



Persistence in Language Learning: The Role of Grit and Future L2 Selves
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Introduction

- Grit (**personality trait**): perseverance and passion for long-term goals (Duckworth, Peterson, Matthews, & Kelly, 2007)
- Future L2 selves (**imagination & vision**): self-image of L2 learner that one would be in the future (Dörnyei & Ryan, 2015)
- Motivation
 - “What moves a person to make certain choices, **to engage in action**, to expend effort and **persist in action**...” (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011)

Why researching motivation and persistence?

- L2 learning: long and tedious process (Dörnyei & Ryan, 2013)



- Motivation: engagement (Intended Effort/ Motivated behavior) and persistence (**learning behavior**)
 - *Kim & Kim (2017): motivated behavior and L2 proficiency*
 - *Matsumoto & Obana (2001): commitment, interest, integrativeness, and intrinsic motivation*
 - *Yu (2013): communicative competence, academic communications and interactions with faculty*
 - *Awad (2014): cross-cultural awareness*

How to research motivation and persistence?

- **Future L2 selves:** *2 x 2 model* (Papi, Bondarenko, Mansouri, Feng & Jiang, 2019)
- **Grit** (Duckworth et al., 2007)

FUTURE L2 SELVES

Future L2 selves in *L2 Motivational Self System* (L2MSS, Dörnyei, 2005)

- What the L2 speaker ideally would like to become (hopes, aspirations)

- What the L2 speaker ought to become (duties, obligations).

Empirical studies on future L2 selves

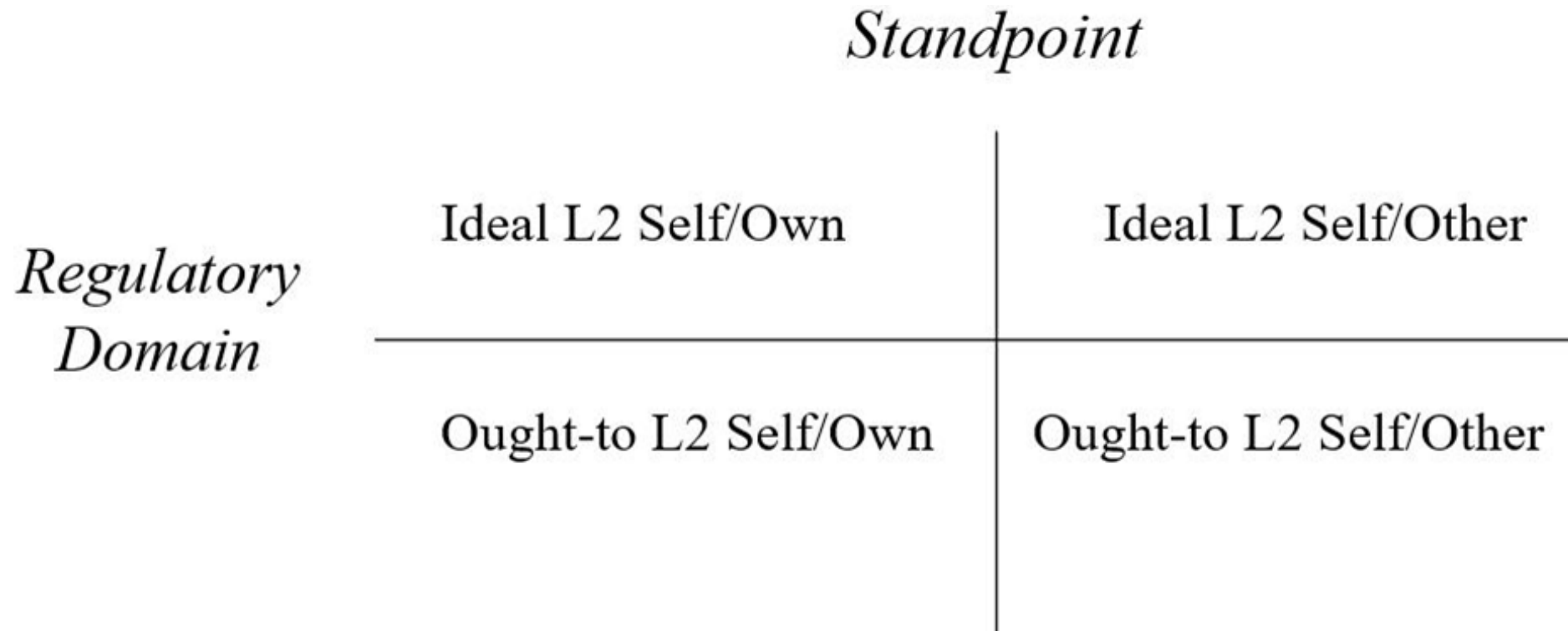
Ideal L2 Self

- Motivated behavior (Taguchi et al., 2009; Papi, 2010; Papi & Teimouri, 2012, 2014)
- L2 achievement (Dörnyei & Chan, 2013; Khan, 2015)
- L2 proficiency (Lamb, 2012)
- Willingness to Communicate (Teimouri

Ought-to L2 Self

- Weak predictor
- Insignificant predictor
- Not a valid construct

The revised 2 x 2 model of future L2 selves (Papi et al., 2019)



PERSONALITY-TRAIT: GRIT

Personality-trait: Grit

- Grit: perseverance and passion for long-term goals (Duckworth et al., 2007)
- **Perseverance of Effort (Grit POE):** it refers to a tendency to sustain effort in the face of adversity or setback during learners' academic pursuits (Duckworth, 2006; Credé, Tynan, & Harms, 2016);
- **Consistency of Interests (Grit COI):** it refers to a tendency to not frequently change interests and goals during learners' academic pursuits (Duckworth, 2006; Credé, Tynan, & Harms, 2016);

Empirical studies on Grit

General pursuits

- Academic achievements (i.e., GPA, SAT)
- Retention of military services
- Career change
- Retention of a competition

L2 research

- L2 language skills (Kramer, McLean & Shepherd Martin, 2017)
- Motivation and emotions (Plonsky & Teimouri, 2017)
- L2 achievement (Changlek & Palanukulwong, 2015)
- Positive psychological variables (Lake, 2013)



THIS STUDY

Purpose of study

- To explore the associations between **motivation**, especially the dimension of **persistence** and **Grit** and **fours future selves** (Ideal L2 Self/Own, Ideal L2 Self/Other, Ought-to L2 Self/Own and Ought-to L2 Self/Other) of learners who are learning Chinese language as a foreign language (CFL).

Research questions

1. What are the relationships among **Grit, future L2 selves** (Ideal L2 Self/Own, Ideal L2 Self/Other, Ought-to L2 Self/Own and Ought-to L2 Self/Other), and **Intended Effort**?
1. What are the relationships among **Grit, future L2 selves**, and **L2 Persistence**?

DESIGN OF STUDY

Participants

- 94 university students learning Chinese as a foreign language (CFL) in two major universities in the US;
- 57 females and 37 males aged from 17 to 32 years old;
- Learning experience from 3 months to 20 years, on average 3 years;
- Proficiency levels: Beginner (12.8%), post beginner (33%), intermediate low (24.5%), intermediate (21.3%), and intermediate high and above (8.5%)

Instruments and variables

Scales

Part 1

- **Intended Effort** (Papi & Teimouri, 2012, 2014)
- **L2 Persistence** (Kim & Kim, 2017; Lou & Noels, 2016)
- **Future L2 selves** (Papi et al., 2019)
- **Grit** (Duckworth et al., 2007)

Part 2

- Demographic information (Papi et al., 2019)

Variables

- **Intended Effort: 5 items**
- **L2 Persistence: 5 items**
- **Ideal L2 Self/Own: 4 items**
- **Ideal L2 Self/Other: 4 items**
- **Ought-to L2 Self/Own: 4 items**
- **Ought-to L2 Self/Other: 2 items**
- **Consistency of Interests (Grit COI): 6 items**
- **Perseverance of Effort (Grit POE): 6 items**

RESULTS

Cronbach's Alpha Analysis

Variables	M (SD)	Alpha
Intended Effort	4.41 (.90)	.78
L2 Persistence*	5.01 (.89)	.81
Ideal L2 Self/Own	4.90 (1.17)	.93
Ideal L2 Self/Other	4.31 (1.26)	.87
Ought-to L2 Self/Own	2.99 (1.22)	.82
Ought-to L2 Self/Other	2.64 (1.32)	.75
Grit COI*	3.41 (.91)	.79
Grit POE	4.80 (.78)	.81

* Items were reverse coded

Correlation and inter-correlation among predictors

Scale	1	2	3	4	5
1. Grit POE	1				
2. Grit COI	.10	1			
3. Ideal L2 Self/Own	.30**	.03	1		
4. Ideal L2 Self/Other	.13	-.01	.54**	1	
5. Ought-to L2 Self/Own	.26*	-.02	.41**	.31**	1
6. Ought-to L2 Self/Other	.12	-.03	.25*	.60**	.34**

Note. n = 94

* $p < .05$. ** $p < 0.01$

Research question 1

- What are the relationships among Grit, future L2 selves and Intended Effort?

Multiple regression results with Intended Effort as outcome variable

	B	Std. Error	Beta	T	Sig.	95% CI
[constant]	.89	.51		1.73	.09	[-.13, 1.91]
Grit POE	.21	.09	.18	2.21	.03	[.02, .39]
Grit COI	-.01	.08	-.01	-.12	.91	[-.16, .14]
Ideal L2 Self/Own	.35	.08	.46	4.71	.00	[.20, .50]
Ideal L2 Self/Other	.16	.08	.23	2.11	.04	[.01, .32]
Ought-to L2 Self/Own	.11	.07	.15	1.75	.08	[-.016, .24]
Ought-to L2 Self/Other	-.08	.07	-.11	-1.16	.25	[-.21, .06]

Note. n = 94

$R^2 = .52$

Sobel statistic = 2.40, $p < .05$

Research question 2

- What are the relationships among Grit, future L2 selves, and L2 Persistence?

Multiple regression results with L2 Persistence as outcome variable

	B	Std. Error	Beta	T	Sig.	95% CI
[constant]	1.59	.46		3.46	.00	[.68, 2.50]
Grit POE	.06	.08	.05	.75	.46	[-.10, .23]
Grit COI	.10	.07	.10	1.43	.16	[-.04, .23]
Ideal Self/Own L2	.49	.07	.65	7.36	.00	[.36, .63]
Ideal Self/Other L2	.14	.07	.19	1.96	.05	[-.00, .27]
Ought-to Self/Own L2	.03	.06	.05	.58	.57	[-.08, .15]
Ought-to Self/Other L2	-.11	.06	-.17	-1.90	.06	[-.23, .01]

Note. n = 94

$R^2 = .60$

Sobel statistic = 2.72, $p < .001$

DISCUSSION & CONCLUSION

Grit, Intended Effort and L2 Persistence

- Perseverance of efforts (Grit POE), that is how hardworking a learner is in the face of setbacks or adversity, motivates him/her to start and persist in the L2 learning pursuit;
- The absence of Grit COI in the findings indicates that learners' willingness to exert effort and continue L2 learning is less related to how frequently learners change their interests.

Future L2 selves, Intended Effort and L2 Persistence

- L2 engagement is associated with L2 learner's hope or desire no matter it is initiated by oneself or it is influenced by one's significant others, such as family or friends;
- L2 engagement is related to L2 learner's self-requirement. Learners are not motivated in L2 Learning when they are required to learn it by other people;
- One's own desire that he/she would like to be in the future is the most critical factor driving L2 learners to exert most effort that helps start and engage in L2 learning.

Future L2 selves and L2 Persistence

- A learner who has a hopeful or desirable image about him/her, no matter the image is created by himself/herself or developed under the influence of his/her family or friends, tends to persist in longer L2 learning;
- Among three significant predictors of L2 Persistence, two of them are from learner's Other standpoint, indicating that L2 Persistence is more driven or influenced by L2 learner's significant others' willingness or requirements than his/her self-requirement;
- L2 learner's desirable image that is created by themselves is a better motive than that is created under the influence of their family, teachers or friends;
- Other people's requirements, responsibilities or obligations would decrease L2 learner's motivation to continue the learning

Grit and future L2 selves

- Perseverant personalities tend to set maximal goals for themselves, which in turn leads to their persistent learning behavior over a long period of time;
- The goals that aim to avoid negative consequences are pursued as long as there is external pressure and threat of negative outcomes. As soon as such risks are avoided, the learning behavior is also likely to stop;
- Maximal vs. minimal distinction of goal-setting personality relates to promotion vs prevention-related future L2 selves.

Educational implications

- Motivating CFL learners by helping them visualize their Ideal L2 Self/Own and Ideal L2 Self/Other.
 - Teachers should explicitly talk about or teach students to develop ideal and hopeful images of future selves in the engagement stage of L2 learning;
 - L2 teachers should reduce the explicit instruction of what students should or must do in the persistence stage of L2 learning.
- Influencing perseverant personality by motivating Ideal L2 Self, especially Ideal L2 Self/Own

Limitations and future studies

Limitations

- Small sample size from two universities
- Scales that were based on are all about learning English as a second language (ESL);
- Focused on one context
- Only focuses on the motivated and persistent L2 learners.

Future studies

- Larger sample size from a variety of universities or countries
- Develop a CFL questionnaire
- Discontinued L2 learners

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Thank you
very much!

