Positive psychology in L2 speaking: The predictive roles of foreign language speaking enjoyment, the ideal L2 speaking self, and L2 speaking grit

Jalil Fathi
University of Kurdistan, Sanandaj, Iran
http://orcid.org/0000-0003-1146-1024
j.fathi@uok.ac.ir

Seyyed-Foad Behzadpoor ✉
Azarbaijan Shahid Madani University, Tabriz, Iran
http://orcid.org/0000-0001-7565-7785
fouad.behzadpour@gmail.com

Abstract

This study investigates the impact of positive psychology factors on English as a foreign language (EFL) learners' second language (L2) speaking proficiency. Specifically, it examines the predictive roles of foreign language speaking enjoyment, the ideal L2 speaking self, and L2 speaking grit on L2 speaking proficiency. Data were collected from 271 EFL learners enrolled in IELTS speaking courses, utilizing validated scales and IELTS-based speaking tasks. Through structural equation modeling, relationships between psychological constructs and L2 speaking proficiency were analyzed. The results showed significant direct relationships between speaking enjoyment and L2 speaking proficiency, as well as between the ideal speaking self and proficiency. Crucially, L2 speaking grit was found to partially mediate the relationships between both enjoyment and L2 speaking proficiency, as well as the ideal self and L2 speaking proficiency. These findings underscore the importance of positive psychological factors in language learning, particularly highlighting the significant inter-

play of enjoyment, the ideal self, and grit in fostering L2 speaking development. The study provides insights for teachers, emphasizing the need to incorporate strategies that cultivate positive emotions, support the development of learners' ideal L2 speaking self, and promote resilience in the face of challenges, ultimately leading to improved speaking skills.

Keywords: EFL learners; speaking enjoyment; ideal speaking self; speaking grit; L2 speaking proficiency; positive psychology

1. Introduction

The process of acquiring a second language (L2) involves a complex interplay of cognitive, emotional, and social factors (Renandya & Nguyen, 2023). Traditionally, research in this area has concentrated on the cognitive and linguistic aspects of L2 learning. However, recent studies have emphasized the importance of positive psychological constructs, such as motivation, self-concept, and resilience, in successful L2 acquisition (Dewaele & MacIntyre, 2016; Li, 2020; Oxford & Khajavy, 2021; Teimouri et al., 2021).

Positive psychology offers a valuable framework for examining the relationship between learners' psychological states and their L2 proficiency. Concepts such as foreign language enjoyment (FLE), which encompasses the pleasure and positive affect experienced during language learning activities (Dewaele & MacIntyre, 2014), have been linked to increased motivation, engagement, and improved language outcomes (Botes et al., 2022; Fathi, Pawlak, Mehraein, et al., 2023). Similarly, the ideal L2 self, representing learners' aspirations and desired future states in terms of language proficiency, has been shown to play a crucial role in driving motivation and facilitating achievement in L2 learning (Dörnyei, 2009; Hessel, 2015; Kim & Kim, 2014). However, despite evidence supporting the influence of these constructs on general L2 language learning, their specific impact on L2 speaking proficiency has not been extensively studied, leaving a notable gap in our understanding of this critical skill (Csizér, 2019; Moskovsky et al., 2016). In addition to positive emotions and the ideal L2 self, grit – defined as perseverance and passion for long-term goals (Duckworth et al., 2007) – has also garnered attention in the context of language learning (Teimouri et al., 2021). Grit has been recognized as a significant predictor of achievement in various domains (Datu et al., 2017; Sudina & Plonsky, 2021b), but its specific role in mediating the relationship between positive emotions and L2 speaking proficiency remains underexplored.

This study aims to address these gaps by investigating the direct and indirect relationships between foreign language speaking enjoyment, the ideal L2

speaking self, L2 speaking grit, and L2 speaking proficiency. By integrating key constructs from positive psychology and the L2 motivational self system (L2MSS) into a comprehensive model, this research seeks to uncover the complex mechanisms through which these specific factors – enjoyment, the ideal L2 self, and grit – interact and influence the development of L2 speaking skills (Dörnyei, 2014). Uncovering these relationships will not only deepen our understanding of the psychological and motivational foundations of L2 speaking success but also provide valuable insights for educators and curriculum designers. These insights can guide the creation of more effective pedagogical approaches that foster positive emotions, support the development of learners' ideal L2 speaking self, and promote resilience, ultimately leading to improved L2 proficiency (Pawlak et al., 2024; Tahmouresi & Papi, 2021).

2. Literature review

2.1. Foreign language enjoyment

Enjoyment, conceptualized as the positive affect arising from an activity or its outcomes (Ainley & Hidi, 2014), has been recognized as a crucial factor in various learning contexts. In the realm of second language acquisition (SLA), the construct of FLE, introduced by Dewaele and MacIntyre (2014), has gained significant attention. FLE specifically refers to the positive feelings that learners experience when their psychological needs are met during foreign language (FL) learning activities (Botes et al., 2020). It has been theorized that FLE and FL learning have a reciprocal relationship, each bolstering the other, particularly when accompanied by a sense of progress and success (Botes et al., 2022; Dewaele, 2022). Dewaele and MacIntyre (2016) further distinguished between two dimensions of FLE: *social enjoyment* (SE), fostering shared experiences and interactions, and *private enjoyment* (PE), associated with personal pride and satisfaction in language use. These two facets are believed to work synergistically, enriching the overall learning experience.

The broaden-and-build theory of positive emotions (Fredrickson, 2001) provides a strong theoretical framework for understanding the role of FLE in L2 speaking. This theory proposes that positive emotions broaden an individual's cognitive and behavioral repertoire, leading to increased creativity, exploration, and greater openness to new experiences. In the context of FL learning, the enjoyment derived from successful communication or engaging language activities can facilitate the acquisition of new linguistic knowledge and skills. By creating a positive and conducive learning environment, enjoyment encourages experimentation, risk-taking, and a willingness to engage in communicative practice, all of which are vital for developing L2 speaking proficiency.

Since its introduction, FLE has attracted considerable scholarly attention, resulting in a growing body of research exploring its multifaceted nature and its relationship with various factors such as boredom, anxiety, motivation, attitude, L2 grit, and trait emotional intelligence (Botes et al., 2022; Derakhshan & Fathi, 2023; Dewaele & Proietti Ergün, 2020; Fathi, Pawlak, Kruk, et al., 2023; Li, 2020; Pan & Zhang, 2023). Moreover, the importance of FLE in overall L2 learning success is widely acknowledged (Dewaele & Alfawzan, 2018; Li, 2020). However, there remains a distinct gap in research specifically investigating the relationship between FLE and *L2 speaking proficiency*. Although some studies have explored L2 writing enjoyment and its link to writing-related constructs (Tahmouresi & Papi, 2021), speaking-specific studies on positive emotions, particularly enjoyment, remain scarce (Piniel & Albert, 2018), despite the undeniable importance of L2 speaking proficiency in real-world communication (Renandya & Nguyen, 2023).

This study aims to bridge this gap by specifically focusing on *foreign language speaking enjoyment* and examining its direct impact on L2 speaking attainment. Further, we investigate the potential mediating roles of *L2 speaking grit* and the *ideal L2 speaking self* in this relationship, drawing upon the broaden-and-build theory to understand how positive emotions, such as enjoyment, can facilitate the development of resilience and a positive self-concept, which in turn may lead to enhanced L2 speaking proficiency.

2.2. The ideal L2 self

Inspired by the pioneering work of Markus and Nurius (1986), the study of self-concept has seen a significant transformation. Originally perceived as unidimensional and static (Markus & Nurius, 1986), self-concept is now recognized as a multidimensional construct with a forward-looking orientation (Karimi & Norouzi, 2019). Central to this transformation is the concept of "possible selves," which allows individuals to envision various potential futures, evaluate these scenarios, and strive to realize or avoid them. This dynamic framework profoundly impacts their current behavior and subjective experiences (Augustinos et al., 2006). Markus and Nurius (1986) argue that the range of possible selves acts as a crucial link between self-concept and motivation. This collection represents the cognitive manifestation of an individual's long-term aspirations, fears, and uncertainties. These possible selves shape and guide behavior, functioning as "behavioral blueprints" (Robinson & Davis, 2001, p. 5) for internal processes. These cognitive constructs serve as powerful motivational sources, driving individuals toward achieving a desired future self or avoiding an undesired one (Karimi & Norouzi, 2019).

Building on the evolving understanding of self-concept and motivation, Dörnyei (2005, 2009) introduced the L2MSS. Influenced by possible selves theory (Markus & Nurius, 1986), socio-educational models (Gardner, 2019), and self-discrepancy theory (Higgins, 1987), the L2MSS explores the relationship between learners' envisioned future selves and their motivational experiences in the context of second language acquisition (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011). The L2MSS includes three key components: the ideal L2 self, the ought-to L2 self, and the L2 learning experience (L2LE). The ideal L2 self represents the desired skills and attributes, influencing learners' efforts to achieve English proficiency. The ought-to L2 self reflects attributes shaped by external expectations from peers, parents, and teachers. The L2LE component examines contextual factors – such as teachers, materials, methods, and classroom atmosphere – that impact language learning experiences.

Building upon this robust conceptual framework, numerous studies over the past decade have investigated learner motivation in the L2 context (Al-Hoorie, 2018; Mahmoodi & Yousefi, 2022). Previous research has consistently underscored the importance of the ideal L2 self in understanding L2 learning motivation (Hessel, 2015; Kim & Kim, 2014). According to self-discrepancy theory, the L2MSS suggests that when an individual's L2 proficiency aligns with their ideal L2 self-image, it creates a strong motivational drive for language learning. This motivation arises from the natural human desire to minimize the gap between one's current self and one's envisioned future self (Dörnyei, 2009). Research related to the ideal L2 self has not been evenly distributed across different aspects of L2 learning. While some studies have examined the influence of the ideal L2 self on factors such as learners' perceptual learning styles (Kim & Kim, 2014) and learners' mental imagery (Dörnyei & Chan, 2013), intervention-based studies have explored the impact of intervention schemes on shaping learners' images of themselves as potential language users (Chan, 2014). Much of the inquiry germane to the ideal L2 self, however, has primarily focused on the construct's relationship with intended learning efforts (ILEs), also known as *motivated learning behavior* (Csizér, 2019). Despite Dörnyei (2009) considering ILEs as predictors of proficiency, conclusive evidence about the ideal L2 self's effect on actual L2 attainment is still lacking, as noted by Moskovsky et al. (2016). In addition, researchers have utilized various measures of attainment to explore the influence of L2MSS constructs on L2 proficiency. Although some studies have relied on course grades as an indication of students' language attainment (e.g., Dörnyei & Chan, 2013; Yang & Kim, 2011), Lamb (2012) took a different approach by using a C-test comprising five short texts to examine the correlation between language proficiency and the three dimensions of the L2MSS. Furthermore, Moskovsky et al. (2016) employed a reading and writing English proficiency test to

assess participants' attainment. More recently, Takahashi and Im (2020) utilized an English proficiency test that only measured listening and reading skills.

Recent studies, particularly those by Papi and colleagues, have expanded our understanding of the ideal L2 self's role in language learning. Their research has demonstrated how this concept influences learners' emotions, actions, and overall language skills. Their updated 2x2 model of L2 self-guides (Papi et al., 2019) connects specific ways learners see themselves to the different learning strategies they use. Research also indicates that a growth mindset and a focus on achieving goals, linked to the ideal L2 self, can increase confidence, decrease anxiety, and create a positive learning atmosphere (Jiang & Papi, 2022; Ozdemir & Papi, 2022). Moreover, the ideal L2 self has been found to directly lead to better speaking and writing skills (Tahmouresi & Papi, 2021; Zhou & Papi, 2023). These findings highlight the many ways the ideal L2 self affects language learning, showing its role in creating positive feelings, encouraging active language use, and ultimately leading to improved L2 abilities (Papi & Khajavy, 2021). Additionally, recent SLA research highlights the potential of domain-specific ideal selves, particularly the ideal L2 speaking self (Zhou & Papi, 2023). This construct likely influences L2 speaking development (Fathi, Pawlak, Mehraein, et al., 2023; Lake, 2016; Zhou & Papi, 2023) by encompassing desired speaking abilities such as fluency, pronunciation, or confidence in specific tasks. Given the growing evidence for the ideal L2 self's influence, further investigation into its practical applications and impact on L2 speaking proficiency is warranted. Additionally, exploring the ideal L2 speaking self in detail is crucial for a deeper understanding of SLA dynamics.

Although these studies provide recent insights into the role of the ideal L2 self in language learning, a notable gap persists in understanding its direct impact on L2 speaking proficiency, especially in the context of EFL learners. Most research has focused on the relationship between the ideal L2 self and learners' intentions or general language proficiency, leaving the specific influence on speaking skills relatively unexplored. This study aims to address this gap by directly examining the relationship between the ideal L2 speaking self and L2 speaking proficiency, contributing to a more nuanced understanding of the role of self-concept in the development of this crucial language skill.

2.3. Grit in L2 education

Research exploring the relationship between students' personality traits and their L2 learning has gained significant prominence in the field of L2 education, and this trend is expected to continue expanding in the relevant literature (e.g., Dörnyei & Ryan, 2015; Zhao, Sun, et al., 2023). This increasing interest stems from

the recognition of the complex nature of language acquisition and the expanding role of psycho-emotional factors in this process (Derakhshan & Fathi, 2023). The concept of grit, introduced by Duckworth et al. (2007), has recently gained attention in language education, drawing interest from both practitioners and researchers (e.g., Sudina & Plonsky, 2021b; Teimouri et al., 2020; Teimouri et al., 2021).

As a non-cognitive, higher-order psycho-emotional construct, grit involves a steadfast commitment to facing challenges, persisting with determination and enthusiasm despite setbacks, obstacles, and periods of stagnation (Duckworth et al., 2007). Grit, as defined by Duckworth et al. (2007), consists of two components: perseverance of effort (PoE) and consistency of interest (CoI), also referred to as passion. PoE allows individuals to persist in their pursuits and overcome challenges (Teimouri et al., 2020), while CoI helps them remain committed and focused on their goals, enabling them to engage in deliberate practice and ultimately achieve mastery (Credé et al., 2017).

SLA research has investigated both general grit (e.g., Wei et al., 2019; Zhao, Sun, et al., 2023) and grit specific to language learning (e.g., Sudina & Plonsky, 2021b; Teimouri et al., 2020). Although the findings vary (Oxford & Khajavy, 2021; Teimouri et al., 2020), a consistent trend indicates that general grit, as a holistic construct, is positively associated with L2 attainment (e.g., Wei et al., 2019). However, a number of studies have shown that the significance of grit may differ greatly when considering its two separate factors, namely PoE and CoI, as independent components (e.g., Khajavy et al., 2021). Notably, CoI has been mostly found to be non-significant or only weakly associated with various L2 variables, including attainment (e.g., Khajavy & Aghaee, 2022) or motivational intensity and persistence (Feng & Papi, 2020). Conversely, Sudina and Plonsky (2021a) reported divergent outcomes. Their research indicated that, in the context of FL attainment, CoI demonstrated stronger predictive power compared to PoE. These mixed findings and the context-specific nature of grit have led to growing calls for investigating domain-specific grit within the L2 context (Teimouri et al., 2021). Furthermore, the unique impact of L2-specific grit on language learning has been receiving more attention. Teimouri et al. (2020) noted that L2 grit shows stronger correlations with both motivation and attainment compared to general grit. Pawlak et al. (2022) suggested that L2 grit could potentially mediate the relationship between students' emotions (such as anxiety, enjoyment, and boredom) and their motivated learning behaviors.

This study introduces the concept of L2 speaking-specific grit, a nuanced construct distinct from general L2 grit (Teimouri et al., 2021). We define L2 speaking-specific grit as the perseverance and passion learners demonstrate when facing challenges unique to oral communication in a second language. This transcends mere resilience, embodying a proactive commitment to speaking activities despite

anxieties, setbacks, or plateaus. While general L2 grit targets overall language goals, L2 speaking-specific grit addresses obstacles inherent to oral communication, such as performance anxiety, fear of mistakes, and real-time interaction. Learners with high L2 speaking-specific grit actively seek opportunities, persist through difficulties, and view setbacks as learning experiences.

Previous research, while illuminating the general role of grit in L2 learning, has lacked focus on its specific contribution to L2 speaking. Given the domain-specific nature of grit (Pawlak et al., 2024), we propose that L2 speaking-specific grit offers a more nuanced understanding of perseverance and passion in oral communication. This aligns with research suggesting L2-specific grit as a stronger predictor of specific language skills (Cheng, 2021; Li & Yang, 2023; Pawlak et al., 2024; Sudina & Plonsky, 2021a). Moreover, as learners prioritize different aspects of language learning (e.g., fluency vs. accuracy) (Pawlak et al., 2024), investigating L2 speaking-specific grit is crucial. It allows us to understand how learners navigate the emotional and social complexities of oral communication, ultimately transforming their dedication into improved speaking proficiency.

By introducing L2 speaking-specific grit, we aim to capture the unique motivational and behavioral patterns driving success in L2 speaking. We hypothesize its crucial mediating role between positive emotions (e.g., enjoyment) and L2 speaking attainment. Through this lens, we can better comprehend how learners navigate the challenges of oral communication, turning passion and perseverance into tangible gains.

3. The hypothesized model

The purpose of our conceptual model (see Figure 1) is to illuminate the intricate relationships among positive psychological factors and L2 speaking proficiency. To this end, we formulated a series of hypotheses that provide insight into the hypothesized direct and mediating influences of foreign language speaking enjoyment, ideal L2 speaking self, and L2 speaking grit on L2 speaking proficiency.

3.1. H1: Foreign language speaking enjoyment is directly related to L2 speaking proficiency

Positive emotions, exemplified by enjoyment in foreign language enjoyment, enhance L2 speaking proficiency (Ainley & Hidi, 2014; Botes et al., 2022). They foster engagement, motivation, and focus, leading to improvements in fluency, coherence, vocabulary, and pronunciation (UCLES, 2011). This supportive environment,

free from fear and judgment (Dewaele, 2022), allows learners to experiment and grow (Dewaele & MacIntyre, 2016). The resulting success further fuels enjoyment, creating a positive cycle that boosts L2 speaking proficiency (Fredrickson, 2001).

3.2. H2: The ideal L2 speaking self is directly related to L2 speaking proficiency

Embedded in Dörnyei's L2MSS, the ideal L2 self underscores the motivational force of envisioning language proficiency (Dörnyei, 2009; Saito et al., 2018). Extending to speaking, we posit a direct link between the ideal L2 speaking self and L2 speaking proficiency. A prominent ideal L2 self promotes risk-taking, swift information processing (Papi et al., 2023), and persistent language use (Sato, 2017). These traits cultivate fluent and intricate L2 speech patterns (Papi et al., 2023). Envisioning oneself as a skilled speaker allows setting ambitious goals, driving engagement and skill refinement. The ideal self's aspiration for proficiency fuels persistent practice, bridging ability gaps. This alignment fosters sustained, deliberate effort, nurturing speaking expertise.

3.3. H3: L2 speaking grit mediates the relationship between foreign language speaking enjoyment and L2 speaking proficiency

The educational role of grit emphasizes its significance in fostering persistence and attainment (Alamer, 2021; Teimouri et al., 2021). In the context of speaking, we propose L2 speaking grit as a mediator channeling foreign language speaking enjoyment's influence on L2 speaking proficiency. The unwavering determination fostered by grit aligns with the challenges of developing speaking skills. Heightened enjoyment in speaking activities enhances perseverance, engagement, and practice (Elahi Shirvan et al., 2021). The dedication promoted by grit parallels sustained enthusiasm for speaking (Teimouri et al., 2020), synergistically driving learners to refine their speaking skills. Thus, L2 speaking grit serves as a vital bridge, translating foreign language speaking enjoyment into tangible gains in L2 speaking proficiency.

3.4. H4: L2 speaking grit mediates the relationship between the ideal L2 speaking self and L2 speaking proficiency

We propose L2 speaking grit as a key intermediary bridging this gap and promoting L2 speaking proficiency. Research supports a link between learners' envisioned future selves and their commitment to language learning (Feng & Papi, 2020).

A clear self-image as a proficient speaker fosters both grit and language goals (Lan et al., 2021; Papi & Teimouri, 2012). The core element of perseverance embodied in grit aligns with speaking proficiency demands, while the enduring interest element of grit mirrors the ideal self's passion. Learners who manifest these facets of L2 speaking grit tend to cultivate consistent practice, obstacle-overcoming strategies, and ultimately, enhanced speaking skills. L2 speaking grit acts as a catalyst, transforming aspirations into tangible speaking gains (Teimouri et al., 2020; Zhao et al., 2023).
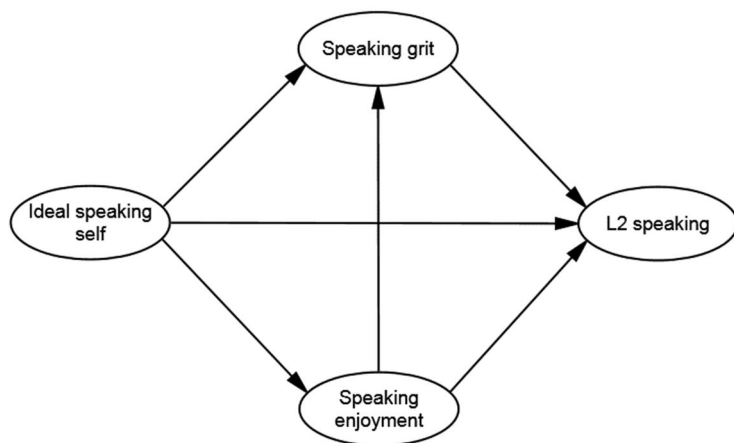
Figure 1 The hypothesized model

4. Methods

4.1. Participants

This study involved a total of 271 EFL learners from Iran who participated in the research. These participants were recruited from specialized International English Language Testing System (IELTS) speaking preparation courses offered at various branches of a prominent private educational institute in Iran. These specialized courses differed from most standard IELTS preparation programs by offering an intensive focus on developing speaking proficiency specifically for the IELTS exam, while still integrating instruction in the other three language skills (reading, writing, and listening) to a lesser degree. All participants were classified as having a B1 proficiency level according to the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages*, often abbreviated as CEFR (Council of Europe, 2020).

The participant pool demonstrated a well-balanced gender distribution, with 159 individuals (58.7%) identifying as female and 112 (41.3%) as male. Their ages ranged from 19 to 29 years, with an average age of 22.08 (*SD* = 3.34) years.

The participants came from diverse academic backgrounds encompassing fields such as engineering, social sciences, natural sciences, humanities, and business studies. Farsi was the predominant first language for all participants.

In terms of their English language learning experience, participants reported an average of seven years of exposure, encompassing formal education in schools or universities, self-study efforts, and participation in extracurricular English language programs. Their learning pathways were varied, with affiliations to diverse institutions including universities, language schools, and private institutes. To ensure a homogeneous level of English language proficiency amongst participants, the institute administered a mock IELTS exam prior to their inclusion in the study. This exam was developed by the institute's experienced IELTS instructors, utilizing a combination of original materials from reputable IELTS preparation resources (e.g., Cambridge IELTS practice tests). The final exam underwent a review process by multiple instructors to ensure content validity and adherence to IELTS standards.

4.2. Instruments

This study employed self-report measures (see Appendix A) to evaluate key psychological factors related to L2 speaking proficiency. This strategy aimed to improve the accuracy of our assessment by using instruments that capture the unique aspects and complexities of the psychological elements pertinent to speaking skills, rather than relying on more general measures that might overlook the specific context of L2 speaking.

4.2.1. L2 speaking grit scale

To measure speaking grit in the context of English language learning, we adapted and slightly modified the items of the L2 grit scale developed by Teimouri et al. (2020). This scale consists of two subscales: perseverance of effort (PoE), which includes five items (e.g., "I am a hard-working learner when it comes to English speaking"), and consistency of interest (CoI), which includes four items (e.g., "I think I have lost my interest in learning English speaking").

4.2.2. Foreign language speaking enjoyment scale

To gauge participants' general enjoyment of L2 speaking, the study employed a scale adapted from the instrument developed by Zhao, Zhu, et al. (2023). This

5-item scale (see Appendix A), originally derived from prior research by Saito et al. (2018) and Teimouri (2017), was modified to focus specifically on enjoyment derived from speaking the L2, rather than enjoyment within a particular course context. The respondents were asked to rate each item on a 5-point Likert scale, with the following response options: 1 ("strongly disagree"), 2 ("disagree"), 3 ("neither agree nor disagree"), 4 ("agree"), and 5 ("strongly agree"). Two examples of the items are: "It is cool to know the knowledge of English speaking" and "I feel proud of my accomplishments in English speaking."

4.2.3. The ideal L2 speaking self

The ideal L2 speaking self scale devised by Han and Hiver (2018), originally intended for writing contexts, was adapted slightly for speaking scenarios in this study. Each item in the scale was subject to slight modifications to ensure its relevance to L2 speaking assessment. The participants responded to the six-point response scale items, ranging from 1 ("strongly disagree") to 6 ("strongly agree"). Two sample items are the following: "I can imagine myself speaking to my foreign friends or colleagues in English" and "I can imagine myself speaking in English as if I were a native speaker of English."

4.2.4. L2 speaking proficiency

To evaluate the participants' speaking proficiency, a series of speaking tasks was administered based on the IELTS speaking assessment criteria. The selection of speaking tasks for the study was informed by established IELTS speaking resources (e.g., McCarter, 2012).

The assessment involved a series of speaking tasks (see Appendix B) that gradually increased in complexity to gauge the participants' L2 speaking skills. It began with a brief introduction and interview (Part 1) to assess basic fluency and vocabulary. Next, participants were asked to present a short speech on a given topic (Part 2), which tested their ability to organize thoughts and elaborate on ideas. In Part 3, they engaged in discussions with the interviewers, demonstrating their conversational abilities. The final task (Part 4) delved into a broader global issue, requiring participants to express complex opinions and showcase their overall language proficiency.

The participants' speaking ability was assessed according to the IELTS speaking band descriptors (see Appendix C), which encompassed various aspects such as fluency and coherence, lexical resource, grammatical range and accuracy, and

pronunciation, in alignment with UCLES (2011) guidelines. The evaluation process aimed to minimize subjectivity by involving two experienced IELTS assessors alongside the research team. The overall speaking score was computed by averaging the ratings across the different criteria. To ensure reliability, the consistency among raters was assessed by comparing the evaluations provided by the three raters for all students, which showed a high level of agreement ($r = .86$).

4.3. Initial piloting

To ensure the adapted scales' face and content validity, we meticulously reviewed and refined them to align more specifically and precisely with the L2 speaking context. Expert feedback was also incorporated to further validate the scales. A pilot run involving 28 participants from the same target population as the main study was conducted. These participants completed the scales and provided feedback on their clarity and relevance. The pilot run results highlighted minor issues with some scale items. Participants noted that the wording of certain items was ambiguous and that a few items lacked context specific to L2 speaking experiences. Additionally, some response options did not fully capture the range of perspectives. Based on this feedback, we made further refinements to the scales. Ambiguous wording was clarified, missing context was added to relevant items, and response options were expanded where necessary. These adjustments were made to enhance the clarity and relevance of the scales for the main study.

4.4. Procedure

The participants were recruited from various branches of a well-regarded language school, where they were enrolled in IELTS speaking courses. Collaboration with the school ensured clear communication of the research's purpose, procedures, and data confidentiality. Invitations to participate were voluntary, and informed consent was obtained from each participant prior to their involvement.

   After securing consent, participants completed a demographic questionnaire that collected information on gender, age, educational background, and language learning experiences. They then accessed an online survey platform to complete validated scales measuring key speaking-related variables, including speaking grit, enjoyment of speaking, and ideal L2 speaking self-perceptions. The online survey was designed to be completed in approximately 20 minutes, allowing participants to proceed at their own pace. To ensure the validity of L2 speaking proficiency assessments, a separate face-to-face session was conducted.

Participants engaged in speaking tasks adapted from IELTS resources and aligned with IELTS speaking assessment criteria. These tasks were administered in a controlled environment to minimize distractions and technical issues, covering a range of topics and difficulty levels to provide a comprehensive evaluation of speaking proficiency.

Three experienced IELTS assessors, each with at least five years of experience rating IELTS speaking exams, administered and evaluated the speaking tasks. To ensure consistent scoring, the assessors participated in a two-day training session led by a certified IELTS examiner trainer. This training focused on the specific application of IELTS speaking assessment criteria and included practice rating sessions with sample recordings. Weekly calibration sessions were held throughout the assessment period, where assessors discussed and resolved any discrepancies in their ratings. These sessions were moderated by the examiner trainer to ensure alignment with official IELTS standards. Short breaks were included between tasks to prevent participant fatigue, and the order of tasks was randomized for each participant to mitigate potential bias.

The online survey, which measured the speaking-related variables under investigation, was conducted in English and achieved a 71% completion rate, reflecting high participant engagement. The data collection phase spanned eight weeks, allowing participants the flexibility to complete the survey and attend assessments at their convenience. This period ran from April 1, 2023, to May 31, 2023, accommodating diverse schedules and ensuring thorough data collection. Ethical guidelines were strictly followed throughout the study, emphasizing participant confidentiality, voluntary participation, and informed consent. A stringent anonymization process using codes ensured the confidentiality of all collected data, reinforcing the ethical integrity of the research.

4.5. Data analysis

Descriptive and correlation analyses were conducted using SPSS version 26.0 in the initial phase to explore the interrelationships among the variables. To ensure the construct validity of the adapted scales, a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was performed to evaluate the measurement model. For hypothesis testing, structural equation modeling (SEM) was executed using Amos software (version 25.0) with maximum likelihood (ML) estimation. The evaluation of the measurement and structural models adhered to Anderson and Gerbing's (1988) guidelines.

Missing data were addressed using Little's Missing Completely at Random (MCAR) test (Little, 1988) to confirm that data were missing randomly and not systematically related to any other variable. Listwise deletion was employed due to the relatively small sample size and minimal missing data (anticipated <5%).

Prior to SEM analysis, all assumptions for normality, linearity, and homoscedasticity were checked. Skewness and kurtosis values were examined for normality, with thresholds of | skewness | < 3 and | kurtosis | < 7 considered acceptable (Kline, 2023). Scatterplots and residual plots were visually inspected to assess linearity and homoscedasticity, respectively.

To gauge the overall model fit, various fit indices were employed, encompassing the χ2-to-degree of freedom ratio (χ2/df), goodness of fit index (GFI), comparative fit index (CFI), root-mean-square error of approximation (RMSEA), and standardized root-mean-square residual (SRMR). The acceptability of the χ2/df ratio was established by a value below 3 and a *p*-value exceeding .05 (Hu & Bentler, 1999). A threshold of .90 or higher for GFI, CFI, and TLI values indicated favorable fit (Marsh et al., 2004), while a good fit was affirmed by RMSEA < .08 and SRMR < .10 (Kline, 2023).

5. Results

The data analysis began with conducting a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) to evaluate the measurement model. Items exhibiting factor loadings below .50 were excluded, leading to the removal of one ideal speaking self item (Id6) and one speaking grit item (Gr6) for model refinement (see Table 1). The refined model demonstrated robust fit indices: (χ2 = 369.25, df = 182, χ2/df = 2.03, *p* < .001; CFI = .94, TLI = .93, RMSEA = .07 (90% CI for RMSEA = [.05, .09]).

Convergent validity was confirmed using average variance extracted (AVE) for each variable in Table 1. All AVE values exceeded the .50 threshold, indicating that indicators effectively captured variance (Anderson & Gerbing, 1988). Maximum shared variance (MSV) and average shared variance (ASV) had lower values than AVE. Fornell and Larcker (1981) suggest that the AVE for each construct should be greater than the shared variances (MSV and ASV) with other constructs. In the present study, all AVE values exceeded the corresponding MSV and ASV values, indicating that each construct shares more variance with its own indicators than with indicators of other constructs, thus supporting discriminant validity. Additionally, we followed the recommendations of Hair et al. (2019), who advise examining the magnitude of the differences between AVE and MSV/ASV. In our study, these differences were all substantial, ranging from .035 (for the "PoE" construct) to .055 (for the "enjoyment" construct), lending further support to the discriminant validity of our constructs.

Table 1 Results of measurement model

Variable	Indicators	AVE	MSV	ASV	Cronbach's α/CR	Standardized factor loadings	t-value
Ideal self	Id1	.621	.563	.425	.853/.853	.77	10.683***
	Id2					.64	9.791***
	Id3					.73	10.052***
	Id4					.82	11.189***
	Id5					.78	10.648***
Enjoyment	En1	.642	.596	.573	.931/.931	.75	9.137***
	En2					.69	9.876***
	En3					.76	11.437***
	En4					.85	12.025***
	En5					.69	10.283***
PoE	Gr1	.601	.566	.427	.847/.847	.81	11.324***
	Gr2					.79	11.135***
	Gr3					.81	11.421***
	Gr4					.79	10.886***
CoI	Gr5	.593	.548	.416	.815/.815	.66	9.618***
	Gr7					.73	10.283***
	Gr8					.87	12.696***
	Gr9					.90	12.847***

Note. AVE = average variance extracted; MSV = maximum shared variance; ASV = average shared variance; and CR = construct or composite reliability; *** significant at the .001 significance level ($N = 271$)

Discriminant validity was established by comparing AVEs with squared correlation coefficients in Table 2, aligning with Fornell and Larcker's (1981) guidelines. Adequate discriminant validity was shown when AVE values surpassing squared correlations. The robust measurement model encompassed significant factor loadings, fitting AVE, MSV, and ASV values, as well as model adjustments, affirming measurement reliability for this study's purpose. Furthermore, to address potential common method bias, a Harman's one-factor test (Podsakoff & Organ, 1986) was conducted. The results indicated that a single factor accounted for 44.07% of variance, dispelling concerns about significant common method bias in the study.

Table 2 Discriminant validity

	1	2	3	4
1. Grit	.584			
2. Ideal self	.122**	.621		
3. Enjoyment	.260**	.240**	.642	

Note. The diagonal line values = AVE; the off-diagonal line values = squared correlation coefficients of one factor with another factor; ** shows significance level of $p < .01$.

Table 3 presents the descriptive statistics and correlations for the study variables. All variables exhibited normal distributions, with skewness values ranging from .21 to .24 and kurtosis values between .09 and .14, falling within the acceptable range for parametric analyses (Hair et al., 2019). Mean scores (*M*) and standard

deviations (*SD*) are reported for all variables. L2 speaking proficiency had the highest mean score (*M* = 6.38, *SD* = 1.32), followed by the ideal L2 speaking self (*M* = 3.63, *SD* = .63). Grit (*M* = 3.14, *SD* = .59) and CoI (*M* = 2.88, *SD* = .54) within the L2 speaking grit scale displayed slightly lower means. Foreign language speaking enjoyment scores (*M* = 2.96, *SD* = .72) fell within the mid-range.

Table 3 Descriptive statistics and correlations

	M	*SD*	Skewness	Kurtosis	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Grit	3.14	.59	-.15	-.08	1					
2. PoE	3.38	.61	.24	.14	.78**	1				
3. CoI	2.88	.54	-.13	-.09	.64**	.58**	1			
4. Ideal self	3.63	.63	-.16	-.11	.35**	.37**	.33**	1		
5. Enjoyment	2.96	.72	-.21	.09	.51**	.48**	.52**	.49**	1	
6. L2 speaking	6.38	1.32	-.17	-.22	.46**	.44**	.48**	.54**	.48**	1

Note. CoI: consistency of interest; PoE: perseverance of efforts; **$p < .01$ (*N* = 271)

Moreover, all correlations were statistically significant at the *p* < .01 level (two-tailed). Positive correlations were observed between all variables, indicating that higher scores on one variable tended to be associated with higher scores on other variables. The strongest correlation was found between grit and PoE (*r* = .78, 95% CI [.73, .82]). This was followed by the correlation between grit and CoI (*r* = .64, 95% CI [.58, .70]). Positive correlations were also observed between the ideal L2 self and both PoE (*r* = .37, 95% CI [.31, .43]) and CoI (*r* = .33, 95% CI [.27, .39]). Similarly, positive correlations were found between L2 enjoyment and all other variables, ranging from *r* = .35, 95% CI [.29, .41] to *r* = .54, 95% CI [.48, .60]. L2 speaking proficiency demonstrated positive correlations with all other variables, with the strongest associations being with the ideal L2 self (*r* = .54, 95% CI [.48, .60]) and CoI (*r* = .48, 95% CI [.42, .54]).

The subsequent phase of analysis involved conducting a SEM analysis to delve into the intricate relationships within the proposed model. The assessment of model fit was carried out through various fit indices, corroborating the compatibility of the model with the observed data. The fit indices indicated a good fit of the model to the data: χ2 = 250.80, df = 160, χ2/df = 1.57, *p* < .001; CFI = .95, TLI = .94, RMSEA = .04 (90% CI for RMSEA = [.03, .05]). Figure 2 illustrates the pathways discerned in the structural model. Notably, all the path coefficients were found to be statistically significant, further affirming the robustness of the associations hypothesized within the conceptual framework.

Table 4 presents the outcomes of the SEM analysis, showing the path coefficients that demonstrate the interconnectedness among the constructs within the proposed model. As seen in Table 4, the ideal speaking self plays a central role, positively influencing both speaking grit (*β* = .412, CR = 11.389, *p* < .001) and

speaking enjoyment (β = .394, CR = 9.310, p < .001), as well as exerting a positive impact on L2 speaking proficiency (β = .432, CR = 11.054, p < .001). Furthermore, the relationship between speaking enjoyment and speaking grit is also affirmed, with a positive association observed (β = .347, CR = 7.713, p < .001). Likewise, the connection between speaking enjoyment and L2 speaking proficiency is established, indicating a positive link (β = .284, CR = 6.042, p < .001). Finally, the constructive role of speaking grit in predicting L2 speaking proficiency is highlighted, displaying a positive relationship (β = .326, CR = 6.785, p < .001).
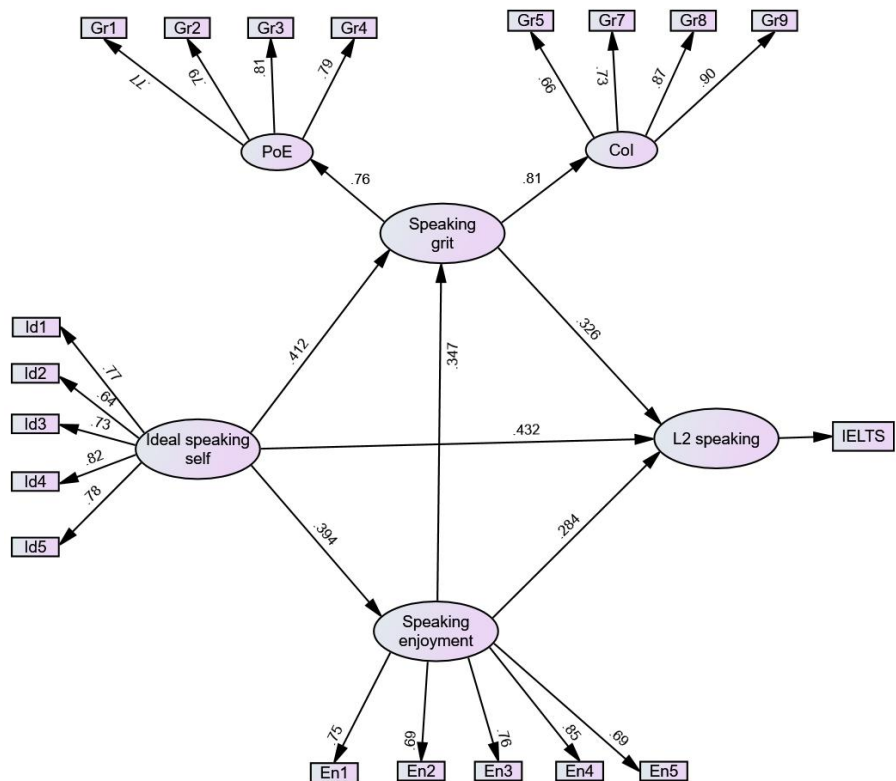

Figure 2 The final model (the figure displays standardized coefficients, N = 271)

Table 4 Path coefficients from structural equation modeling

Path relationship	β	Weight	SE	CR	p
Ideal speaking self → Speaking grit	.412	.550	.036	11.389	p < .001
Ideal speaking self → Speaking enjoyment	.394	.480	.042	9.310	p < .001
Ideal speaking self → L2 speaking proficiency	.432	.570	.039	11.054	p < .001
Speaking enjoyment → Speaking grit	.347	.420	.045	7.713	p < .001
Speaking enjoyment → L2 speaking proficiency	.284	.380	.047	6.042	p < .001
Speaking grit → L2 speaking proficiency	.326	.410	.048	6.785	p < .001

Furthermore, to examine the significance of indirect effects within the conceptual model, a latent variable mediation analysis was conducted using bootstrapping procedures. This approach allows for the estimation and testing of indirect effects while accounting for measurement error (Hayes, 2013). Following Hayes' (2013) recommendations for a robust approach, a total of 5,000 resamples were generated to ensure a robust approach. The results of the bootstrapping analyses are shown in Table 5. As indicated in Table 5, all three specific indirect effects were statistically significant at the $p < .05$ level. The ideal speaking self was found to indirectly influence L2 speaking proficiency through both speaking enjoyment ($\beta = .111$, 95% CI [.055, .167]) and speaking grit ($\beta = .134$, 95% CI [.092, .186]). Furthermore, speaking enjoyment was found to have a significant indirect effect on L2 speaking through speaking grit ($\beta = .113$, 95% CI [.059, .166]).

The significant indirect effects observed in the bootstrapping analyses suggest partial mediation. This implies that the ideal L2 speaking self exerts its influence on L2 speaking not only directly but also indirectly through the mediating roles of speaking enjoyment and speaking grit. However, a significant direct effect of the ideal L2 speaking self on L2 speaking proficiency was also observed in the path coefficient analysis (see Table 4), confirming that this construct continues to exert a positive influence on L2 speaking proficiency even after accounting for the mediating effects.

Table 5 Bootstrapping analyses of results of indirect effects

Independent variable	Mediator variable	Dependent variable	Standardized path coefficient (β)	SE	Estimate (95% CI)
Ideal self →	Grit →	L2 speaking	.134*	.028	[.092, .186]
Ideal self →	FLE →	L2 speaking	.111*	.033	[.055, .167]
FLE →	Grit →	L2 speaking	.113*	.032	[.059, .166]
Ideal self →	FLE → Grit→	L2 speaking	.044	.013	[.018, .070]

Note. Ideal self = ideal speaking self; Grit = speaking grit; FLE = speaking enjoyment; SE = standard error; bootstrap is based on 5,000 resamples (Hayes, 2013); *$p < .05$

6. Discussion

The present study investigated the potential interplay among positive psychology factors and L2 speaking proficiency within the context of EFL learners. Employing SEM, our analysis revealed notable insights into the relationships among these psychological constructs and L2 speaking proficiency.

Firstly, our findings indicated a substantial correlation between foreign language speaking enjoyment and L2 speaking proficiency, supporting H1. This finding aligns with the broaden-and-build theory of positive emotions (Fredrickson, 2001),

which posits that positive emotions broaden an individual's cognitive and behavioral repertoire, facilitating the building of enduring personal resources. In the context of L2 acquisition, the enjoyment derived from successful communication can expand learners' attentional focus, enhance their cognitive flexibility, and promote the development of creative and effective speaking strategies. These broadened capacities can, in turn, lead to improved L2 acquisition and performance (Bielak, 2022; Dewaele & Li, 2022; Zare et al., 2023).

The observed link between foreign language speaking enjoyment and L2 speaking proficiency can also be attributed to the strong motivational influence of positive emotions on learners (Li, 2020). This motivation increases their willingness to participate in speaking practice, engage in interactive activities, and seek opportunities to use the target language (Dewaele, 2022; Fathi, Pawlak, Mehrein, et al., 2023). The increased engagement, fueled by enjoyment, enables learners to gain the necessary practice and exposure to develop their speaking skills (Lee et al., 2022). Extensive research on FLE consistently highlights its positive impact on various language learning outcomes, including proficiency (Botes et al., 2022; Dewaele & Alfawzan, 2018; Li, 2020). Positive emotional experiences in the language classroom are closely linked to increased motivation, sustained engagement, and dedication to language learning activities (Mohammad Hosseini et al., 2022). These motivational factors collectively enhance language learning outcomes, with speaking proficiency being a significant result (Dewaele, 2022). Further deepening our understanding, the bidirectional relationship suggested by Dewaele and MacIntyre (2016) offers a plausible explanation for the observed association. It can be argued that foreign language speaking enjoyment and L2 speaking proficiency reinforce each other. Specifically, learners who enjoy speaking are more likely to invest in improving their speaking skills. As they progress and their competence grows, their enjoyment increases, creating a positive feedback loop that fosters ongoing motivation and engagement (Mikami, 2020), thus enhancing speaking proficiency over time. This direct relationship underscores the critical role that affective factors play in the process of L2 acquisition (Dewaele & MacIntyre, 2014; Piniel & Albert, 2018).

Additionally, our study highlighted the significant impact of the ideal speaking self on L2 speaking proficiency, supporting H2. Participants who envision themselves as proficient L2 speakers tend to achieve higher levels of speaking proficiency. This finding emphasizes the powerful influence of motivational factors and self-perception on language learning outcomes (Dörnyei & Chan, 2013; Kim & Kim, 2014; Sato, 2017). This insight aligns with the theoretical foundations of the L2MSS and the broader framework demonstrating how self-concept can significantly guide individuals' efforts and achievements (Dörnyei, 2005, 2009).

The concept of the ideal self is fundamental to the L2MSS (Dörnyei, 2009), asserting that learners' motivation is closely linked to their envisioned future

selves as proficient language users. Specifically, the ideal L2 speaking self captures learners' aspirations to become effective and confident speakers of the target language. This vision drives their attitudes, efforts, and behaviors toward achieving this ideal (Papi et al., 2023). This concept aligns with Higgins' (1987) self-discrepancy theory, which suggests that individuals strive to reduce the gap between their actual and ideal selves. The connection between the ideal speaking self and learners' current speaking abilities acts as a catalyst for motivation and effort. Through this perspective, the direct correlation between the ideal speaking self and L2 speaking proficiency becomes clear: Learners who closely identify with their ideal image as proficient speakers are more likely to dedicate time, effort, and energy to improving their speaking skills (Sato, 2017). The desire to close the gap between their current and ideal speaking selves motivates them to engage in speaking activities, seek practice opportunities, and overcome challenges. Empirical evidence supporting this finding is rooted in previous research exploring the role of the ideal L2 self in language learning (Henry & Cliffordson, 2015). Studies within the L2MSS framework frequently highlight the impact of the ideal self on learners' motivation and language learning efforts (Dörnyei, 2009; Kim & Kim, 2021).

Thirdly, our study revealed a noteworthy mediation effect of L2 speaking grit in the relationship between foreign language speaking enjoyment and L2 speaking proficiency, supporting H3. This result aligns with the expanding body of research that highlights the diverse role of non-cognitive factors in shaping learners' language learning paths (Pawlak et al., 2022; Teimouri et al., 2020; Teimouri et al., 2021). The observed mediating role of L2 speaking grit emphasizes the importance of perseverance of effort and consistency of interest in the development of L2 speaking proficiency. As a higher-order non-cognitive construct, grit involves a steadfast commitment to overcoming obstacles and persistently pursuing goals, supported by both PoE and CoI (Duckworth et al., 2007). Our findings indicate that learners who enjoy L2 speaking activities are more likely to engage in sustained, focused practice and show resilience when faced with challenges, leading to improved speaking proficiency. This supports the idea that positive emotions encourage learners to invest more time and effort in their learning activities (Fredrickson, 2001).

Additionally, the mediating role of L2 speaking grit offers empirical backing for the theory that positive emotions, such as enjoyment, are crucial in motivating learners to tackle challenges and actively participate in learning tasks (Fredrickson, 2001; Khajavy & Aghaee, 2022). The combination of enjoyment-driven perseverance and determination within the framework of L2 speaking grit creates an environment where learners turn their positive emotional experiences into concrete actions aimed at improving their speaking skills (Elahi Shirvan

et al., 2021). Consequently, L2 speaking grit acts as a conduit that transforms the positive effects of L2 speaking enjoyment into tangible improvements in L2 speaking proficiency (Teimouri et al., 2020).

Finally, our study uncovered that L2 speaking grit served as a vital mediator in clarifying the relationship between the ideal L2 speaking self and L2 speaking proficiency, supporting H4. This finding deepens our understanding of the motivational and psychological mechanisms driving language learning outcomes, highlighting the critical role of grit in connecting learners' aspirational visions with their actual L2 abilities (Alamer, 2021; Elahi Shirvan & Alamer, 2022). The mediating role of L2 speaking grit is especially significant within the L2MSS framework (Dörnyei, 2009). In this model, the ideal speaking self represents learners' forward-looking vision of themselves as proficient and confident speakers. This ideal self acts as a powerful source of motivation, guiding learners' actions, attitudes, and efforts toward achieving their linguistic goals (Lan et al., 2021).

Our findings are consistent with the fundamental principles of the L2MSS, where aligning learners' ideal self-concept with their current competencies drives their motivation to close the gap (Dörnyei, 2005, 2009). The role of L2 speaking grit as a mediator reinforces the idea that a strong identification with one's ideal speaking self encourages learners to bridge this gap through dedicated practice and unwavering commitment (Papi & Teimouri, 2012). The elements of grit – perseverance of effort and consistency of interest – are critical drivers of progress in speaking proficiency (Lan et al., 2021). This mediating role underscores the practical importance of non-cognitive factors in language learning (Derakhshan & Fathi, 2023; Zhao, Sun, et al., 2023). The ideal L2 speaking self sparks motivation, while grit propels learners from motivation to tangible action. This aligns with the broader understanding of grit as a multifaceted construct involving the ability to overcome challenges and persist over time (Duckworth et al., 2007). The mediating effect highlights grit as a transformative force, turning aspirations into achievements in speaking proficiency.

Overall, this study makes several novel contributions to L2 speaking research. First, by focusing specifically on L2 speaking, we have uncovered unique interactions between positive psychological constructs (i.e., enjoyment, ideal self, and grit) and speaking proficiency, offering insights that are not fully applicable to other language skills. Second, our integrated theoretical framework, which combines the L2MSS framework with the broaden-and-build theory and the concept of grit, provides a more comprehensive examination of the interplay between motivational, emotional, and perseverance-related factors in L2 speaking development. Third, by highlighting the mediating role of L2 speaking grit, we have revealed how positive emotions and self-concept translate into improved speaking skills, extending previous research that primarily focused on

direct relationships. Finally, our findings emphasize the importance of incorporating positive psychology principles into L2 speaking instruction to foster enjoyment, nurture the ideal L2 self, and cultivate grit, thereby enhancing learner motivation, engagement, and ultimately, speaking proficiency.

7. Conclusion

This study examined the relationships between positive psychological constructs, self-concept, determination, and L2 speaking proficiency. The results confirmed the hypothesized relationships among these constructs. Importantly, the study revealed that foreign language speaking enjoyment and the ideal L2 speaking self directly impact L2 speaking proficiency, with L2 speaking grit serving as a mediator. These findings may advance SLA theory by deepening our understanding of the complex interactions between positive psychological constructs and personality traits. The mediation effect of L2 speaking grit sheds light on the mechanisms linking positive emotions, self-concept, and language proficiency. This supports the principles of the L2MSS, emphasizing the connections between learners' ideal selves, motivation, and language proficiency. Our empirical evidence underscores the importance of domain-specific personality trait conceptualizations in understanding the multifaceted influences on language learning.

This research offers practical suggestions for creating more effective L2 speaking environments. Our findings, in line with studies highlighting the importance of enjoyment in language learning (Dewaele & MacIntyre, 2014), suggest that educators can enhance L2 speaking proficiency by making classroom experiences enjoyable. Techniques such as interactive games, role-playing, and simulations can make speaking practice more engaging (Lee et al., 2022). Furthermore, connecting the L2 to learners' personal interests and hobbies can boost intrinsic motivation and foster a positive emotional connection to the language (Kormos et al., 2011). Our results also support the L2MSS, which emphasizes the significance of the ideal L2 self in motivating language learning (Dörnyei, 2009). Educators can encourage learners to envision their ideal L2 speaking self through activities like creating vision boards or setting specific, achievable goals. These strategies can help learners build confidence and maintain consistent effort toward improving their speaking skills (Chan, 2014). Additionally, our study underscores the importance of L2 speaking grit, a crucial factor in language learning success (Duckworth et al., 2007). Initiatives such as peer mentorship programs and self-reflection prompts can promote perseverance and consistency, aiding learners in developing the resilience needed to overcome challenges (Teimouri et al., 2021). This aligns with research on the role of grit and other non-cognitive factors in language acquisition (Datu et al., 2017).

Despite the valuable insights provided by this study, it is essential to acknowledge its limitations. First, the research focused on a specific group of EFL learners in a single country, which may limit the generalizability of the findings to other cultural and linguistic contexts. Second, cultural differences and educational variations might produce different outcomes. Additionally, the study relied on self-report measures, which can introduce response biases. Incorporating more objective assessment methods could strengthen future research. Moreover, the cross-sectional design limits the ability to establish causal relationships; correlations do not imply causation. Longitudinal studies are needed to explore the dynamic interplay of these constructs more comprehensively. Finally, the study centered on the proposed constructs, leaving room for unexamined variables that might influence language learning outcomes. Future research should adopt a holistic approach that considers diverse factors such as individual aptitude, teaching methods, and social contexts to better understand L2 acquisition.

References

Ainley, M., & Hidi, S. (2014). Interest and enjoyment. In R. Pekrun, & L. Linnenbrink-Garcia (Eds.), *International handbook of emotions in education* (pp. 205-227). Routledge.

Alamer, A. (2021). Grit and language learning: Construct validation of L2-Grit scale and its relation to later vocabulary knowledge. *Educational Psychology, 41*(5), 544-562. https://doi.org/10.1080/01443410.2020.1867076

Al-Hoorie, A. H. (2018). The L2 motivational self system: A meta-analysis. *Studies in Second Language Learning and Teaching, 8*(4), 721-754. https://doi.org/10.14746/ssllt.2018.8.4.2

Anderson, J. C., & Gerbing, D. W. (1988). Structural equation modeling in practice: A review and recommended two-step approach. *Psychological Bulletin, 103*(3), 411-423. https://doi.org/10.1037/0033-2909.103.3.411

Augustinos, M., Walker, I., & Donaghue, J. (2006). *Social cognition.* Sage Publications.

Bielak, J. (2022). To what extent are foreign language anxiety and foreign language enjoyment related to L2 fluency? An investigation of task-specific emotions and breakdown and speed fluency in an oral task. *Language Teaching Research.* https://doi.org/10.1177/13621688221079319.

Botes, E., Dewaele, J.-M., & Greiff, S. (2020). The power to improve: Effects of multilingualism and perceived proficiency on enjoyment and anxiety in foreign language learning. *European Journal of Applied Linguistics, 8*(2), 279-306. https://doi.org/10.1515/eujal-2020-0003

Botes, E., Dewaele, J.-M., & Greiff, S. (2022). Taking stock: A meta-analysis of the effects of foreign language enjoyment. *Studies in Second Language Learning and Teaching, 12*(2), 205-232. https://doi.org/10.14746/ssllt.2022.12.2.3

Chan, L. (2014). Effects of an imagery training strategy on Chinese university students' possible second language selves and learning experiences. In K. Csizér & M. Magid (Eds.), *The impact of self-concept on language learning* (pp. 357-376). Multilingual Matters.

Cheng, H. F. (2021). The effect of language-specific grit and future self-guides on willingness to communicate in the second language. *English Teaching & Learning, 45*(3), 283-301. https://doi.org/10.1007/s42321-021-00081-7

Council of Europe (2020), *Common European framework of reference for languages: Learning, teaching, assessment – Companion volume.* Council of Europe. https://www.coe.int/en/web/common-european-framework-reference-languages

Credé, M., Tynan, M. C., & Harms, P. D. (2017). Much ado about grit: A meta-analytic synthesis of the grit literature. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 113*(3), 492-511. https://psycnet.apa.org/doi/10.1037/pspp0000102

Csizér, K. (2019). The L2 motivational self system. In M. Lamb, K. Csizér, A. Henry, & S. Ryan (Eds.), *The Palgrave handbook of motivation for language learning* (pp. 71-93). Palgrave Macmillan.

Datu, J. A. D., Yuen, M., & Chen, G. (2017). Grit and determination: A review of literature with implications for theory and research. *Journal of Psychologists and Counsellors in Schools, 27*(2), 168-176. https://doi.org/10.1017/jgc.2016.2

Derakhshan, A., & Fathi, J. (2023). Grit and foreign language enjoyment as predictors of EFL learners' online engagement: The mediating role of online learning self-efficacy. *The Asia-Pacific Education Researcher, 33*, 759-769. https://doi.org/10.1007/s40299-023-00745-x

Dewaele, J.-M. (2022). Enjoyment. In S. Li, P. Hiver, & M. Papi (Eds.), *The Routledge handbook of second language acquisition and individual differences* (pp. 190-206). Routledge.

Dewaele, J.-M., & Alfawzan, M. (2018). Does the effect of enjoyment outweigh that of anxiety in foreign language performance? *Studies in Second Language Learning and Teaching, 8*(1), 21-45. https://doi.org/10.14746/ssllt.2018.8.1.2

Dewaele, J.-M., & Li, C. (2022). Foreign language enjoyment and anxiety: Associations with general and domain-specific English achievement. *Chinese Journal of Applied Linguistics, 45*(1), 32-48. https://doi.org/10.1515/CJAL-2022-0104

Dewaele, J.-M., & MacIntyre, P. D. (2014). The two faces of Janus? Anxiety and enjoyment in the foreign language classroom. *Studies in Second Language Learning and Teaching, 4*(2), 237-274. https://doi.org/10.14746/ssllt.2014.4.2.5

Dewaele, J.-M., & MacIntyre, P. D. (2016). Foreign language enjoyment and foreign language classroom anxiety: The right and left feet of the language learner? In P. D. MacIntyre, T. Gregersen, & S. Mercer (Eds.), *Positive psychology in SLA* (pp. 215-236). Multilingual Matters.

Dewaele, J.-M., & Proietti Ergün, A. L. (2020). How different are the relations between enjoyment, anxiety, attitudes/motivation and course marks in pupils' Italian and English as Foreign languages? *Journal of the European Second Language Association, 4*(1), 45-57. https://doi.org/10.22599/jesla.65

Dörnyei, Z. (2005). *The psychology of the language learner.* Lawrence Erlbaum.

Dörnyei, Z. (2009). The L2 motivational self system. In Z. Dörnyei & E. Ushioda (Eds.), *Motivation, language identity and the L2 self* (pp. 9-42). Multilingual Matters.

Dörnyei, Z. (2014). Motivation in second language learning. In M. Celce-Murcia, D. M. Brinton, & M. A. Snow (Eds.), *Teaching English as a second or foreign language* (pp. 518-531). Cengage Learning.

Dörnyei, Z., & Chan, L. (2013). Motivation and vision: An analysis of future L2 self images, sensory styles, and imagery capacity across two target languages. *Language Learning, 63*, 437-462. https://doi.org/10.1111/lang.12005

Dörnyei, Z., & Ryan, S. (2015). *The psychology of the language learner revisited.* Routledge.

Dörnyei, Z., & Ushioda, E. (2011). *Teaching and researching motivation* (2nd ed.). Pearson Education.

Duckworth, A. L., Peterson, C., Matthews, M. D., & Kelly, D. R. (2007). Grit: Perseverance and passion for long-term goals. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 92*(6), 1087-1101. https://psycnet.apa.org/doi/10.1037/0022-3514.92.6.1087

Elahi Shirvan, M., & Alamer, A. (2022). Modeling the interplay of EFL learners' basic psychological needs, grit and L2 achievement. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development, 45*(7), 2831-2847. https://doi.org/10.1080/01434632.2022.2075002

Elahi Shirvan, M., Taherian, T., Shahnama, M., & Yazdanmehr, E. (2021). A longitudinal study of foreign language enjoyment and L2 grit: A latent growth curve modeling. *Frontiers in Psychology, 12*, 720326. https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2021.720326

Fathi, J., Pawlak, M., Kruk, M., & Naderi, M. (2023). Modelling boredom in the EFL context: An investigation of the role of coping self-efficacy, mindfulness, and foreign language enjoyment. *Language Teaching Research*. https://doi.org/10.1177/13621688231182176

Fathi, J., Pawlak, M., Mehraein, S., Hosseini, H. M., & Derakhshesh, A. (2023). Foreign language enjoyment, ideal L2 self, and intercultural communicative competence as predictors of willingness to communicate among EFL learners. S*ystem, 115*, 103067. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.system.2023.103067

Feng, L., & Papi, M. (2020). Persistence in language learning: The role of grit and future self-guides. *Learning and Individual Differences, 81*, 101904. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.lindif.2020.101904

Fornell, C., & Larcker, D. F. (1981). Evaluating structural equation models with unobservable variables and measurement error. *Journal of Marketing Research, 18*(1), 39-50. https://doi.org/10.1177/002224378101800104

Fredrickson, B. L. (2001). The role of positive emotions in positive psychology: The broaden-and-build theory of positive emotions. *American Psychologist, 56*, 218-226. https://doi.org/10.1037/0003-066X.56.3.218

Gardner, R. C. (2019). The socio-educational model of second language acquisition. In M. Lamb, K. Csizér, A. Henry, & S. Ryan (Eds.), *The Palgrave handbook of motivation for language learning* (pp. 21-37). Palgrave Macmillan.

Hair, J. F., Black, W. C., Babin, B. J., & Anderson, R. E. (2019). *Multivariate data analysis* (8th ed.). Cengage Learning.

Han, J., & Hiver, P. (2018). Genre-based L2 writing instruction and writing-specific psychological factors: The dynamics of change. *Journal of Second Language Writing, 40*, 44-59. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jslw.2018.03.001

Hayes, A. F. (2013). *Introduction to mediation, moderation, and conditional process analysis: A regression-based approach*. Guilford Press.

Henry, A., & Cliffordson, C. (2015). The impact of out-of-school factors on motivation to learn English: Self-discrepancies, beliefs, and experiences of self-authenticity. *Applied Linguistics, 38*(5), 713-736. https://doi.org/10.1093/applin/amv060

Hessel, G. (2015). From vision to action: Inquiring into the conditions for the motivational capacity of ideal second language selves. *System, 52*, 103-114. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.system.2015.05.008

Higgins, E. T. (1987). Self-discrepancy: A theory relating self and affect. *Psychological Review, 94*(3), 319-340. https://psycnet.apa.org/doi/10.1037/0033-295X.94.3.319

Hu, L. T., & Bentler, P. M. (1999). Cutoff criteria for fit indexes in covariance structure analysis: Conventional criteria versus new alternatives. *Structural Equation Modelling: A Multidisciplinary Journal, 6*(1), 1-55. https://doi.org/10.1080/10705519909540118

Jiang, C., & Papi, M. (2022). The motivation-anxiety interface in language learning: A regulatory focus perspective. *International Journal of Applied Linguistics, 32*(1), 25-40.

Karimi, M. N., & Norouzi, M. (2019). Developing and validating three measures of possible language teacher selves. *Studies in Educational Evaluation, 62*, 49-60. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.stueduc.2019.04.006

Khajavy, G. H., & Aghaee, E. (2022). The contribution of grit, emotions and personal bests to foreign language learning. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development, 45*(6), 2300-2314. https://doi.org/10.1080/01434632.2022.2047192

Khajavy, G. H., MacIntyre, P. D., & Hariri, J. (2021). A close look at grit and language mindset as predictors of foreign language achievement. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition, 43*(2), 379-402. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0272263120000480

Kim, T.-Y., & Kim, Y.-K. (2014). A structural model for perceptual learning styles, the ideal L2 self, motivated behavior, and English proficiency. *System, 46*, 14-27. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.system.2014.07.007

Kim, T.-Y., & Kim, Y. (2021). Structural relationship between L2 learning motivation and resilience and their impact on motivated behavior and L2 proficiency. *Journal of Psycholinguistic Research, 50*, 417-436.

Kline, R. B. (2023). *Principles and practice of structural equation modeling*. Guilford Publications.

Kormos, J., Kiddle, T., & Csizér, K. (2011). Systems of goals, attitudes, and self-related beliefs in second-language-learning motivation. *Applied Linguistics, 32*(5), 495-516. https://doi.org/10.1093/applin/amr019

Lake, J. (2016). Accentuate the positive: Conceptual and empirical development of the positive L2 self and its relationship to L2 proficiency. In P. D. MacIntyre, T.

Gregersen, & S. Mercer (Eds.), *Positive psychology in SLA* (pp. 237-257). Multilingual Matters.

Lamb, M. (2012). A self system perspective on young adolescents' motivation to earn English in urban and rural settings. *Language Learning, 62*(4), 997-1023. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9922.2012.00719.x

Lan, G., Nikitina, L., & Woo, W. S. (2021). Ideal L2 self and willingness to communicate: A moderated mediation model of shyness and grit. *System, 99*, 102503. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.system.2021.102503

Lee, J. S., Yeung, N. M., & Osburn, M. B. (2022). Foreign language enjoyment as a mediator between informal digital learning of English and willingness to communicate: A sample of Hong Kong EFL secondary students. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development, 45*(9), 3613-3631. https://doi.org/10.1080/01434632.2022.2112587

Li, C. (2020). A positive psychology perspective on Chinese EFL students' trait emotional intelligence, foreign language enjoyment and EFL learning achievement. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development, 41*, 246-263. https://doi.org/10.1080/01434632.2019.1614187

Li, C., & Yang, Y. (2023). Domain-general grit and domain-specific grit: Conceptual structures, measurement, and associations with the achievement of German as a foreign language. *International Review of Applied Linguistics in Language Teaching*. https://doi.org/10.1515/iral-2022-0196

Little, R. J. (1988). A test of missing completely at random for multivariate data with missing values. *Journal of the American Statistical Association, 83*(404), 1198-1202. https://doi.org/10.1080/01621459.1988.10478722

Mahmoodi, M. H., & Yousefi, M. (2022). Second language motivation research 2010-2019: A synthetic exploration. *The Language Learning Journal, 50*(3), 273-296. https://doi.org/10.1080/09571736.2020.1869809

Markus, H., & Nurius, P. (1986). Possible selves. *American Psychologist, 41*(9), 954-969. https://psycnet.apa.org/doi/10.1037/0003-066X.41.9.954

Marsh, H. W., Hau, K. T., & Wen, Z. (2004). In search of golden rules: Comment on hypothesis-testing approaches to setting cutoff values for fit indexes and dangers in overgeneralizing Hu and Bentler's (1999) findings. *Structural Equation Modeling, 11*(3), 320-341. https://doi.org/10.1207/s15328007sem1103_2

McCarter, S. (2012). *IELTS introduction: Study skills.* MacMillan Education.

Mikami, Y. (2020). Goal setting and learners' motivation for extensive reading: Forming a virtuous cycle. *Reading in a Foreign Language, 32*(1), 28-48. https://nflrc.hawaii.edu/rfl/item/438

Mohammad Hosseini, H., Fathi, J., Derakhshesh, A., & Mehraein, S. (2022). A model of classroom social climate, foreign language enjoyment, and student

engagement among English as a foreign language learners. *Frontiers in Psychology, 13*, 933842.

Moskovsky, C., Assulaimani, T., Racheva, S., & Harkins, J. (2016). The L2 motivational self system and L2 achievement: A study of Saudi EFL learners. *Modern Language Journal, 100*(3), 641-654. https://doi.org/10.1111/modl.12340

Ozdemir, E., & Papi, M. (2022). Mindsets as sources of L2 speaking anxiety and self-confidence: The case of international teaching assistants in the US. *Innovation in Language Learning and Teaching, 16*(3), 234-248.

Oxford, R. L., & Khajavy, G. H. (2021). Exploring grit: "Grit linguistics" and research on domain-general grit and L2 grit. *Journal for the Psychology of Language Learning, 3*(2), 7-36. https://doi.org/10.52598/jpll/3/2/2

Pan, C., & Zhang, X. (2023). A longitudinal study of foreign language anxiety and enjoyment. *Language Teaching Research, 27*(6), 1552-1575. https://doi.org/10.1177/1362168821993341

Papi, M., Bondarenko, A. V., Mansouri, S., Feng, L., & Jiang, C. (2019). Rethinking L2 motivation research: The 2×2 model of L2 self-guides. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition, 41*(2), 337-361.

Papi, M., Eom, M., Zhang, Y., Zhou, Y., & Whiteside, Z. (2023). Motivational dispositions predict qualitative differences in oral task performance. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition, 45*(5), 1261-1286. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0272263123000220

Papi, M., & Khajavy, G. H. (2021). Motivational mechanisms underlying second language achievement: A regulatory focus perspective. *Language Learning, 71*(2), 537-572.

Papi, M., & Teimouri, Y. (2012). Dynamics of selves and motivation: A cross-sectional study in the EFL context of Iran. *International Journal of Applied Linguistics, 22*(3), 287-309. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1473-4192.2012.00312.x

Pawlak, M., Fathi, J., & Kruk, M. (2024). The domain-specific grammar grit questionnaire: A cross-cultural validation study. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development.* https://doi.org/10.1080/01434632.2024.2322692

Pawlak, M., Zarrinabadi, N., & Kruk, M. (2022). Positive and negative emotions, L2 grit and perceived competence as predictors of L2 motivated behavior. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development, 45*(8), 3188-3204. https://doi.org/10.1080/01434632.2022.2091579

Piniel, K., & Albert, Á. (2018). Advanced learners' foreign language-related emotions across the four skills. *Studies in Second Language Learning and Teaching, 8*(1), 127-148. https://doi.org/10.14746/ssllt.2018.8.1.6

Podsakoff, P. M., & Organ, D. W. (1986). Self-reports in organizational research: Problems and prospects. *Journal of Management, 12*(4), 531-544. https://doi.org/10.1177/014920638601200408

Renandya, W. A., & Nguyen, M. T. T. (2023). Teaching speaking in L2 contexts. In E. Hinkel (Ed.), *Handbook of practical second language teaching and learning* (pp. 269-280). Routledge.

Robinson, B. S., & Davis, K. L. (2001). The occupational possible selves of low-income women. Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Psychological Association. San Francisco, CA, United States.

Saito, K., Dewaele, J.-M., Abe, M., & In'nami, Y. (2018). Motivation, emotion, learning experience, and second language comprehensibility development in classroom settings: A cross-sectional and longitudinal study. *Language Learning, 68*(3), 709-743. https://doi.org/10.1111/lang.12297

Sato, M. (2017). Interaction mindsets, interactional behaviors, and L2 development: An affective-social-cognitive model. *Language Learning, 67*, 249-283. https://doi.org/10.1111/lang.12214

Sudina, E., & Plonsky, L. (2021a). Academic perseverance in foreign language learning: An investigation of language-specific grit and its conceptual correlates. *Modern Language Journal, 105*(4), 829-857. https://doi.org/10.1111/modl.12738

Sudina, E., & Plonsky, L. (2021b). Language learning grit, achievement, and anxiety among L2 and L3 learners in Russia. *International Journal of Applied Linguistics, 172*(2), 161-198. https://doi.org/10.1075/itl.20001.sud

Tahmouresi, S., & Papi, M. (2021). Future selves, enjoyment and anxiety as predictors of L2 writing achievement. *Journal of Second Language Writing, 53*, 100837. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jslw.2021.100837

Takahashi, C., & Im, S. (2020). Comparing self-determination theory and the L2 motivational self system and their relationships to L2 proficiency. *Studies in Second Language Learning and Teaching, 10*(4), 673-696. https://doi.org/10.14746/ssllt.2020.10.4.2

Teimouri, Y. (2017). L2 selves, emotions, and motivated behaviors. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition, 39*(4), 681-709. https://doi.org/10.1017/s0272263116000243

Teimouri, Y., Plonsky, L., & Tabandeh, F. (2020). L2 grit: Passion and perseverance for second-language learning. *Language Teaching Research, 26*(5), 893-918. https://doi.org/10.1177/1362168820921895

Teimouri, Y., Sudina, E., & Plonsky, L. (2021). On domain-specific conceptualization and measurement of grit in L2 learning. *Journal for the Psychology of Language Learning, 3*(2), 156-164. https://doi.org/10.52598/jpll/3/2/10

University of Cambridge ESOL Examinations. (2011). *Score processing, reporting and interpretation*. http://www.ielts.org/researchers/score_processing_and_reporting.aspx

Wei, H., Gao, K., & Wang, W. (2019). Understanding the relationship between grit and foreign language performance among middle school students: The roles of foreign language enjoyment and classroom environment. *Frontiers in Psychology, 10*, 1508. https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2019.01508

Yang, J. S., & Kim, T. Y. (2011). The L2 motivational self system and perceptual learning styles of Chinese, Japanese, Korean, and Swedish students. *English Teaching, 66*, 141-162. https://doi.org/10.15858/engtea.66.1.201103.141

Zare, J., Aqajani Delavar, K., & Derakhshan, A. (2023). The impact of altruism on the emotions and English summary writing skills of L2 learners: An intervention study in light of positive psychology. *Language Teaching Research*. https://doi.org/10.1177/13621688231151632

Zhao, X., Sun, P. P., & Gong, M. (2023). The merit of grit and emotions in L2 Chinese online language achievement: A case of Arabian students. *International Journal of Multilingualism*. https://doi.org/10.1080/14790718.2023.2202403

Zhao, P., Zhu, X., Yao, Y., & Liao, X. (2023). Ideal L2 self, enjoyment, and strategy use in L2 integrated writing: A self-regulatory learning perspective. *System, 115*, 103033. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.system.2023.103033

Zhou, Y., & Papi, M. (2023). The role of future L2 selves in L2 speech development: A longitudinal study in an instructional setting. *System, 119*, 103156. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.system.2023.103156

APPENDIX A

The scales included in the composite questionnaire

Ideal L2 speaking self (adapted from Han & Hiver, 2018)

- I can imagine myself speaking to my foreign friends or colleagues in English.
- I can imagine myself speaking in English at work.
- I can imagine myself speaking in English as if I were a native speaker of English.
- I can imagine myself as someone who can speak English fluently.
- I can imagine myself speaking in English fluently.
- I can imagine myself confidently participating in university discussions entirely in English.

Response scale: 1 (strongly disagree), 2 (disagree), 3 (somewhat disagree), 4 (somewhat agree), 5 (agree), 6 (strongly agree)

Foreign language speaking enjoyment scale (adapted from Zhao, Zhu, et al., 2023)

- I enjoy speaking English.
- I feel very happy when I am speaking English.
- English speaking lessons are fun.
- It is cool to know the knowledge of English speaking.
- I feel proud of my accomplishments in English speaking.

Response scale: 1 (strongly disagree), 2 (disagree), 3 (neutral), 4 (agree), 5 (strongly agree) Note: Item 4 ("It is cool to know the knowledge of English speaking") was modified from the original item "It is cool to know the knowledge of English" to be more specific to speaking enjoyment.

L2 speaking grit scale (adapted from Teimouri et al., 2020)

Perseverance of Effort (PoE)

- I will not allow anything to stop me from making progress in learning English speaking.
- I am a diligent language learner when it comes to learning English speaking.
- Now that I have decided to learn English speaking, nothing can prevent me from reaching this goal.
- When it comes to English speaking, I am a hard-working learner.
- I put much time and effort into improving my English speaking weaknesses.

Consistency of Interest (CoI)

- I think I have lost my interest in learning English speaking. (reverse-coded)
- I have been obsessed with learning English speaking in the past but later lost interest. (reverse-coded)
- My interests in learning English speaking change from year to year. (reverse-coded)
- I am not as interested in learning English speaking as I used to be. (reverse-coded)

Response scale: 1 (strongly disagree), 2 (disagree), 3 (neutral), 4 (agree), 5 (strongly agree) Note: All items were slightly modified from the original L2 grit scale to specifically focus on the context of English speaking.

APPENDIX B

Sample speaking tasks

Part 1: Introduction and interview

- Let's start by getting to know you a little better. Could you tell me about your hometown?
- What do you enjoy doing in your free time?
- Do you think it's important to learn English? Why or why not?

Part 2: Individual long turn

- Describe a time when you had to overcome a challenge in learning English. You should say:
  - What the challenge was
  - How you dealt with it
  - What you learned from the experience
  - And explain how this experience has affected your approach to language learning.
- Describe a person who has inspired you to improve your English speaking skills. You should say:
  - Who this person is
  - How you know them
  - What qualities they have that inspire you
  - And explain how they have influenced your language learning journey.

Part 3: Two-way discussion

- Let's talk about the importance of communication skills.
  - How important are good communication skills in your culture?
  - Do you think technology has changed the way people communicate? How?
  - What are some of the challenges people face when communicating in a foreign language?
- Now let's discuss the role of language learning in today's world.
  - Why do you think people learn foreign languages?
  - What are some of the benefits of being multilingual?
  - In what ways can language learning promote understanding between different cultures?

Part 4: Discussion on a global issue

- Globalization and language
  - What impact do you think globalization has on the spread and use of languages around the world?
  - Do you think it's important to preserve minority languages in the face of globalization? Why or why not?
  - How can technology be used to promote language learning and cultural exchange in a globalized world?

APPENDIX C

IELTS speaking band descriptors rubric

This appendix details the IELTS Speaking Band Descriptors utilized for evaluating participants' L2 speaking proficiency in the current study. These descriptors, established by the University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate (UCLES, 2011), outline specific criteria for assessing various aspects of spoken English.

Fluency and coherence

Band score	Descriptor
9	Speaks fluently and effortlessly with a wide range of linking words. Can effortlessly develop ideas and express themselves spontaneously at length.
8	Speaks very fluently and almost effortlessly. Can express themselves fluently and at length on a wide range of topics, rarely hesitating or searching for expressions.
7	Speaks fluently and idiomatically with good use of linking words. Can express themselves fluently and at length on a wide range of topics.
6	Speaks fluently with some hesitation or repetition. Can express themselves clearly and at length on familiar topics.
5	Speaks fairly fluently with occasional hesitation or repetition. Can express themselves on a familiar range of topics and handle most situations likely to arise in work, study, or social contexts.
4	Speaks with some hesitation and repetition, finding it difficult to express themselves fluently. Can get meaning across in simple and routine situations.
3	Frequently hesitates or repeats and has limited ability to express themselves fluently. Can only provide short, fragmentary answers.
2	Has great difficulty expressing themselves, even in simple situations. Uses isolated words or very short phrases.
1	Non-existent or very limited use of English.

Lexical resource

Band score	Descriptor
9	Has a very wide vocabulary and uses it skillfully and flexibly. Uses idioms and less common lexical items with ease.
8	Has a wide vocabulary and uses it skillfully and flexibly. Uses some idioms and less common lexical items.
7	Has a good vocabulary and uses it appropriately. Uses some idioms and less common lexical items.
6	Has a sufficient vocabulary to handle most situations. Occasionally uses idioms and less common lexical items.
5	Has a functional vocabulary that is sufficient to meet the demands of most situations.
4	Has a limited vocabulary that restricts their ability to express themselves fluently.
3	Has a very limited vocabulary that makes it difficult to express themselves clearly.
2	Has an extremely limited vocabulary that restricts communication to basic needs.
1	No recognizable vocabulary.

Grammatical range and accuracy

Band score	Descriptor
9	Uses a wide range of grammatical structures with only very occasional errors. Uses complex structures accurately and effectively to express subtle meanings.
8	Uses a wide range of grammatical structures accurately and effectively. Occasional minor errors do not hinder communication.
7	Uses a wide range of grammatical structures with some accuracy. Occasional errors may occur but do not seriously impede communication.
6	Uses a fairly wide range of grammatical structures with reasonable accuracy. Errors may occur but communication is not seriously affected.
5	Uses a functional range of grammatical structures with occasional errors.
4	Makes frequent grammatical errors that cause some communication difficulties.
3	Makes grammatical errors that frequently cause communication problems.
2	Makes very frequent grammatical errors that severely restrict communication.
1	Uses very little or no grammatical structure.

Pronunciation

Band score	Descriptor
9	Has a full command of the spoken language, using a wide range of pronunciation features. Pronunciation is clear, fluent, and natural.
8	Has a very good command of the spoken language, using a wide range of pronunciation features. Pronunciation is clear and natural, with only occasional minor inconsistencies.
7	Has a good command of the spoken language, using a range of pronunciation features. Pronunciation is generally clear and natural, but may have some inconsistencies.
6	Has a fairly good command of the spoken language, using a sufficient range of pronunciation features. Pronunciation is generally understandable, but there may be some inconsistencies and occasional errors.
5	Has a partial command of the spoken language, producing some features of pronunciation which may cause occasional misunderstanding.
4	Pronunciation is frequently indistinct and may cause some understanding difficulties.
3	Pronunciation is severely restricted and frequently causes communication problems.
2	Pronunciation is so poor that communication is extremely difficult.
1	Pronunciation is unintelligible.