



L2 Grit: Looking into Gritty and Ungritty Learners in Learning English as a Foreign Language

Achmad Kholili

Universitas Islam Zainul Hasan Genggong, Indonesia

Feri Ferdiyanto

Universitas Islam Zainul Hasan Genggong, Indonesia

Introduction

As a personality trait, researchers have formerly figured out that Grit is a factor of success in both academic and non-academic contexts in studies that fall under social psychology (Duckworth, 2016). Researchers subsequently studied this notion in second language learning (Teimouri et al., 2020). This Grit has been accounted for as passion and perseverance for long-term goals (Duckworth et al., 2007), consisting of two lower-order notions: perseverance of effort and consistency of interest. Perseverance of effort is related to one's continuity with investing boundless energy over an extremely long time, while consistency of interest is correlated to one's consistency of spirit for noble goals even though he/she represents failure, hindrance, and challenges (Duckworth et al., 2007; Duckworth & Quinn 2009; Robertson-Kraft & Duckworth, 2014). Hence, learners with Grit believe firmly and always do their best all the time, which consists of maintaining their efforts, working hard towards the challenges, and showing their interest in something despite failure and complexities in progress (Duckworth et al., 2007).

In terms of personality, studies on personality traits have been extensively carried out in several countries thus far, including global and local contexts, ranging from those on self-esteem (Morcom, 2017), perfectionism (Farim & Noormohammadi, 2014), and extrovert and introvert effects on language learning (Kim & Nassaji, 2017; Winasih et al., 2019; Zainuddin, 2016). The findings of these studies are fluid and dynamic and have proven that personality types have a dramatic impact on language learning, for instance, self-esteem becomes an integral part of reaching success in language learning (Morcom, 2017). In terms of extrovert and introvert learners, extrovert learners performed better in learning a language than their introverted counterparts (Zainuddin, 2016). As far as perfectionism is concerned, it shows that positive perfectionism is closely associated with the learners' learning strategy and style (Farim & Noormohammadi, 2014).

Despite the undertaking of these previous studies on personality traits (Farim & Noormohammadi, 2014; Liyanage & Bartlett, 2013; Morcom, 2017; Winasih et al., 2019; Zainuddin, 2016), there is, however, a dearth of research, especially those looking into the L2 learners' grittiness in English language learning, particularly in the Indonesian context. To this end, this study was conducted to investigate undergraduate learners' Grit in English as their foreign language at the tertiary education level. Grit, in this case, is different from the need of academic attainments. The need of academic achievement is



closely related to a person’s inclination for completing tasks that receive immediate favourable feedback on performance. At the same time, grit purposely sets long-term goals and remains committed towards the goals despite the challenges, hardship, and obstacles one faces (Duckworth et al., 2007). Those who have this grit personality stay loyal to their highest level goals over a long span of time in spite of drawbacks and letdowns they deal with (Duckworth & Cross, 2014). Consequently, the findings of this study are expected to make a significant contribution to the institution and carry recent insights into the realm of language learning.

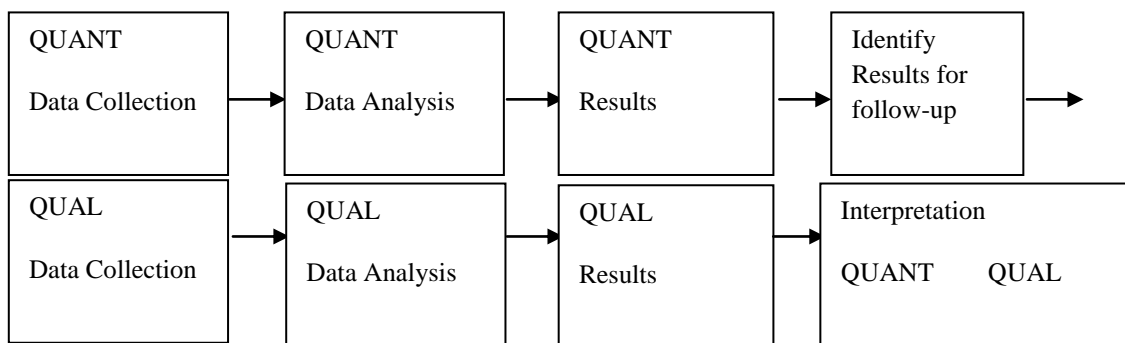
Overarching Research Questions

1. How many EFL learners are categorized as gritty learners at the University of Islam Zainul Hasan Genggong?
2. How many EFL learners are categorized as ungritty learners at the University of Islam Zainul Hasan Genggong?
3. What are the reasons they develop the grit personality?
4. What are the reasons they develop the ungrit personality?

Research Method

The existing study adopted a mixed-methods design, exploiting quantitative and qualitative data. A two-phase mixed methods design called explanatory sequential design was used in this study, focusing on the follow-up explanations model. The reason for employing the follow-up explanations model is that the researchers utilized qualitative data to expand on the quantitative findings (Creswell et al., 2003). Thus, this study started with a quantitative data phase, and was subsequently followed by a qualitative data phase to form or to connect to the results of the first quantitative phase (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2006). A questionnaire was distributed as the quantitative data collection method, while a semi-structured interview was administered as the qualitative data collection method to follow up the results of the quantitative data as additional explanation (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2006).

Explanatory Design: Follow-up Explanation Model



Participants

A total of 30 EFL learners from non-Anglicized linguistic backgrounds participated in this study. Non-Anglicized linguistic background means that the participants come from non-English language backgrounds. In other words, they use Indonesian and other local languages for communication, such as *Madurese* and *Javanese* languages, which exist in the country. In this case, there are only two classes

available in the University: Class A and Class B, both consisting of 30 learners. These two classes were then randomly selected through simple random sampling. It is with this type of sampling where individuals in the defined population have a similar and individual chance of being selected into the sample (Mills & Gay, 2019).

Data Collection

A questionnaire was distributed to 30 learners so as to investigate the learners' L2 Grit. The instrument was similar to a 9-item questionnaire developed by Teimouri et al. (2020) about a grit scale. This questionnaire employs a Likert scale with five response options: (1) Not like me at all, (2) Not much like me (3), Somewhat like me (4) Mostly like me (5) Very much like (see Appendix). In addition, a semi-structured interview was conducted to inspect factors underlying why learners become great learners. The researchers held this interview with both high and low gritty learners. The interview questions were predicated upon the learners' responses in the questionnaire to determine whether the learners were gritty or ungritty learners.

Data Analysis

Quantitative analysis

The data from this questionnaire that was distributed in this study was analysed using a simple calculation analysis. As shown in the questionnaire, questions 1, 3, 5, 6, and 9 are included in the gritty categorization, where they are: (1) Not like me at all, (2) Not much like me, (3) Somewhat like me, (4) Mostly like me, and (5) Very much like. Meanwhile, questions 2, 4, 7, and 8 are covered in the ungritty categorization, in which they also followed a five-choice Likert scale with: (5) Not like me at all, (4) Not much like me, (3) Somewhat like me, (2) Mostly like me, and (1) Very much like me. The scores the learners gave to the questionnaire were subsequently added up and divided by 9. The calculated scores must be within 1-5, in which 5 = extremely gritty learners in learning English, and 1 = not gritty at all in learning English. This calculation is in accordance with research done by Teimouri et al. (2020).

Qualitative analysis

The analysis of the current study employed thematic analysis, involving familiarizing ourselves with the data, generating initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing themes, defining themes, and naming themes as well as producing the final report (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The researchers first familiarized themselves with the data by reading it, again and again, both critically and analytically. Shortly after reading the data, the researchers began to code the features that emerged from the transcript across the entire data set, arranging the data relevant to each code. Subsequently, the researchers attempted to collect codes into the potential themes. Next, the researchers checked if the themes work with respect to the coded extracts, generating a thematic map of the analysis. At this stage, the researchers invited another suitably experienced researcher to review and explore the data analysis. The goal of this is to provide additional insights into themes and theory development (Burnard et al., 2018). Eventually, the researchers produced the final report of the analysis. Above all, the researchers found two overarching themes: *"Strong Beliefs for Future Career and Satisfaction in Academic Attainment"* and *"Inhibiting Factors Rendering Learners low attitudes to learn"*. During the coding process, as the researchers employed participants' own words and concluded their statements, the researchers drew both descriptive and InVivo coding (Saldana, 2013).

Procedures of the study

At the outset, the researchers visited the research site and attempted to gain permission from the head of the study program to conduct a study. After getting permission, the researchers subsequently administered a grit questionnaire to the learners. The allotted time for completing the questionnaire was 90 minutes. After the students completed the questionnaire, the researchers identified the questionnaire results for follow-up action. The results of the questionnaire were done through mathematical calculations. Afterwards, the learners were informed about their attendance at the interview session, which lasted between 30 and 40 minutes. In this session, the researchers used purposive sampling to recruit the participants for the interview.

Findings and Discussion

From the quantitative findings, the results of the L2 Grit questionnaire are presented in the following:

TABLE 1

Demographic Information of the Participants Selecting Grit and Ungrit Personality Type

No.	The Number of Participants Choosing the Grit and Ungrit Personality Type	
1.	Learner 1 = 5	16. Learner 16 = 5
2.	Learner 2 = 4.5	17. Learner 17 = 4.7
3.	Learner 3 = 5	18. Learner 18 = 4.8
4.	Learner 4 = 4.8	19. Learner 19 = 5
5.	Learner 5 = 5	20. Learner 20 = 4.5
6.	Learner 6 = 5	21. Learner 21 = 1.4
7.	Learner 7 = 4.8	22. Learner 22 = 1.1
8.	Learner 8 = 5	23. Learner 23 = 1.2
9.	Learner 9 = 5	24. Learner 24 = 1.3
10.	Learner 10 = 4.8	25. Learner 25 = 1.4
11.	Learner 11 = 5	26. Learner 26 = 4.7
12.	Learner 12 = 5	27. Learner 27 = 5
13.	Learner 13 = 5	28. Learner 28 = 4.8
14.	Learner 14 = 5	29. Learner 29 = 5
15.	Learner 15 = 4.7	30. Learner 30 = 5

The categorization is depicted in the following:

Gritty Learners:

5 = 15
4.8 = 5
4.7 = 3
4.5 = 2

Not Gritty Learners:

1.4 = 2
1.3 = 1
1.2 = 1
1.1 = 1

Grounded upon these findings, the learners who developed a grit personality are 25 learners out of 30, while 5 learners as the rest adopt an ungritty personality. Therefore, it can be concluded that 83.3 % of the learners are categorized as gritty learners, while 16.7 % of them are categorized as ungritty learners. It is subsequently presented in the form of chart:

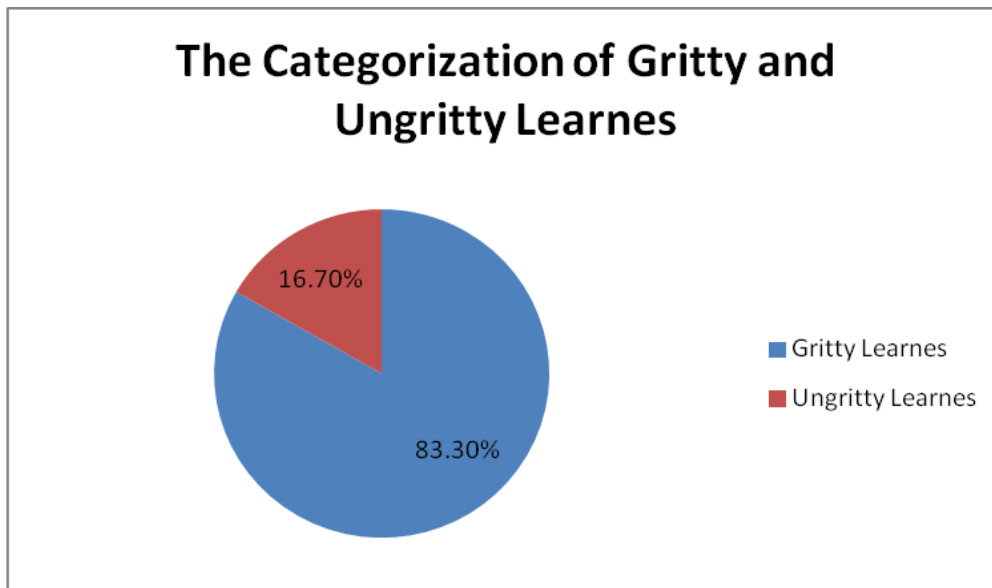


Figure 1. The comparison between Gritty and Ungritty learners.

Learners' Response to English Language Learning

Personal semi-structured interviews were carried out with the learners to confirm or strengthen their questionnaire responses. In this regard, the individual semi-structured interviews were held with both gritty and ungritty learners.

Gritty learners

Strong beliefs for the future career and satisfaction in academic achievement. Some learners, especially those categorized as gritty learners, study English very diligently and are consistent in this subject because they want to make their dreams come true. For the most part, they wish to have a good English teaching career, be a good spokesman, a translator, and be a freelance English writer. Hence, being a hard-working learner is of value to them. As the examples of their vignettes in the following:

I study English very hard because I want to be an English teacher in the future. I think it would be better for me to develop my skill in this subject on and on. Being a hard-working learner is important for me. (Learner 12)

I must be consistent in learning English because I want to be a spokesman in my future. I would like to work in a tourism sector. I think it is important to always learn English. (Learner 7)

Besides, they have a positive self-concept and firm beliefs towards what they will reach in the future. No matter what other people say to them, they remain consistent in developing their English skills for their career prospects.

Anyway, English is important for me since my future career is to become an English teacher. I believe that I can be a professional English teacher in my future even though many people doubt my abilities. I will do my best. (Learner 12)

Sometimes I make a few errors in writing English and my friends often doubt my abilities in writing. Nevertheless, I keep on learning to write in order that I can be a good translator later on. (Learner 26)

Being hardworking and consistent in learning English has satisfied learners with the attainments they received in the past and the achievement they plan for the the present. It is because they never give up learning English and always focus on their primary aims in their future.

I felt surprised and satisfied when I got good GPA score in the last semester especially in English subject. It happened after I learned hard in English. (Learner 12)

I am happy because I always get A in writing, reading and speaking. I think it is important to study hard in writing. It will for sure have a good impact in the future. (Learner 26)

Ungritty learners

Inhibiting factors rendering learners low attitudes to learn. There are several factors that contribute to learners being lazy and inconsistent in learning English. All of them are occasioned by subject difficulties and stress. They, for the most part, study English irregularly and inconsistently. Even some of them wish to stop and move to other majors.

The difficulties of English cause me a mental breakdown. I feel that English is quite difficult. I have ever tried to comprehend English, I read English every day to make my understanding better, but it is not successful sometimes. I am not sure about my future career to be an English teacher. (Learner 24)

Actually, from the beginning, I have no interest in English major because I want to be a judge; therefore, it seems suitable for me if I am in the law faculty. However, at that time, I was forced to choose the English major by my family because they want me to be teacher of English. (Learner 22)

Since they are not interested in learning English, their progress in this subject matter is low each semester. It is based on their arguments depicted in the following that their scores and GPA are lower than ever.

Since there is no support from my family, I feel that my spirit is down and I cannot do better in English. My GPA score is often low. (Learner 21)

I think I am not so interested in English since my dream is to become a judge. So, I cannot learn English hard. It causes me many unsuccessful results, such as my GPA score gets low in English, like writing and reading. (Learner 22)

Discussion

The current study has attempted to discover the learners' Grit at the University of Islam Zainul Hasan Genggong, Indonesia. Grit as a personality trait has brought a significant impact on language learning in which the grittier learners achieve higher levels of educational attainment (Cross, 2014; Duckworth et al., 2007; Duckworth & Quinn, 2009). This study, for instance, has proven that gritty learners are a lot better than ungritty learners. It has showcased that (83%) or 25 learners out of 30 are categorized as gritty learners, while ungritty learners are only (16%) or 5 learners out of 30, as shown in Table 1.

It has been argued by (Duckworth, 2016) that grit plays a more vital role in success than talent. Being gritty learners, drawing on perseverance and consistency of interest, they possess stable efforts, remarkable tenacity, and good faith to achieve their future career. Although they have some complexities in learning English, they never give up learning it and are always motivated to learn more, resulting in a more satisfying academic achievement.

On the other hand, ungritty learners show negative attitudes towards learning English because several significant factors have predisposed them to despondency in studying English, such as family support (parents' support), subject difficulties, and stress from parents. In other words, they are inconsistent and have no sound persistence in language learning, leading them to fail academically. Getie (2020) asserts that social and educational context factors have a devastating impact on the learners' behaviour in language learning.

Therefore, it is implied that having a gritty personality is of the utmost importance in language learning. The perseverance and effort they have can demonstrate a positive view of language learning and their future career. This study is confined to the Indonesian context with a small sample size. Other studies on grit personality factors are recommended with larger samples in other contexts.

Conclusion

The current study has attempted to delve into learners' Grit in English as a foreign language. Hence, a mixed-methods study employing an explanatory sequential design was carried out to investigate their Grit. The findings indicate that only 25 learners out of 30 were gritty in English learning. Those categorized as gritty learners demonstrated positive behaviour and a firm belief to pursue their future career - their motivation to learn increased along with the self-confidence levels. In addition, those ungritty learners, on the other hand, have a poor motivation to learn and express passive interests in English. It is due mainly to several factors influencing them, such as subject difficulties, family support, and stress.

The Authors

Achmad Kholili is a faculty member at Universitas Islam Zainul Hasan Genggong, Indonesia. He earned his master's degree in English Language Teaching at Universitas Islam Malang, Indonesia. His research interests fall within the realm of English Language Teaching (ELT), Applied Linguistics, Pragmatics, and Academic Writing.

Department of English Education
Faculty of Tarbiyah
Universitas Islam Zainul Hasan Genggong, Probolinggo, Indonesia
Mobile +6282228048028
Email: achmadkholili93@gmail.com

Feri Ferdiyanto is a lecturer of English at Universitas Islam Zainul Hasan Genggong, Indonesia. He completed his master's degree in English Language Teaching at Universitas Islam Malang, Indonesia. His research interests include English Language Teaching (ELT), Academic Writing, and Reading Comprehension.

Department of English Education
Faculty of Tarbiyah
Universitas Islam Zainul Hasan Genggong, Probolinggo, Indonesia
Mobile +6285336035487
Email: feriferdiyanto99@gmail.com

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(Received June 17, 2022; Revised August 23, 2022; Accepted Sep 18, 2022)

Appendix

L2 Grit Scale adopted from (Teimouri et al., 2020)

No	Statements	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	5	4	3	2	1
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	5	4	3	2	1
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	5	4	3	2	1
8	I was obsessed with learning English in the past but have lost interest recently	5	4	3	2	1
9	I put much time and effort into improving my English language weaknesses	1	2	3	4	5

Persistence of Effort

- Q1. I am a diligent language learner
 Q3. When it comes to English, I am a hard-working learner
 Q5. Now that I have decided to learn English, nothing can prevent me from reaching this goal
 Q6. I will not allow anything to stop me from my progress in learning English
 Q9. I put much time and effort into improving my English language weaknesses

Consistency of Effort

- Q2. My interests in learning English change from year to year
 Q4. I think I have lost my interest in learning English
 Q7. I am not as interested in learning English as I used to be
 Q8. I was obsessed with learning English in the past but have lost interest recently

Scoring

For questions 1, 3, 5, 6, 9, assign the following points:

- 5= very much like me
 4= Mostly like me
 3= Somewhat like me
 2= Not much like me
 1= Not like me at all

For questions 2, 4, 7, 8, assign the following points:

- 5= Not like me at all
- 4= Not much like me
- 3= Somewhat like me
- 2= Mostly like me
- 1= Very much like me

Add up all the scores and then divide by 9. The calculated score must be within 1-5, in which 5 = extremely gritty learner in learning English, and 1= not gritty at all in learning English.