that contribute to long-term success in addition to measures traditionally regarded as indicators of success, such as standardized test scores and intelligence quotient (IQ) (Duckworth & Quinn, 2009). Grit, which has its roots in positive psychology, belongs to a larger theoretical framework. Its relationship with theories of self-regulation emphasizes the

importance of developing the capacity to overcome difficulties and persevere through challenging situations for a long period (Duckworth & Gross, 2014). According to Eskreis-Winkler et al. (2014), due to their strong sense of affection for their goals, students with great levels of grit display increased motivation, excitement, and involvement in their efforts. Duckworth and Yeager (2015) highlight the important role of grit in predicting L2 achievement, focusing on its potential as a key element of learner motivation. As Duckworth and Gross (2014) mention, gritty students are more successful and productive because they have higher levels of self-control and are more prepared to work hard to achieve their objectives.

Building on the broader construct of grit, which encompasses sustained effort and an enduring interest in the pursuit of long-term goals (Mikami, 2024), L2 grit is a domain-specific personality trait characterized by a mixture of passion and perseverance towards learning an L2 (Teimouri et al., 2022). Grit serves a key role in L2 learning especially regarding sustained effort and motivation (Duckworth, 2016). 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 (Khajavy et al., 2021).

L2 grit 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 a learner's enduring engagement in language learning over time, notwithstanding potential alterations in circumstances or fluctuations in motivation (Sudina et al., 2021). 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 significance of L2 grit lies in its positive association with language learning motivation and success, surpassing the relationship of domain-general grit with these two variables (Teimouri et al., 2021). L2 grit entails sustained effort and interest in mastering a language over a long period of time even when faced with difficulties such as low motivation, anxiety, or external pressures (Wu et al., 2024). The distinct relevance and predictive power of L2 grit in L2 learning are different from those of general grit (Teimouri et al., 2021).

The Relationship between L2 Grit and L2 Achievement

Much research (e.g. Khajavy & Aghaee, 2024; Sun & Xu, 2024; Teimouri et al., 2022) has proven a positive correlation between L2 grit and L2 achievement. Students with high level of L2 grit were found not only to perform better on language exams but also demonstrate greater persistence in improving their language skills such as writing, reading, and speaking (Zhang & Zhang, 2023). According to Alamer (2021), studies using the L2 grit scale have consistently shown that higher grit scores are correlated with better language outcomes. Specifically, learners with high L2 grit scores demonstrated improved language proficiency, particularly in areas demanding long-term effort such as writing and speaking skills.

Teimouri et al. (2022) highlight how language-specific grit contributes to sustained motivation and achievement above general grit. They demonstrate that L2 grit is a significant determinant of L2 achievement which surpasses the influence of domain-general grit primarily due to its strong relationship with sustained motivation in L2 learning. They also state that learners with higher degrees of L2 grit tend to attain higher levels of proficiency in that L2. Moreover, in their study, Wang and Ke (2024) found that L2-specific grit has a substantial influence on academic performance and learner engagement, particularly over extended periods.

Elahi Shirvan and Alamer (2022) who studied the mediating role of L2 grit in the interplay between basic psychological requirements and L2 achievement found that grit enhances language learning outcomes by fostering perseverance in the face of challenges. Likewise, Khajavy and Aghaee (2024) noted that although several studies failed to demonstrate an obvious link between L2 grit and L2 success, others, including their own study, revealed a strong positive relationship between them, especially when learners included personal bests in their language learning strategies. Additionally, Sudina and Plonsky (2021) conducted a study among Russian L2 and L3 learners and found that students with higher grit are more inclined to achieve better proficiency and performance. A comprehensive review by Wang (2024) also confirmed these results. The researcher noted that most empirical studies affirm the strong connection between L2 grit and L2 achievement. In a recent meta-analytic study (Sun & Xu, 2024) on 24 empirical studies carried out from 2017 to 2023, a positive correlation between L2 grit and L2 achievement was reported, which implies that greater L2 grit correlates with improved L2 performance.

In the Turkish EFL context, the study of Akyıldız (2020) demonstrated a positive correlation between grit and academic performance in English, with students showing higher grit levels tending to score better on exams. Likewise, Taşpınar and Külekçi (2018) highlighted the significance of grit in goal setting and perseverance, linking it positively to L2 success. A comparative study by Jalilzadeh et al. (2022) also revealed that grit levels increased with proficiency, implying that grit is a predictor of language achievement.

Although the aforementioned studies have demonstrated a positive relationship between L2 grit and L2 achievement, the strength of this link may vary depending on contextual factors. For example, in ESL contexts in which learners are frequently exposed to English in their daily lives, grit may have a stronger and more immediate impact on academic achievement due to greater opportunities for practice and engagement. In EFL settings like Türkiye where learners often have limited exposure to the target language outside the classroom, on the other hand, even high degrees of grit may not bring about comparable achievement gains. Additionally, cultural norms, institutional support, teacher expectations, and pedagogical practices can shape how grit is fostered and whether it leads to sustained effort and achievement. Thus, a context-sensitive perspective is needed to interpret the association between L2 grit and achievement more accurately.

The Relationship between L2 Grit and L2 Motivation

The relationship between L2 grit and L2 motivation has been explored in some studies (e.g., Feng & Papi, 2020; Teimouri et al., 2022; Wu, 2024). Research has demonstrated that L2 motivation, frequently structured through frameworks like Dörnyei's (2009) L2 Motivational Self System, significantly influences L2 grit (Liu, 2024). L2 grit has frequently been related to higher levels of L2 motivation. Teimouri and associates (2022) found a positive correlation between L2-specific grit and L2 learners' motivation, which indicates that learners exhibiting higher levels of grit have a greater level of motivation to persist in their language studies. In their study, Pawlak et al. (2024) explored how L2 grit influences motivated learning behavior among 238 Iranian university students majoring in English and L2 grit emerged as a significant predictor of motivated behaviour. Recently, Wu (2024) concluded that higher levels of L2 motivation foster greater grit, enabling Chinese EFL learners to overcome challenges more effectively than non-English majors who frequently exhibit a deficiency in systematic and persistent effort. Thus, it was stated that motivational factors can either enhance or hinder grit based on the learner's emotional and cognitive states. In another study (Mei et al., 2024) conducted with Chinese EFL learners, it was revealed that L2 grit is directly associated with L2 motivation. Pawlak et al. (2024) investigated how both general grit and L2-specific grit influence motivated behaviour among 549 Polish university students majoring English, and L2 grit was found to be a more robust predictor of motivated behaviour compared to general grit. Besides, Chou (2023) concluded that L2 grit predicts learners' motivation and performance in language activities.

Within the context of Turkish EFL learning, a research study carried out by Kırmızı et al. (2023) indicated that L2 grit influences motivational factors, affecting students' perceptions of future language use and their commitment to learning. Additionally, Demir (2024) affirmed the connection between grit and motivation while Solhi et al. (2023) found that high grit levels aid emotion regulation and coping in challenging situations, thereby enhancing engagement.

The Relationship between L2 Grit, L2 Motivation, and L2 Achievement

The interplay between L2 grit, L2 motivation, and L2 achievement has been an important focus of SLA research, though it remains a relatively new area of study with limited existing research. Research conducted by Teimouri et al. (2022) revealed a positive correlation between L2 grit and both language learning motivation and achievement, and they reported L2 grit as a crucial predictor of L2 achievement. In another study carried out by Pawlak et al. (2024), it was discovered that domain-specific grit is more strongly correlated with motivation and success than general grit. Chen and colleagues (2021) demonstrated that Japanese learners exhibiting higher L2-specific grit displayed greater motivation and superior English language proficiency. As a result, L2 grit was revealed to be significantly correlated with L2 motivation and reported to be a predictor of improved L2 performance. All in all, these studies accentuate the significance of fostering grit in improving L2 learning outcomes in EFL classrooms.

The literature on L2 grit, while developing, contains various significant gaps that require further investigation. Firstly, despite an increasing body of research on L2 grit, L2 achievement, and L2 motivation, existing research has often examined these variables separately or in pairs, leaving a gap in understanding the triadic relationship between them in L2 learning settings. There is little available literature (Chen et al., 2021; Pawlak et al., 2024; Teimouri et al., 2022) on the relationships between these three ID variables. Besides, no single study exists that investigates the probable relationships between all these three learner variables simultaneously in the Turkish EFL context. Therefore, a comprehensive study of their triadic relationships is needed to offer a clearer picture of how these variables interact with and influence each other in the EFL context and to expand the body of literature by addressing the gap.

Secondly, as Teimouri et al. (2021) mention, L2 grit positively affects achievement and language learning motivation beyond general grit, yet its unique role in various L2 contexts requires further study. Most of the studies employed domain-general scales (Duckworth, 2007; Sudina et al., 2021) and measured learners' grit globally rather than locally with reference to the L2 learning context (Teimouri et al., 2022). Hence, further studies that use a language-domain-specific measure of grit are needed to determine learners' grit levels with respect to L2 learning or L2 use (Teimouri et al., 2022).

Lastly, most research has focused on specific cultural contexts, such as Iranian or Chinese EFL learning settings, resulting in a lack of studies examining the role 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. The investigations into L2 grit are relatively recent in Türkiye. As this construct is deeply influenced by the context, there is a great need to see its interaction with L2 motivation and L2 achievement within the setting of EFL in Türkiye and to contribute to the underexplored areas in the literature. Therefore, the present study seeks to explore the relationships between EFL learners' L2 grit, L2 motivation, and L2 achievement. The study also aims to find out the role of L2 motivation and L2 achievement in predicting L2 grit. To this end, the following research questions were posed:

1. Are there any relationships among EFL learners' L2 grit, L2 motivation, and L2 achievement?
2. To what extent can the variability in Turkish EFL learners' perceptions of L2 grit be predicted by their L2 motivation and L2 achievement?

Method

Setting and Participants

In this quantitative study, convenience sampling method, a non-probability sampling method in which participants are selected based on certain practical criteria such as geographical proximity, easy accessibility, and willingness to volunteer, was used to select the sample from which the data were collected (Wallen & Fraenkel, 2013). The study was carried out with a total of 500 EFL students studying at a vocational school of a state university in Türkiye during the spring semester of the 2023-2024 academic year. All the participants were male whose ages ranged from 18 to 22 years ($M=20.04$, $SD=2.54$). The study included only male students because this vocational school does not admit female students into the relevant vocational programs (e.g., Electrical Technology, Automotive Technology etc.), which are exclusively male-dominated. Students study for two years at this vocational school and major in such fields as Business Management, Electrical Technology, Electronic Communication Technology, Computer Technology, Automotive Technology, Mechatronics Technology, Aircraft Technology, and Construction System Technology. English is a compulsory course in all departments, and students receive four hours of English classes per week.

In this EFL context, English proficiency is considered an important asset for students' future career development, especially in technical fields, where English is often necessary for understanding manuals, participating in international business, and accessing global technological resources. Most of the instructors are non-native English speakers, many of whom have received their education in Türkiye. They often employ a combination of communicative approaches and traditional methods, which may vary in their emphasis on fluency and accuracy. Materials used in the classroom are typically textbooks adapted to the needs of vocational students, with a strong focus on technical vocabulary and practical language use in professional contexts. Despite the challenges of teaching English in a non-native environment such as limited exposure to the target language outside the classroom, these students are motivated by the need for English in their careers and the opportunities it provides.

Instrumentation

In this study, the data were collected through a composite survey instrument consisting of two parts. Course achievement was another key variable in the present study, and it was assessed according to the total scores for the semester. The initial section of the questionnaire includes a set of questions concerning the participants' age, grade level, and English course grade. In the following section of the instrument, 19 items are used to determine the learners' L2 grit (item 1-9) and L2 motivation (item 10-19). In the first nine items, the participants were required to demonstrate how gritty they were to learn English. All the items were measured using a 5-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 'not at all like me' to 5 'very much like me'. In the next ten items, they were required to respond to the statements using a 6-point Likert type scale, selecting a response from 1 'strongly disagree' to 6 'strongly agree'. The next section provides a detailed explanation of the scales employed in the questionnaire.

L2 Grit scale

The L2 Grit scale developed by Teimouri et al. (2022) consists of nine items and measures the learners' grit levels in learning a second/foreign language. It is a language-domain-specific grit scale that specifically measures students' grit in L2 learning environments. A higher score from a participant for a situation listed in the questionnaire statements indicates that the participant is acting grittier in that particular situation. That is, higher scores correspond to higher levels of grit. The reference study reported a Cronbach's alpha value of $\alpha = .80$ for the scale (Teimouri et al., 2022).

In order to minimize any potential impact resulting from the participants' low proficiency in English, such as misinterpretation or complete lack of comprehension, and to facilitate the participants' understanding of the statements, the scale was translated into Turkish using translation and back translation procedures (Brislin, 1970). Firstly, the translation of the scale into Turkish was carried out by three different professional majors in English. A Turkish language academic expert reviewed the translations provided by the professionals to ensure the naturalness of Turkish. The next step involved a back translation which was conducted by another group of three translators who held equivalent qualifications. It was conducted from the Turkish version without consulting the initial English version in its original form (Geisinger, 1994). Following that, the two translations were reviewed and integrated into one unified version by two academic experts to ensure equivalency. Afterwards, three expert bilingual raters with at least a Master's degree in English were requested to rate the synonymy between the Turkish and English versions on a 10-point scale, with 1 indicating no relationship and 10 showing complete synonymy between the Turkish and English versions. The examination of the raters' answers revealed an average score of 9.7/10, which is a high equivalence. In the final phase, a new group of three expert raters who had matching qualifications evaluated the equivalence between the original English version and the back translated English version. The result of the analysis indicated an average score of 9.3/10, which suggests a satisfactory level of meaning correspondence between them. Therefore, it was reasonable to assume that the Turkish version adequately reflected the content included in the items of the original L2 grit scale. In the current research, the internal consistency of the Turkish version of the scale was calculated to be $\alpha = .78$, which is an acceptable reliability coefficient (Büyükoztürk, 2009).

L2 Motivation Scale

The ten-item intended effort scale, one of the subscales of the questionnaire developed by Taguchi et al. (2009), was employed to measure the participants' motivation to learn English. In the reference study (Taguchi et al., 2009), the reliability of the scale was computed to be $\alpha = 0.83$. With regard to the level of alignment between the Turkish and English versions, the examination of the raters' answers provided an average score of 9.5/10, indicating a strong correspondence in meaning. Moreover, with an average score of 9.1/10 on a 10-point scale, the level of equivalency between the initial English version and the one back-translated from Turkish was accepted as satisfactory. In this research, a Cronbach's alpha value of $\alpha = .91$ was calculated for the Turkish version of the scale, demonstrating a strong internal consistency for the instrument.

Before the main study, a group of volunteers participated in piloting the survey instrument. The aim was to check for any potential problems with the scales (i.e., L2 grit scale and L2 motivation scale) intended for use in the main study. No difficulties were noted or reported in the administration of the instrument.

Data Collection

Upon receiving ethical approval from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Ethics Committee, the study was carried out in the spring semester of 2023-2024 academic year. The data were gathered during the learners' usual class hours. 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 15 minutes. One of the variables in this study was achievement in the English course, which represents the level of attainment that students receive to meet the course objectives in an academic semester. It was assessed based on the composite scores obtained by the end of the academic semester. The learners' course achievement scores were calculated using the results of their midterm and final exams, which were gathered from the student affairs division of the vocational school at the end of the academic semester.

Data Analysis

Rationale for the Use of Parametric Tests

A test of normality was conducted employing the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test and Shapiro-Wilk test to find out whether parametric or non-parametric tests would be more suitable to analyze the available data. The findings indicated that the data were not normally distributed. Both the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test and Shapiro-Wilk test indicated statistically significant values ($p < .05$) for all the variables in the study, suggesting that the assumption of normality was violated. The findings are illustrated in Table 1.

Table 1
Tests of Normality

	Kolmogorov-Smirnov ^a			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
		500		.982		
L2 Grit	.074		.000		500	.000
L2Motivation	.053	500	.002	.983	500	.000

a. Lilliefors Significance Correction

The initial analysis revealed non-normally distributed data. Nevertheless, according to Pallant (2020), this is common in large samples, and the correct structure of distribution is visible in histograms or normal probability plots. Thus, even though the numerical findings of the Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk tests demonstrated a non-normal distribution, the graphical representations of the normal probability plots showed a normal distribution for both tests. The following figures indicate the findings for each variable.

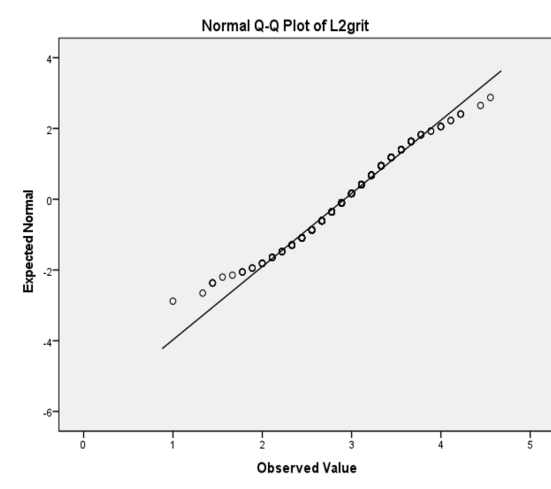


Figure 1. Normal Probability Plots of L2 Grit

The data of the L2 Grit appeared to be normally distributed, as seen by the fairly straight line of scores in Figure 1.

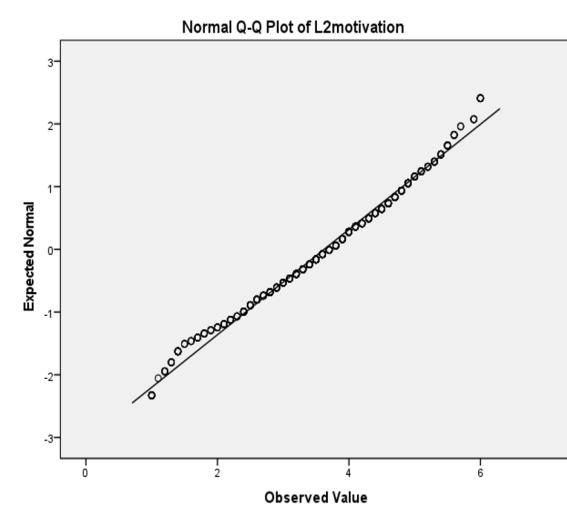


Figure 2. Normal Probability Plots of L2 Motivation

As seen in Figure 2 above, the L2 Motivation data also seemed to follow a normal distribution with an almost straight line. Furthermore, the skewness and kurtosis values for each variable were between $[-2, +2]$ (for L2 grit, skewness = $-.221$, kurtosis = 1.226 ; for L2 motivation, skewness = $-.235$, kurtosis = $-.564$). Considering the plots and the values of skewness and kurtosis, the researchers decided to use parametric tests instead of non-parametric alternatives.

Tests Employed

The data analysis was performed in compliance with the research questions. The data obtained from the questionnaires were analyzed descriptively via the IBM Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) 21. Before the analysis, all the negatively keyed items in the L2 grit scale were reverse-coded. Pearson product-moment correlation coefficients were computed to address the first research question and assess the possible relationships between L2 grit, L2 motivation, and L2 achievement. The second research question was analyzed through simple standard regression analyses which were carried out to ascertain the extent to which variability in learners' L2 grit can be predicted by L2 motivation and L2 achievement. According to Pallant (2020), to perform regression analysis, a minimum of eight participants for each independent variable and an additional 50 participants were required. As this study had two independent variables, 66 participants would be adequate. Thus, the sample size of this research ($n = 500$) was sufficiently large for the regression analysis.

Results and Discussion

Relationships among EFL Learners' L2 Grit, L2 Motivation, and L2 Achievement

The relationships between L2 grit and each of the independent variables were examined through Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient. To ensure that the assumptions of normality, linearity, and homoscedasticity were not violated, preliminary analyses were conducted. Correlation coefficients are displayed in Table 2.

Table 2
Pearson Product-moment Correlations between the Variables

Variable	1	2	3
1. L2 Grit	1		
2. L2 Motivation	.446**	1	
3. L2 Achievement	.542**	.390**	1

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

As seen in the table, there was a positive and statistically significant correlation between all the variables. There was a large and positive correlation between L2 grit and L2 achievement ($r_{(500)} = .542, p < .01$), indicating a rather strong relationship between the two variables. A medium and positive correlation was found between L2 grit and L2 motivation ($r_{(500)} = .446, p < .01$). Furthermore, a medium and positive correlation was revealed between L2 motivation and L2 achievement ($r_{(500)} = .390, p < .01$). To sum up, the strongest statistically significant correlation in the research was evident between L2 grit and L2 achievement ($r_{(500)} = .542, p < .01$) while the smallest emerged between L2 motivation and L2 achievement ($r_{(500)} = .390, p < .01$).

The most significant finding is that there were positive correlations between all the variables, with L2 grit demonstrating the strongest association with L2 achievement. This result is in line with that of Teimouri et al. (2022) who also revealed a positive correlation between L2 grit, L2 motivation, and L2 achievement, emphasizing L2 grit as a key determinant of L2 achievement. A similar finding was stated by Pawlak et al. (2022) who demonstrated that domain-specific grit is more strongly correlated with L2 learning motivation and success than general grit. In accordance with this result, the study of Feng and Papi (2020) also showed that L2 grit can transform motivational constructs into persistent language learning behaviors and, ultimately, L2 achievement. Besides, this result corroborates the ideas of Chen et al. (2021), who suggested that students exhibiting higher L2-specific grit display enhanced motivation and superior English language proficiency.

Consistent results across various studies mentioned above reinforce the value of L2 grit in successful L2 learning. A potential explanation for this consistency might be that unlike general grit, which applies to any domain, L2 grit specifically addresses perseverance and passion in second language acquisition. This focus on L2 grit closely aligns with the motivational and behavioral demands of language learning, offering a more direct link to L2 outcomes (Pawlak et al., 2022; Teimouri et al., 2022). It seems possible that L2 grit bridges the gap between motivation and consistent effort, transforming language learning motivation into persistent behaviors essential for L2 achievement. Furthermore, despite differing cultural or linguistic contexts, it is intriguing that the present study and the related studies conducted so far converge on similar findings. This implies that L2 grit universally has a vital role in L2 learning outcomes irrespective of external factors.

The results may also be interpreted with reference to contextual factors specific to the Turkish EFL setting. The relatively strong correlation observed between L2 grit and L2 achievement could be partly affected by the exam-oriented nature of the Turkish education system, where sustained effort and perseverance are highly valued and often necessary for academic achievement (Kırkgöz, 2009). On the contrary, the relatively weaker correlation between L2 motivation and L2 achievement may reflect the challenges Turkish EFL learners face in maintaining motivation due to restricted exposure to authentic language environments outside the classroom. These results emphasize the potential impact of cultural and institutional factors such as test pressure, classroom dynamics, and limited opportunities for informal language use on how grit and motivation influence academic success. Even though a direct cross-contextual comparison is beyond the scope of this study, such influences merit further examination in further research.

The Predictive Power of L2 Motivation and L2 Achievement on L2 Grit

A simple standard regression analysis was conducted to reveal to what extent the variability in EFL learners' L2 grit can be predicted by their L2 motivation and L2 achievement. The findings signified that L2 motivation significantly contributed to the prediction of L2 grit, $R^2 = .43$, $F(1, 498) = 123.94$, $p < 0.05$. To put it differently, L2 motivation explained 43% of the variance in the students' L2 grit. The results of the simple standard regression analysis, which was performed to measure the prediction power of L2 achievement on L2 grit, demonstrated that L2 achievement also significantly contributed to the prediction of L2 grit, $R^2 = .50$, $F(1, 498) = 207.30$, $p < 0.05$, explaining 50% of the variance in learners' L2 grit.

The regression analysis elucidated significant findings concerning the impact of L2 motivation and L2 achievement on L2 grit among EFL learners. While both factors significantly predicted L2 grit, L2 achievement demonstrated greater predictive power (50% explained variance) compared to L2 motivation (43% explained variance). The findings indicate that achievement may play a slightly more significant role in cultivating grit than motivation, possibly because concrete achievements reinforce language learners' dedication and perseverance.

The results of the current research contradict those of Mikami and Shiozawa (2024), who found that L2 motivation accounts for 59.3% of the variability in L2 grit, indicating a strong predictive relationship, while L2 achievement accounts for 12.3% of the variability in learners' L2 grit, indicating a moderate explanatory power. A plausible explanation for this discrepancy between the two studies may be that L2 motivation functions as a broader and a more consistent determinant of grit. Motivation is a critical factor as it drives learners to engage in behaviors that enhance their L2 grit, which subsequently mediates the relationship between perseverance, passion, and language achievement (Mikami & Shiozawa, 2024).

The outcomes gained from this study are also in contrast to those of Fathi and Hejazi (2024) who observed that 15.21% of the variability in learners' L2 grit can be predicted by their L2 achievement.

This rather contradictory result, which indicates that L2 achievement moderately contributes to shaping learners' L2 grit, might be accounted for by the fact that L2 achievement alone does not constitute the sole determinant of grit as additional personal, contextual, and motivational variables also exert a significant influence on grit. In contrast to the current study, the study of Teimouri et al. (2022) demonstrated that L2 achievement explained 7.84% of the variability in learners' perceptions of L2 grit, which suggests a weak predictive power and implies that academic performance in L2 learning settings is not a key determinant of L2 grit. In agreement with the findings of the study of Teimouri et al. (2022), Botes et al. (2024) also reported that L2 achievement explained only 7.29% of the variance in learners' perceptions of L2 grit.

All in all, it can be concluded that the current research identified L2 achievement as a key predictor of L2 grit, whereas earlier studies (Botes et al., 2024; Fathi & Hejazi, 2024) posited that its role is secondary. These differences can be explained in part by cultural factors (e.g., societal emphasis on exam success in countries like Türkiye), educational factors (e.g., teacher-centered versus communicative language teaching approaches) or measurements of achievement (e.g., standardized language proficiency tests versus classroom-based assessments). In the Turkish EFL context, this may reflect the impact of a high-stakes, exam-oriented education system where national exam results are often prioritized over intrinsic motivation (Kırkgöz, 2009). Measurable achievement may serve as a culturally relevant motivator for persistence and dedication, which has a stronger impact on fostering L2 grit compared to internal motivational factors. Furthermore, the societal emphasis in Türkiye on academic perseverance, parental expectations, and future career prospects may further shape EFL learners' attitudes, which causes them to view perseverance as a path to measurable accomplishments (Pasha-Zaidi et al., 2019). While the current study was not designed to provide a cross-cultural comparison, it is easy to recognize that in different sociocultural and educational contexts, particularly those in which communicative competence or learner autonomy is highlighted, L2 motivation might play a more central role in learners' L2 grit (Ushioda, 2011).

Conclusion

The results of this particular study offer some practical teaching implications that could be valuable for EFL instruction and developing learners' grit to learn English. First of all, the current study offers new insights into the strong associations between L2 grit, L2 motivation, and L2 achievement, which necessitates integrative pedagogical approaches addressing all three variables. Educational practitioners and curriculum developers should prioritize interventions that reinforce perseverance and consistent interest in language learning through goal setting, fostering a growth mindset, providing consistent feedback, and creating a supportive environment that emphasizes gradual progress (Pawlak et al. 2024). Grit in L2 learning critically connects broader positive self-concepts with specific interest and motivation in learning English, providing a framework for understanding how general psychological traits influence language learning behaviors and outcomes (Chen et al., 2021). Therefore, instructors and curriculum designers should consider implementing strategies that strengthen these constructs to promote well-being (Oladrostam et al., 2024; Sadeghi & Pourbahram, 2024) and effective L2 learning and teaching.

The outcomes of the study support the notion that generating more comprehensive insights into the mechanisms underlying the influence of motivation on L2 grit would be beneficial (Liu, 2024). Educators should endeavor to encourage and assist their students in becoming learners with a growth focus, characterized by an orientation towards positive outcomes (Mei et al., 2024). They may enhance students' L2 grit through several strategies such as employing educational tools designed to develop grit, assigning challenging, semester-long language projects which require continuous effort, and fostering growth mindsets by emphasizing effort.

The evidence from this research also implies that L2 grit is positively correlated with L2 motivation, encouraging educators to incorporate grit-enhancing activities into language learning. These activities not only support EFL learners in developing grit as a personality trait but also cultivate positive feelings and a persistent mindset towards L2 learning (Solhi et al., 2023). Another important practical implication is that educators can foster grit among L2 learners by encouraging their motivation to learn English. They can inspire learner achievement by presenting examples of gritty professionals or help learners by sharing their own L2 learning experiences (Solhi et al., 2023).

Overall, this study strengthens the idea that emphasizing consistent efforts is crucial for achieving long-term language learning goals (Alamer, 2021). Educators should develop strategies to promote both passion and perseverance for L2 learning, highlight the significance of sustained interest throughout the challenging L2 learning process, and motivate EFL learners to perceive obstacles as essential components of their journey toward L2 proficiency. There is, therefore, a definite need for EFL educators to encourage their students to embrace challenges as chances for development, establish realistic long-term objectives, and maintain consistent progress despite difficulties (Liu et al., 2022). It is vital for instructors to gain a deeper understanding of this non-cognitive trait and to create language learning settings that promote the development of this affective individual difference variable which is based on positive psychology.

This study was not without limitations. The most important limitation of this research stems from the fact that all the participants were male. Hence, the results might not be generalizable to mixed-gender or female-only groups. This limitation emphasizes the need for caution in applying the findings to broader contexts. Another potential limitation is that the study lacked triangulation of data from different sources. The findings were derived solely from the quantitative data which were obtained using a questionnaire. Although the participants' responses demonstrated high reliability, follow-up qualitative data like interviews and observation could provide further insight into the reasons behind the participants' responses. Finally, this study was restricted by its scope, which involved only tertiary level students from a vocational school at a state university in Türkiye. Therefore, the results obtained from the current study cannot be generalized to other educational levels.

Some suggestions that may shed light on future research can be proposed. Supporting the findings of quantitative data with those of qualitative one would deepen the understanding of the relationships between L2 grit, L2 motivation, and L2 achievement. Further research might expand the scope of the study beyond university students to include primary, secondary, or high schools, thereby enhancing its generalizability. As L2 grit can be regarded as a context-specific ID variable, the study might also be replicated with participants from diverse cultural and socioeconomic backgrounds in different L2 learning settings. Besides, further research needs to be carried out with both male and female EFL learners to explore potential gender differences in L2 grit. Including participants of different genders would also improve the generalizability of the findings, enabling them more applicable to the broader population of EFL learners. Another fruitful area for further work could be to examine the effect of EFL teachers' L2 grit on students' motivation, achievement, and overall learning outcomes. Lastly, the issue of the role of teaching strategies in fostering learners' grit in L2 learning contexts is an intriguing topic that could be usefully explored in further research.

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