JOURNAL OF NARRATIVE AND LANGUAGE STUDIES
Volume 14 | Issue 29 (Special Issue) | 2026

Research Article

EFL Learners' Second Language Grit and Boredom in Contemporary Technology-Mediated Learning Contexts

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ABSTRACT

Investigating the second language (L2) grit and boredom has become important because, these days, although AI-supported environments offer learners a variety of sources and feedback, the effective use of these technologies depends on students' dedication, consistency, and emotional engagement in learning. Thus, the aim of the present study was to examine the relationship between English language learners' grit and boredom coping strategies (BCS). To investigate the given aspects, the study adopted an explanatory sequential mixed-methods design. The study included 69 English preparatory school students at a state university. For the first part of the study, the participants completed the L2 grit and boredom coping strategies scales. It was found that L2 grit was moderately high, with perseverance of effort scoring higher than consistency of interest. The correlational and regression analyses showed significant positive correlations between L2 grit and all boredom coping mechanisms, including avoidance-based and adaptive responses. In the second phase, semi-structured interviews were conducted to investigate the perceptions of the participants. Thematic analysis revealed that participants held long-term dedication to language learning despite the momentary boredom they experienced. They also indicated that boredom is a typical classroom incident. It was found that learners used avoidance techniques to manage their emotions and maintain motivation when they are working on repetitive tasks. The results indicate that L2 grit depends on circumstances rather than being a fixed inclination. The study carries implications for language classes to encourage motivation and emotional flexibility.

Keywords: Boredom coping mechanisms (BCM), Emotion regulation, Mixed-methods research, L2 grit; SLA

Citation: Şimşek Turan, G., Ceylan, M., & Güven, A. Z. (2026). EFL learners' second language grit and boredom in contemporary technology-mediated learning contexts . *Journal of Narrative and Language Studies*, *14*(29, Special Issue: Narrative, Education and Learning in the Age of Artificial Intelligence), 110-124. https://doi.org/10.59045/nalans.2026.97

Introduction

With the development of artificial intelligence (AI), L2 education has shifted to a more personalized, adaptive, and interactive learning environment. AI-powered tools can provide immediate feedback, tailor tasks to learners' needs, and expand access to language input and practice. These developments promoted flexibility in language learning, but they have also shown that the learner's role in managing engagement, motivation, and emotional responses in technology-mediated environments needs more attention. As learning becomes increasingly supported by intelligent systems, understanding how L2 learners experience and regulate their emotions has become more critical. Second language acquisition (SLA) has moved beyond a purely cognitive focus, emphasizing psychological and emotional factors in learning (MacIntyre et al., 2019).

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This shift aligns with positive psychology research (Dewaele et al., 2019; Gregersen & Mercer, 2022; Wang et al., 2021), which promotes well-being by balancing negative emotions with enjoyment, resilience, and emotional regulation (Dewaele & MacIntyre, 2014).

While anxiety, motivation, and strategies are widely studied in SLA, grit has recently emerged as a key construct. Defined as perseverance and passion for long-term goals (Duckworth et al., 2007), it includes effort and interest consistency (Duckworth & Quinn, 2009) and predicts academic success (Robertson-Kraft & Duckworth, 2014). Although debated as part of conscientiousness (McCrae & Costa, 1987; Credé et al., 2017), grit uniquely reflects sustained commitment despite setbacks (Datu et al., 2016) and predicts achievement (Teimouri et al., 2020). Unlike motivation or resilience, it supports continuous engagement in slow SLA progress (Masten, 2001; Wang et al., 2021).

L2 acquisition is demanding, requiring persistence and sustained interest, as well as motivation and attitudes (Solhi et al., 2025). Grit supports regular practice and commitment, and, while a personality trait, it is shaped by hope, purpose, and environmental factors such as peers, teachers, and family (Duckworth, 2016). Solhi et al. (2025) describe grit as persisting like a marathon despite boredom. While others withdraw, gritty learners continue, highlighting the need to examine this relationship in SLA (MacIntyre & Khajavy, 2021).

Studies show that L2 grit is negatively related to stress and closely linked to boredom (e.g. Hu et al., 2025; Lyu, 2025; Solhi et al., 2023). Although boredom is common in L2 classrooms, it is not a passive experience; learners actively try to manage it. To do so, they employ various coping strategies, which in turn can influence their English learning process.

Given the recent attention to both L2 grit and boredom in SLA research, it is vital to explore how these constructs interact in the classroom. Also, how learners perceive their emotional and motivational tendencies seems to receive more attention in the literature. Addressing this gap may contribute to understanding affective and motivational dynamics in language-learning environments.

Theoretical Background

L2 Grit

Grit has been shown to positively influence achievement in academic contexts. Duckworth et al. (2007) found that grittier cadets were more likely to complete military training and achieve higher ranks. Similarly, college students with higher levels of grit obtained higher GPA scores and performed better in spelling competitions, even when cognitive ability was controlled. Early studies on grit mainly focused on general educational settings (Duckworth & Quinn, 2009; Robertson-Kraft & Duckworth, 2014).

More recently, research in Second Language Acquisition (SLA) has increasingly examined the role of grit in sustaining effort, emotional resilience, and goal engagement during language learning (Kramer et al., 2017; Teimouri et al., 2020; Yamashita, 2018; Zhao & Wang, 2023). Teimouri et al. (2020) adapted the concept of grit to the SLA context and developed a validated L2 Grit Scale. Their findings showed that perseverance and consistency of interest were associated with higher motivation, lower anxiety, and better language achievement. In addition, grit has been linked to learners' enthusiasm, confidence, and overall performance in language learning contexts (Changlek & Palanukulwong, 2015; Kramer et al., 2017; Lake, 2013).

Recent studies suggest that domain-specific measures of L2 grit predict language-related outcomes more effectively than general grit measures. For instance, L2 grit has been found to predict motivation, communication, proficiency, and language performance more strongly than general grit scales (Alamer, 2021; Khajavy et al., 2021; Pawlak et al., 2022; Lan et al., 2021; Lee & Hsieh, 2019; Sudina & Plonsky, 2021; Teimouri et al., 2021). Building on this line of research, scholars have begun to examine the two dimensions of L2 grit separately. Evidence indicates that the perseverance of effort (PE) dimension often acts as a stronger direct predictor of both language achievement and motivation (intrinsic and extrinsic) than the consistency of interest (CI) dimension (Sun et al., 2026; Zhao & Zhang, 2025). PE refers to learners' sustained hard work and persistence in overcoming challenges to achieve long-term language-learning goals, which often leads to higher achievement and motivation. In contrast, CI involves maintaining long-term focus and passion for language learning. Although CI may be a weaker direct predictor of achievement, it plays an important role in emotional regulation by helping learners remain engaged and reducing boredom in the language-learning process (Sun et al., 2026).

A growing body of research also highlights the emotional dimension of grit in language learning. Studies emphasize its role in academic achievement and persistence (Duckworth et al., 2011; Lam & Zhou, 2019). In EFL contexts, focused learners tend to outperform multitaskers (Alamer, 2022), and L2 grit has been shown to increase alongside learners' enjoyment of language learning (Elahi Shirvan et al., 2021). Moreover, grit can be strengthened through cognitive, behavioral, and emotional strategies (Solhi et al., 2025; Teimouri et al., 2020; Wei et al., 2020).

Importantly, L2 grit may also function as a mediating factor in the relationship between emotions and learning outcomes. For example, it helps connect positive emotions, such as Foreign Language Learning Enjoyment (FLLE), to learners' motivated behaviors and can act as a buffer against academic burnout (Song, 2024). When learners encounter challenging or repetitive tasks, grit may also help them cope with negative emotions, such as Foreign Language Learning Boredom (FLLB). Previous studies generally report that higher levels of grit are associated with lower levels of L2 boredom, while self-regulation strategies can further support this relationship by helping learners maintain focus (Lyu, 2025). At the same time, research suggests that perseverance of effort may sometimes coexist with boredom because language practice often involves repetitive activities; nevertheless, sustained effort can still contribute to better learning outcomes (Zhao & Zhang, 2025).

L2 Boredom and Coping Strategies

Recent years have witnessed a significant increase in interest in affective factors, especially concerning the feelings of learners and their impact on the language learning experience (Dewaele & MacIntyre, 2016). One of the affective factors, boredom has lately surfaced as a notable yet underexplored emotion impediment to language acquisition (Pawlak et al., 2020). Recent research argues that boredom is a complex structure and has a dynamic construction (Goetz et al., 2014). Being an undesirable feeling, boredom can significantly impede learning by reducing attention. Boredom may be a significant danger to student perseverance and achievement in language learning settings where attention and motivation are essential requirements.

Boredom is an undesirable emotional state characterized by disinterest and distracted attention toward a subject (Fahlman et al., 2013) and is considered a deactivating, negative achievement-related emotion arising when learners perceive tasks as lacking value and control (Pekrun, 2006). According to Control-Value Theory, it emerges when students experience low perceived control and low task value. In SLA, L2 boredom is defined as "a negative emotion with an extremely low degree of activation/arousal that arises from ongoing activities … [that] are typically over-challenging or under-challenging and/or of little significance, relevance, or meaning to the learners" (Li et al., 2021, p.12). It is commonly linked to teacher-centered instruction and tasks that are too difficult, too easy, or unengaging. L2 boredom reduces cognitive and behavioral engagement and may lead to avoidance behaviors such as yawning, slouching, or drowsiness (Nett et al., 2010). In current L2 contexts, including those with emerging AI-supported learning environments, boredom may become more noticeable when students have limited access to interactive tools during classroom tasks, especially when they expect more adaptive and engaging support.

Research highlights both the origins of boredom and coping processes in L2 learning (Li & Wei, 2022; Pawlak et al., 2020). Studies show that boredom increases when learners engage in undemanding or repetitive tasks, encounter activities lacking diversity or relevance, or experience slow task completion (Derakhshan et al., 2021; Pawlak et al., 2021; Li, 2021; Pawlak et al., 2022). For instance, Li (2021) found that intrinsic value in L2 learning reduces boredom, whereas slow progress can intensify it (Pawlak et al., 2022). Overall, task monotony, low relevance, and inefficient pacing are consistently identified as key factors increasing learner boredom in L2 classrooms.

Although boredom is common in L2 learning, it can be actively managed through boredom coping strategies (BCS), typically categorized as approach and avoidance strategies (Nett et al., 2011). Approach strategies involve cognitive and behavioral efforts to reframe or modify the learning situation, such as redirecting attention, changing task perceptions, or seeking alternative resources (Finkielsztein, 2020). Avoidance strategies, by contrast, reflect disengagement from the task. Cognitive avoidance includes mental withdrawal such as "zoning out" or daydreaming (Willis & Willis, 2020), while behavioral avoidance involves observable disengagement such as chatting or skipping class (Finkielsztein, 2020; D'Mello & Graesser, 2012). Beyond these forms, learners may also adopt more adaptive strategies, such as personalizing tasks or embedding them in social contexts, which can reduce boredom and enhance engagement (Pawlak et al., 2020). Similarly, Turkish EFL learners report using humor, creativity, and peer support as effective means of maintaining involvement and managing boredom in language classrooms (Coşkun & Yüksel, 2022).

Research has explored how EFL university students use boredom coping strategies (BCS) to support language learning. Studies by Solhi (2021) and Solhi and Önen (2023), showed that males reported higher levels of boredom. Females preferred cognitive strategies in both face-to-face and online settings, whereas males preferred behavioral approaches. Higher-level students increasingly relied on behavioral avoidance strategies.

Research on L2 grit and its links with psychological factors and boredom coping strategies (BCS) remains limited (Solhi et al., 2025). Pawlak et al. (2022) found that boredom and anxiety negatively affect L2 grit, while enjoyment enhances motivation. Gritty learners better manage negative emotions, and coping with boredom may strengthen grit. Thus, their dynamic relationship offers insight into grit development, as grit

supports persistence and engagement (Sudina & Plonsky, 2021).

Grounded in Control-Value Theory (Pekrun, 2006), the present study assumes that boredom emerges when learners perceive low value or limited control in language learning activities. In such situations, learners attempt to regulate their emotional experiences through different boredom coping strategies. Within this framework, Grit—particularly perseverance of effort—may function as a self-regulatory resource that supports sustained engagement and encourages learners to manage boredom rather than withdraw completely from the learning process. Therefore, the study conceptualizes L2 grit as a factor influencing the ways learners cope with boredom in Second Language Acquisition contexts.

The latest study by Solhi et al. (2025) offers convincing empirical data on the relationship between L2 grit and BCS of EFL learners. The study provides a vital foundation for exploring how gritty students sustain long-term involvement in the face of regular but often overlooked emotional challenges in the language acquisition process, by emphasizing the predictive function of grit in positive coping behaviors. Hence, this study investigated the extent to which L2 grit affects boredom-coping strategies, with the following research questions:

1. What is the relationship between EFL learners' language grit and boredom coping strategies?

2. What are the perceptions of participants about their language grit and boredom coping strategies?

Method

Research Design

The study adopted an explanatory sequential mixed-methods design (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). Using qualitative methods after preliminary quantitative results in a sequential mixed methods design allows the researcher to investigate what, why, who, and how questions (Plano Clark, 2017).

In the initial part of the study, in order to obtain participants' L2 grit and boredom coping strategies, quantitative data were gathered using two numerical questionnaires. According to the findings of the quantitative part, participants were selected for semi-structured interviews in the second phase to examine their experiences and perceptions. This design was utilized to ensure a more detailed and comprehensive understanding of the issue.

Context and Participants

The study is conducted in a state university in Türkiye where English is taught as a foreign language. The university differs from other state universities in terms of regulations and conditions. Students are not allowed to use smartphones in classrooms, and internet access around campus is unstable. They are expected to be disciplined, organized, and attend classes regularly, creating a structured learning environment. At the same time, students are provided with an AI-supported learning environment through the university's distance education center. In the English writing course, they use a ChatGPT-based feedback system developed by an instructor, and in other courses, such as speaking, they may also use AI tools to prepare for the learning tasks.

The participants in the present study consisted of 69 Turkish students enrolled in English courses at a state university in Türkiye. The students were taking English lessons at the university's preparatory school. The students were divided according to their proficiency levels specified by an exam at the beginning of the semester. Thus, all the participants were at the same proficiency levels which is B1 level according to Common European Framework Reference (CEFR). Their ages ranged between 17-21.

Instruments

L2 Grit Scale

To assess participants' L2 grit, a 5-point Likert-type scale developed by Teimouri et al. (2020) was utilized. Comprising nine components, the L2 grit scale has a dual framework: PE and CI. Five components made up the former part: "I put much time and effort into improving my English language weaknesses." The latter section comprises four items, including "I was obsessed with learning English in the past, but have lost interest recently." Teimouri et al. (2020) created a domain-specific scale to measure grit, particularly in connection to SLA. For the two sub-scales, the study found internal consistency values of .86 for PE and .66 for CI, which are regarded as high and reasonable. The developers also noted good instrument construct validity. The scale has been utilized in EFL contexts since it was first validated with Iranian students. For instance, studies with Chinese EFL learners (Wei et al., 2020) and English majors in Japanese university (Mikami, 2024) have confirmed the validity of the scale. Since this instrument provides a domain-specific grit evaluation, it was applied for the current investigation.

Coping Strategies with Boredom in Class (CBCS)

CBCS is an instrument developed by Kökçam and Satan (2022) to assess university students' boredom management in academic environments. The scale consists of twenty-five items. Accordingly, four different coping mechanisms are identified in their study: cognitive approach, cognitive avoidance, behavioral avoidance based on simple stimuli, behavioral avoidance based on activating stimuli. Cognitive approach indicates mentally engaging tasks to overcome boredom while cognitive avoidance includes mentally disengaging activities from the lesson like daydreaming. Behavioral avoidance based on simple stimuli refers to engaging in distractions such as doodling or fidgeting. Lastly, behavioral avoidance based on activating stimuli entails stimulating unrelated activities such as using their phones. On a Likert-type scale, participants score the items on how often they apply these techniques.

The CBCS has been validated among university students and showed good internal consistency and construct validity. It is found to be a relevant and convenient instrument for exploring how students manage boredom in the classroom. Thus, in the present study, CBCS is utilized to investigate EFL learners' boredom coping strategies. Both scales (L2 Grit and CBCS) were conducted in English and online.

Interview Questions

To gather participants' ideas about their language learning grit and boredom, semi-structured interviews were conducted. The interview questions consisted of ten items. (see Appendix C) The questions were prepared according to relevant literature, and previous studies. Expert opinion was received on the items.

Data Analysis

Due to the explanatory sequential mixed methods design used in this study, the data analysis was conducted in two stages: quantitative and qualitative. In the first stage, the quantitative data collected using the Coping with Boredom in Class Scale (Kökçam & Satan, 2022) and the L2 Grit Scale (Teimouri et al., 2020) were analyzed.

The dataset was checked for outliers, missing values before statistical analyses were performed. To guarantee the validity of the findings, cases with a high percentage of missing data were eliminated listwise. To evaluate the response distribution and verify normality, descriptive statistics such as mean, standard deviation, skewness, and kurtosis were calculated. Internal consistency coefficients were computed for every scale and subscale in order to guarantee the instruments' dependability. Descriptive statistics were then presented for both the overall L2 grit and its two subscales, consistency of interest and perseverance of effort. For the four BCSs—cognitive approach, cognitive avoidance, behavioral avoidance based on simple stimuli, and behavioral avoidance based on activating stimuli—means and standard deviations were also computed.

Investigating the relationship between L2 grit and BCSs involved the computation of correlation coefficients. These studies aimed to find the degree and direction of the correlation between students' preferred boredom-management strategies and grit levels. Multiple linear regression analyses were also conducted to determine if features of L2 grit specifically predicted the use of certain coping methods. Every coping mechanism was treated as a dependent variable, using separate regression models, and each grit scale was used as an independent variable.

The second stage of the study examined qualitative data gathered from semi-structured interviews with a selection of participants. To get familiar with the material, verbatim transcriptions of the interview tapes were created and read several times. The data then underwent thematic analysis, as outlined by Braun and Clarke (2014). The replies were examined using the six processes of the thematic analysis framework: familiarization, code generating, theme search, theme review, theme definition and naming, and report creation. Handcrafted, the codes were organized into broader categories and topics that reflected the participants' notions of grit and how they handled boredom. Based on the theoretical framework of the study and the participants' own words, both inductive and deductive reasoning—based on which the theme development was grounded—served as such. Strategies meant to boost credibility included member verification and peer debriefing. To validate their correctness, participants were provided access to a range of quotes; an independent researcher with knowledge in emotional factors and SLA looked at any developing trends.

Finally, the quantitative and qualitative findings were merged in line with the explanatory sequential layout of the study during the interpretation step. This integration aimed to provide a better and more comprehensive understanding of the relationship between the L2 grit levels of EFL students and their preferred coping strategies for boredom. While the quantitative data exposed general trends and predicted linkages, the qualitative data provided contextual insights and complex viewpoints on the participants' lived events.

Ethical Procedure

Ethical approval for the study was obtained from the relevant Anadolu University ethics committee prior to data collection on March 27, 2025 with protocol number 867784. Participation was voluntary, and informed consent was obtained from all participants. Confidentiality and anonymity were ensured throughout the research process.

Results

The Relationship Between Learners' Language Grit and Boredom Coping Strategies

The correlation between language grit and coping mechanisms of the subjects was exposed by means of statistical analysis. 69 students' quantitative data were obtained using the Coping with Boredom in Class Scale Descriptive statistics and L2 Grit Scale. For both scales, the internal consistency coefficients proved to be reasonable: L2 grit scale (.68), CBCS (.82). Nine items covering two important criteria—consistency of interest and endurance of effort—make up L2 grit scale. Participants reported quite high degrees of L2 grit (M= 2.96, SD= 0.73), according to the results. Items measuring the endurance of interest showed higher mean scores (M=3.18, SD=1.05). This outcome shows that most of the students considered themselves as committed and conscientious in their English acquisition process. Conversely, objects of consistent attention exhibited somewhat lower ratings (M=2.69, SD=0.93). Therefore, the first section of the results revealed that, although it might be more challenging to sustain constant interest over time, participants typically exhibited tenacity to stay with their goals. Understanding this complex profile of L2 grit enables one to better comprehend how students manage negative feelings, such as boredom, in foreign language education.

The scale of coping strategies for boredom consists of 25 items assessing four types of strategies: behavioral avoidance based on simple stimuli, behavioral avoidance based on activating stimuli, cognitive avoidance, and cognitive approach. The participants demonstrated that they used moderately high levels of coping strategies (M=3.34, SD= 0.59). The detailed version of the strategies and mean scores is given in Table 1.1 below. The highest mean score among the strategies was cognitive avoidance (M= 3.75, SD= 0.72) and cognitive approach (M= 3.67 SD= 0.62). According to the results, participants generally used disengagement techniques and mental reframing to deal with boredom in the classroom. A comparatively small number of participants adopted behavioral avoidance strategies like daydreaming or fidgeting (M= 3.30, SD= 0.78). Thus, the findings show that when the participants get bored in the English classes, they prefer a variety of adaptive and maladaptive strategies with a propensity for internal, cognitively driven approaches.

Table 1.1. *CBCS Subscale Results*

Strategies	M	SD
Cognitive avoidance	3.75	0.62
Cognitive approach	3.66	0.71
Behavioral avoidance – simple stimuli	3.30	0.77
Behavioral avoidance – activating stimuli	2.74	0.85

Regarding the relationship between the L2 grit of participants and their use of BCSs, a Pearson correlation analysis was conducted. The analysis revealed moderate and statistically significant positive correlations between L2 grit and all types of BCSs displayed in Table 1.2 below. L2 grit was significantly correlated with cognitive avoidance (r =.54, p <.001), behavioral avoidance based on simple stimuli (r =.51, p <.001), cognitive approach (r =.44, p <.001), and behavioral avoidance based on activating stimuli (r =.46, p <.001). Hence, the findings suggest that even the persistent learners may use mental withdrawal strategies when they are bored in the classroom. Overall, the findings suggest that in AI-supported but structurally controlled learning environments, gritty learners do not simply avoid boredom; rather, they regulate it strategically through both engagement-oriented and temporary disengagement strategies in order to sustain long-term participation in language learning.

Table 1.2. *L2 grit and CBCS correlations*

Strategies	*r*	*p*
Cognitive avoidance	.54	<.001
Cognitive approach	.44	<.001
Behavioral avoidance – simple stimuli	.51	<.001
Behavioral avoidance – activating stimuli	.46	<.001

Perceptions of the Participants

Semi-structured interviews were employed as a part of the explanatory sequential mixed methods design to examine students' perceptions of grit and their coping mechanisms for handling boredom in the English classroom. The purpose of the interviews was to supplement the quantitative findings. Patterns that emerged from the data were found using an inductive approach. The findings from the interviews revealed the themes of task disengagement, emotional persistence, and dependence on environmental or social support systems as shown in Figure 1.

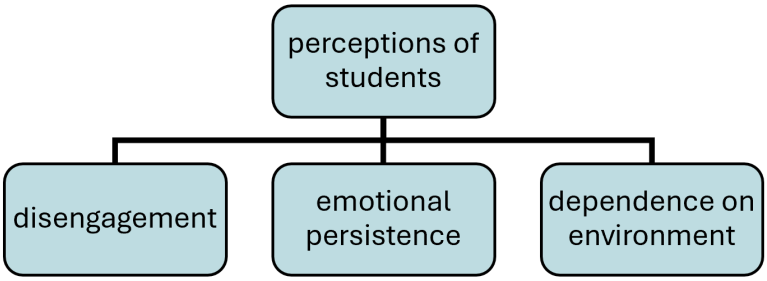


Figure 1. *Themes revealed from the interviews.*

The first theme is about overcoming boredom with adaptive persistence. The desire to continue learning despite classroom boredom emerged as a major theme in the participants' responses. Although they admitted to occasional periods of disengagement, learners generally characterized themselves as persistent. Crucially, students saw boredom as a short-term obstacle rather than a reason to quit learning. Student 23 supports this view by stating:

> "I get really bored with the grammar exercises, but I don't give up. I tell myself that these are necessary exercises."

The second theme is the use of strategic cognitive withdrawal as a coping strategy. To control their frustration or stay motivated during dull classes, many students reported purposefully disengaging their minds. This was frequently characterized as a coping mechanism to preserve their emotional resilience rather than as laziness:

> "When I force myself to focus, I feel tired. Sometimes I allow myself a short break and then come back to the activity with more focus." (Student 9)

The other theme revealed from the interviews was coping and boredom-inducing environmental factors. Although students had access to an AI-supported learning environment, lack of variety, repetitive tasks, and teacher-centered instruction were commonly cited as main causes of boredom. Peer support and an inspiring classroom environment, however, enhanced their coping capacity:

> "I get bored when we answer questions after just reading. But when we do group work together, especially in competitive games, my interest in the subject increases and I enjoy it." (Student 17)

The last theme found was about grit as an emotionally adaptable quality. Gritty learners' adaptable emotional regulation techniques were another significant theme. Many students discussed a range of constructive and destructive coping mechanisms, emphasizing that grit can also be a form of resilience in the face of emotional ups and downs:

> "Sometimes I get excited when I come to class. But some days I get bored and scribble in my book during class. But I always find a reason and focus back." (Student 5)

Insights into how and why gritty learners deal with boredom in different ways are provided by the qualitative findings, which support the quantitative results. The underlying emotional logic of these behaviors was revealed by interview responses, even though statistical analysis demonstrated a positive correlation between L2 grit and both adaptive and avoidance strategies. Gritty learners strategically disengage, modulate their effort, and rely on social or environmental resources to stay motivated rather than persevering mindlessly. These results support the idea that grit is a multifaceted, adaptable quality influenced by both personal characteristics and educational environments, which are increasingly shaped by the use (or limited use) of AI-supported tools in language learning contexts.

Discussion

The current study examined the relationship between Turkish EFL learners' L2 grit and BCS. Findings showed strong L2 grit, particularly perseverance of effort, despite lower consistency of interest. This aligns with research suggesting sustained engagement despite fluctuating motivation

(Elahi Shirvan et al., 2021; Teimouri et al., 2020), while highlighting grit's sensitivity to emotional dynamics (Sudina & Plonsky, 2021).

Although participants had access to an AI-supported learning environment, they still used various coping strategies for boredom, and environmental variety did not prevent boredom in class. Particularly, cognitive approaches such as disengaging mentally or daydreaming were reported. The findings support previous research showing university students frequently employ both approach- and avoidance-based strategies to manage boredom (Nett et al., 2011; Li et al., 2021). Activating distractions, such as using a phone, was the least common behavioral avoidance strategy, indicating that students would be more likely to deal with boredom internally as opposed to externally.

The correlation analysis revealed a clear trend: L2 grit was positively and significantly associated with all four types of coping strategies, including adaptive strategies such as the cognitive approach and maladaptive strategies such as behavioral avoidance. The highest association identified between grit and cognitive avoidance suggests that even highly gritty students may mentally disengaged when they experience repeated or emotionally challenging classroom situations. This is a vital element as it challenges the idea that grit determines optimal academic success. As Duckworth and Gross (2014) note, grit is not necessarily a guarantee of success; its effects rely on situational and emotional elements.

These findings are in line with Solhi et al. (2025), who reported a substantial link between L2 grit and boredom coping strategies (BCS) using structural equation modeling. Their study showed that grit positively influenced both emotion regulation and boredom coping mechanisms, even in the absence of strong emotion regulation capacity. The results of the current study support this claim within a context where students also have access to an AI-supported learning environment, although such tools are not consistently integrated into classroom practice.

Additionally, the findings suggest that while gritty learners strive toward long-term goals, they may also use avoidance strategies to protect their motivation and focus over time. This dual tendency may reflect a self-regulatory trade-off. Rather than indicating apathy, avoidance can be understood as a planned temporary disengagement to conserve emotional and cognitive resources, particularly in structured learning settings. D'Mello and Graesser (2012) similarly argue that disengagement is not necessarily a sign of failure, but may form part of adaptive self-regulation in challenging learning environments.

To deepen our understanding of grit, the regression analysis found that L2 grit predicted all four types of coping methods. More crucial than the technique itself may be the learner's capacity to endure, even if it involves briefly disengaging or turning to less productive habits to emotionally reset. This view aligns with the emerging positive psychology perspective, which suggests that success is defined by sustained commitment rather than constant performance despite emotional challenges (MacIntyre & Khajavy, 2021). From a pedagogical standpoint, these findings emphasize the importance of creating emotionally responsive learning environments that consider both learner persistence and the changing role of technology, including AI, in supporting engagement and self-regulation.

While developing grit is crucial, language teachers must also consider students' emotional strain. Encouraging adaptive coping strategies such as goal setting, metacognitive reflection, and mindfulness can help learners channel their endurance more effectively. Task variety, learner autonomy, and cooperative or creative activities may also promote sustained engagement and reduce reliance on avoidance strategies (Derakhshan et al., 2021; Pawlak et al., 2021). In addition, within AI-supported learning environments, personalized feedback systems and adaptive task design can further support engagement by offering differentiated input and reducing repetitive learning experiences, even though such tools are not consistently available in all classroom settings.

The findings of the current study contribute to the existing literature in three important ways. First, with regard to L2 grit, it extends previous research by examining grit not only as a predictor of achievement but also as a construct that interacts dynamically with learners' emotional responses in real classroom conditions. While prior studies have largely focused on performance outcomes (e.g., Teimouri et al., 2020; Pawlak et al., 2022), this study shows that grit is also reflected in how learners regulate boredom and maintain engagement through different coping mechanisms.

In relation to boredom coping strategies (BCS), the study provides a more fine-grained understanding of how EFL learners manage boredom by linking specific coping strategies (cognitive and behavioral, approach and avoidance) to levels of L2 grit. Unlike earlier research that has mainly described boredom or coping strategies separately, this study demonstrates their systematic relationship, showing that even highly gritty learners may rely on both adaptive and avoidance-based strategies depending on classroom demands.

Finally, in terms of language learning in contemporary, technology-mediated contexts, the study offers an important contextual contribution. Conducted in a setting where students have limited access to mobile devices in classrooms but engage with AI-supported learning platforms during instruction, it highlights how learner engagement and emotional regulation operate under mixed technological conditions. This allows for a more realistic understanding of L2 grit and boredom management in today's evolving educational environments, where digital tools are present but unevenly integrated.

Overall, the study positions L2 grit as a context-sensitive, emotionally embedded construct and underscores the importance of examining boredom coping strategies within both traditional and technology-mediated learning ecologies. Integrating qualitative perspectives into quantitative findings reveals a complex picture of how L2 grit operates in real classroom contexts. Rather than passively enduring boredom, gritty learners manage it strategically through social support, short-term cognitive breaks, and internal reframing. These findings contribute to a growing body of research that conceptualizes L2 grit as a flexibly enacted, context-dependent, and emotionally embedded construct (Elahi Shirvan et al., 2021; MacIntyre & Khajavy, 2021; Solhi et al., 2025).

Implications

According to the results of the present study, language learners who have the highest levels of grit prefer cognitive mechanisms to deal with boredom. Coping with boredom is crucial for maintaining interest in language learning and pursuing long-term objectives. Thus, the study tries to clarify a few concerns. Firstly, grit can be fostered in educational settings by a variety of motivational techniques (Teimouri et al., 2022). Instructors can help learners share their experiences of language learning, assign both short- and long-term projects, or provide examples of professionals to inspire learner achievement. Secondly, creating a realistic environment can foster language learning, as students can use boring situations to change their perspectives. Gritty language learners inclined to benefit from boring situations since they have consistent and positive perceptions about language learning. So, activities need to pay attention to management of boredom in the classroom. Boredom should be considered as an emotional state that may be addressed with specific coping mechanisms by both teachers and students. Additionally, the dynamic interaction between language learners' grit and their boredom-coping strategies needs to be methodologically incorporated into instructional design, classroom management, and assessment procedures in language teaching. In AI-supported learning environments, such strategies can be further enhanced through adaptive feedback, personalized task sequencing, and reflective prompts generated by intelligent systems, which may help sustain engagement and reduce monotony. Also, in AI-supported contexts, boredom detection and adaptive task design can contribute to more responsive learning experiences.

The results also demonstrate the importance of teaching emotion management and strategy in language learning. Boredom is a common but poorly managed unpleasant feeling that can affect performance, focus, and active participation (Pekrun et al., 2010; Pekrun & Linnenbrink-Garcia, 2014). Incorporating introspective exercises, metacognitive strategy training, and task diversity during regular instruction may help students transform passive disengagement into active coping methods.

Limitations and Further Studies

Though this study provides insights into the relationship between L2 grit and boredom coping strategies, several limitations should be noted. First, the small sample size (N = 69) limits generalizability to broader EFL populations with different institutional, sociocultural, and proficiency backgrounds. Prior SLA research shows that context-sensitive emotional variables such as grit and boredom are shaped by learning environments and instructional practices (Pawlak et al., 2022; Wang et al., 2021); therefore, replication with larger samples is needed. Second, the study relied mainly on self-report measures, which may be influenced by social desirability and recall bias, despite acceptable reliability. Future research could employ longitudinal, observational, or experience-sampling methods for richer data. Finally, affective variables such as enjoyment, anxiety, and emotion regulation were not included. Given their interaction in SLA, future studies should adopt more comprehensive models of learner emotions.

Conclusion

This study examined the relationship between Turkish EFL learners' L2 grit and boredom coping strategies (BCS) using an explanatory sequential mixed-methods design. Findings showed generally high L2 grit, especially in perseverance of effort, while consistency of interest was lower. Participants reported using cognitive and behavioral, approach and avoidance strategies to manage boredom. Results indicated a positive correlation between L2 grit and all BCS. This may show that gritty learners employ a flexible combination of approach- and avoidance-based coping strategies to regulate boredom and sustain long-term engagement in language learning. Interviews showed boredom as temporary and manageable, supported by emotional

regulation, strategic disengagement, and social or environmental resources. Overall, L2 grit emerged as a dynamic, context-dependent construct linked to emotional self-regulation rather than a fixed trait (Elahi Shirvan et al., 2021; MacIntyre & Khajavy, 2021).

The findings highlight the need for emotionally responsive language education in AI-supported learning environments. Enhancing autonomy, task diversity, and AI-assisted activities may foster engagement, while requiring careful pedagogical design. Since boredom coexists with persistence, it should be seen as normal rather than failure. The study contributes to positive psychology in SLA and calls for further research on emotional resilience in AI-mediated contexts.

Acknowledgement

The authors would like to state that no specific support was received for this study.

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Appendix

A. *L2 GRIT SCALE - TEIMOURI, Y., PLONSKY, L., & TABANDEH, F. (2021)*

		Not like me at all	Not much like me	Somewhat like me	Mostly like me	Very much like me
1.	I am a diligent English language learner.	1	2	3	4	5
2.	My interests in learning English change from year to year.	1	2	3	4	5
3.	When it comes to English, I am a hard-working learner.	1	2	3	4	5
4.	I think I have lost my interest in learning English.	1	2	3	4	5
5.	Now that I have decided to learn English, nothing can prevent me from reaching this goal.	1	2	3	4	5
6.	I will not allow anything to stop me from my progress in learning English.	1	2	3	4	5
7.	I am not as interested in learning English as I used to be.	1	2	3	4	5
8.	I was obsessed with learning English in the past but have lost interest recently.	1	2	3	4	5
9.	I put much time and effort into improving my English language weaknesses.	1	2	3	4	5

B. *COPING STRATEGIES WITH BOREDOM IN CLASS (CBCS) (TURKISH FORM)*

No	Açıklama: Bu formda derste can sıkıntısı yaşadığınız zamanlarda nasıl tepki verdiğinizi belirlemeye yönelik ifadeler bulunmaktadır. İfadeleri okurken ne sıklıkla o ifadeye uygun hareket ettiğinizi "hiçbir zaman (1), nadiren (2), bazen (3), çoğunlukla (4) ve her zaman (5)" seçeneklerinden birini seçerek optik forma kodlayınız. **Derste sıkıldığımda…**	Hiçbir zaman	Nadiren	Bazen	Çoğunlukla	Her zaman
1	Derste öğreneceğim bilgilerin meslek hayatımda önemli olduğunu düşünerek dikkatimi derse yoğunlaştırırım.	1	2	3	4	5
2	Hayal kurarım.	1	2	3	4	5
3	Not ortalamamın önemli olduğu düşüncesiyle derse odaklanmaya çalışırım.	1	2	3	4	5
4	Yanımda oturan sınıf arkadaşımla sohbet ederim.	1	2	3	4	5
5	Derse gelmek için harcadığım çabayı düşünerek dikkatimi derse yöneltirim.	1	2	3	4	5
6	Uyurum.	1	2	3	4	5
7	Not alarak derse yönelik dikkatimi arttırmaya çalışırım.	1	2	3	4	5
8	Etrafı (hocayı, sınıf arkadaşlarımı, eşyaları vs.) incelerim.	1	2	3	4	5
9	Hobilerim ve ilgi alanlarıma dair şeyler düşünürüm.	1	2	3	4	5
10	Geleceğimi düşünerek dikkatimi derse yoğunlaştırırım.	1	2	3	4	5
11	Sorunlarım hakkında düşünürüm.	1	2	3	4	5
12	Dersi dinlemenin konuyu anlamamı kolaylaştıracağını düşünerek dikkatimi derse yöneltirim.	1	2	3	4	5
13	Sınavdan düşük not alabileceğimi düşünerek derse odaklanmaya çalışırım.	1	2	3	4	5
14	Hayatın anlamı hakkında düşünürüm.	1	2	3	4	5
15	Derste öğreneceğim bilgilerin beni geliştireceğini düşünerek dikkatimi derse yoğunlaştırırım.	1	2	3	4	5
16	İşlenen konuyu daha sonra telafi edemeyebileceğimi kendime hatırlatarak derse odaklanmaya çalışırım.	1	2	3	4	5
17	Telefonda oyun oynarım.	1	2	3	4	5
18	Telefonda mesajlaşırım.	1	2	3	4	5
19	Alışveriş sitelerinde gezinirim.	1	2	3	4	5
20	Kitap okurum.	1	2	3	4	5
21	Bulmaca/sudoku çözerim.	1	2	3	4	5
22	Dersten kalabileceğimi düşünerek derse odaklanmaya çalışırım.	1	2	3	4	5
23	Haberleri okurum.	1	2	3	4	5
24	Zihnimi meşgul eden herhangi bir şey hakkında yazı yazarım.	1	2	3	4	5
25	Sosyal paylaşım sitelerinde (instagram, facebook vs.) takılırım.	1	2	3	4	5

C. *INTERVIEW QUESTIONS (TURKISH AND ENGLISH VERSIONS)*

Görüşme Soruları:
1. Kısaca kendinizi tanıtabilir misiniz? (Yaş, İngilizce seviyeniz, ne kadar süredir İngilizce öğrendiğiniz gibi.)
2. İngilizce öğrenme sürecinizi nasıl tanımlarsınız?
3. İngilizce öğrenirken motivasyonunuzu nasıl koruyorsunuz?
4. Hiç İngilizce öğrenmeyi bırakmayı düşündünüz mü? Eğer düşündüyseniz, sizi devam etmeye ne teşvik etti?
5. İngilizce öğrenirken zorlandığınızda hangi stratejileri kullanıyorsunuz?
6. İngilizce öğrenirken hiç sıkıldığınız oldu mu? Eğer olduysa, hangi durumlarda?
7. İngilizce derslerinde veya kendi başınıza çalışırken sıkıldığınızda ne yapıyorsunuz?
8. İngilizce öğrenmeyi kendiniz için daha ilgi çekici hale getirmek adına neler yapıyorsunuz?
9. Can sıkıntısıyla başa çıkabilme becerinizin, İngilizce öğrenmeye devam etmenizde size yardımcı olduğunu düşünüyor musunuz? Neden?
10. Dil öğrenme azminin (grit) öğrencilerin can sıkıntısını yönetmesine bir etkisi var mıdır? Varsa nasıl bir etkisi olabilir? Açıklayabilir misiniz?

Interview Questions:
1. Could you briefly introduce yourself? (Such as age, English level, and how long you have been learning English.)
2. How would you describe your English learning process?
3. How do you maintain your motivation while learning English?
4. Have you ever considered giving up on learning English? If so, what motivated you to continue?
5. What strategies do you use when you struggle while learning English?
6. Have you ever been bored while learning English? If so, in what situations?
7. What do you do when you get bored in English classes or when studying on your own?
8. What do you do to make learning English more engaging for yourself?
9. Do you think your ability to cope with boredom helps you continue learning English? Why?
10. Does language learning grit have an effect on students' ability to manage boredom? If so, what kind of effect might it have? Can you explain?