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Probing into the Contribution of Self-efficacy, L2 Grit, and Foreign Language Classroom Enjoyment to Alleviating Oral Presentation Anxiety of University Students

Seyed Mohammad Reza Amirian[1], Vahid Edalati Bazzaz[2], Saeed Ghaniabadi[3]✉, & Gholamreza Zareian[4]

1. Department of English Language and Literature, Hakim Sabzevari University, Sabzevar, Iran., sm.amirian@hsu.ac.ir
2. Department of English Language and Literature, Hakim Sabzevari University, Sabzevar, Iran., edalati_vahid@yahoo.com
3. Department of English Language and Literature, Hakim Sabzevari University, Sabzevar, Iran., s.ghaniabadi@hsu.ac.ir
4. Department of English Language and Literature, Hakim Sabzevari University, Sabzevar, Iran., g.zareian@hsu.ac.ir

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ABSTRACT

Despite the growing recognition of Oral Presentation Anxiety (OPA) as a significant barrier to effective communication in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) education, previous research has predominantly examined anxiety in isolation, leaving a critical gap in understanding how these constructs interact (Botes et al., 2020; Dewaele et al., 2017; Tsang, 2022). To offer a more integrated perspective, this study investigates the predictive roles of L2 grit, Foreign Language Classroom Enjoyment (FLCE), and self-efficacy in relation to Oral Presentation Anxiety among English major university students. A total of 123 participants completed an online survey that included demographic questions and established scales measuring L2 grit, FLCE, self-efficacy, and OPA. Path analysis was employed to examine the proposed relationships within the model. The findings reveal that self-efficacy significantly predicts OPA, demonstrating a strong correlation with participants' anxiety levels during oral presentations. In contrast, neither L2 grit nor FLCE emerged as significant predictors of OPA across the sample. These results highlight the importance of fostering self-efficacy to mitigate OPA in undergraduate language learners. The study concludes with practical implications for educators and stakeholders in higher education aimed at reducing foreign language presentation anxiety.

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1. Introduction

Oral presentations have become an integral component of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) education particularly in the context of higher education, serving not only as a mode of communication but also as a key assessment tool (Tsang, 2022). Despite their recognized educational benefits, oral presentations frequently induce significant challenges for language learners, manifesting primarily as Oral Presentation Anxiety (OPA) (Liang & Kelsen, 2018; Woodrow, 2006) . In Iran, for example, students frequently report feeling anxious when presenting in English, mainly due to fear of negative evaluation and doubts about their language skills (Amirian & Tavakoli, 2016; Tsang, 2022). This challenge is not unique to Iran; international studies show that public speaking and oral presentations rank among the most anxiety-provoking academic tasks for university students worldwide (Dwyer & Davidson, 2012; Ferreira Marinho et al., 2017). Although constructs like self-efficacy, L2 grit, and foreign language classroom enjoyment (FLCE) have been studied individually, little is known about how these factors work together to reduce OPA in EFL university students.

The main objectives of this study are to examine how self-efficacy, L2 grit, and foreign FLCE predict OPA among EFL university students, and to investigate whether FLCE mediates the relationship between self-efficacy, L2 grit, and OPA. This study provides insights into the psychological factors that influence OPA among EFL university students. By examining self-efficacy, L2 grit, and classroom enjoyment FLCE together, it contributes to a more integrated understanding of how these factors interact and offers practical guidance for educators seeking to reduce anxiety and enhance student engagement in oral presentations.

Self-efficacy which is defined as an individual's belief in their ability to succeed in specific situations (Bandura, 1997) plays a crucial role in mitigating anxiety associated with public speaking. Despite the established link between self-efficacy and language learning outcomes (Amirian & Tavakoli, 2016; Goetze & Driver, 2022), the relationship between OPA and self-efficacy remains underexplored, highlighting a critical gap in the literature. Existing studies suggest that higher self-efficacy can mitigate anxiety levels during public speaking tasks, thereby enhancing performance (Liu & Wang, 2021; Tsang, 2020). However, most research has focused on these constructs in isolation or within limited contexts, failing to capture the dynamic interplay between OPA and self-efficacy across diverse settings (Ahmetović et al., 2020; Wu et al., 2022).

L2 grit, defined as the combination of perseverance of effort and consistency of interest in the pursuit of long-term language learning goals, has gained recognition as a crucial factor influencing second language acquisition (Duckworth et al., 2007;Teimouri et al., 2022). This construct emphasizes the importance of sustained effort and passion in overcoming the challenges inherent in language learning, contributing to improved motivation and achievement (Lee & Drajati, 2019; Wei et al., 2019). Despite the growing body of literature highlighting the positive effects of L2 grit

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on various aspects of language learning (Botes et al., 2025) including motivation and engagement (Lee & Drajati, 2019; Teimouri et al., 2022; Zhao & Wang, 2023a), there remains a significant gap in research regarding its relationship with OPA. While studies have established that self-efficacy and anxiety significantly impact learners' performance during oral presentations (Tsang, 2022), the interplay between L2 grit and OPA has not been thoroughly investigated.

FLCE is defined as a positive emotional state that arises from engaging in foreign language learning activities, characterized by feelings of satisfaction, motivation, and enthusiasm (Dewaele & MacIntyre, 2014). Research has shown that FLCE can significantly enhance learners' motivation and academic performance (Botes et al., 2020; Dewaele & MacIntyre, 2014) while serving as a protective factor against negative emotions such as anxiety (MacIntyre et al., 2022). While OPA is recognized as a common challenge that can hinder language learners' performance during speaking tasks, the potential role of FLCE in alleviating this anxiety has not been thoroughly explored.

By integrating self-efficacy, L2 grit, and FLCE into a cohesive framework, this study aims to clarify their collective influence on oral presentation anxiety and to inform pedagogical strategies for reducing OPA in EFL contexts

2. Review of Literature

2.1. Oral Presentation Anxiety in English

Anxiety is a well-documented barrier in language acquisition (Amirian et al., 2022; Saghafi et al., 2022), particularly in performance-based contexts such as speaking, which has consistently been identified as the most anxiety-inducing skill in language learning (e.g., Kelsen, 2019; Liang & Kelsen, 2018; Zhang & Ardasheva, 2019). Speaking anxiety, a situation-specific phenomenon, emerges during oral interactions, often leading to avoidance behaviors and cognitive disruptions like fear of making errors or underperforming compared to peers. Physical symptoms such as trembling, sweating, and increased heart rate further exacerbate the issue (Cheng, 2017).

Delivering oral presentations intensifies this anxiety. Woodrow (2006) highlighted that advanced English learners identified public speaking, particularly oral presentations, as a primary source of anxiety. Supporting this, Dwyer and Davidson (2012) reported that public speaking is a top fear among US college students, second only to death and financial concerns. Ferreira Marinho et al. (2017) similarly observed widespread fear of public speaking among undergraduates, underscoring the need for targeted interventions.

Oral presentation anxiety (OPA) differs from general speaking anxiety by its academic and formal context, where high expectations heighten pressure. While constructs like public speaking anxiety (Bodie, 2010) and language learning anxiety (Horwitz et al., 1986) provide useful frameworks, OPA and foreign language classroom enjoyment (FLCE) offer more focused insights into the interplay of emotional factors in academic settings.

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Different factors are found to be potentially correlated with OPA, such as errors in pronunciation and fear of being laughed at (MacIntyre, 2017), personality traits (Liang & Kelsen, 2018), fear of making mistakes (Price, 1991), self-perceived pronunciation and speaking proficiency (Tsang, 2022) , fear of being judged, and uncertainty about the topic and physical symptoms (Grieve et al., 2021) and video-based formative practice (Zheng et al., 2023). After reviewing the literature on OPA, while prior studies have investigated the relationships between self-efficacy and speaking anxiety (e.g., Grieve, 2020; Tsang, 2022), as well as grit and FLCE in relation to language learning anxiety (e.g., Dewaele & MacIntyre, 2014; Teimouri et al., 2022;), few studies have examined how these three constructs together predict OPA in an EFL university setting. This integrative approach helps clarify the combined impact of affective and motivational variables on OPA. Addressing these gaps would provide valuable insight into the holistic nature of OPA and its underlying mechanisms.

2.2. Self-efficacy

Self-efficacy, as conceptualized by Bandura (1994), refers to "people's beliefs about their capabilities to produce designated levels of performance that exercise influence over events that affect their lives" (p. 71). In educational contexts, self-efficacy significantly influences motivation, engagement, and achievement (Hsieh & Schallert, 2008; Wang et al., 2013;Wang et al., 2021). Collins (1982) emphasized that underperformance often stems not from a lack of skills but from a lack of belief in one's capabilities. Research has established positive relationships between self-efficacy and language skills, including listening (Chen, 2007), reading (Shang, 2010), writing (Sarkhoush, 2013), and speaking (Sundari & Dasmo, 2014).

Despite its importance, the role of self-efficacy in oral presentations has received limited attention. Studies like Amirian and Tavakoli (2016) found no significant differences in oral presentation self-efficacy among learners from diverse academic backgrounds, underscoring the need to investigate other influencing factors. Adams (2004) highlighted the potential for peer presentations to boost self-efficacy, revealing that students who observed peer performances showed greater improvements than those who watched expert demonstrations.

However, the literature on self-efficacy in oral presentation remains sparse, with limited studies exploring the nuanced relationship between self-efficacious beliefs and oral presentation performance. Future research should aim to fill this gap by examining the mechanisms through which self-efficacy influences learners' experiences and outcomes in oral presentation tasks, thereby providing valuable insights for language educators and curriculum designers.

2.3. L2-Grit

In the dynamic landscape of language learning, maintaining interest and effort despite setbacks is essential for success (Khajavy et al., 2021). Grit, defined by Duckworth et al. (2007) as the

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sustained effort and interest toward long-term goals despite challenges, comprises two dimensions: consistency of interest (CI) and perseverance of effort (PE). CI reflects an individual's ability to sustain passion in a task despite its challenges, distractions, and failures, while perseverance of effort (PE) refers to persistence in tasks that require a long period to complete (Duckworth et al., 2007).

Empirical research on grit, primarily outside language learning, has revealed its association with life satisfaction, academic achievement, and GPA (e.g., Clark & Malecki, 2019; Duckworth & Gross, 2014; Duckworth & Quinn, 2009; Muenks et al., 2017). In the context of second language acquisition, however, it remains a venue for further research that examines such a matter in more detail in the field of language learning (MacIntyre & Khajavy, 2021; Teimouri et al., 2022; Wei et al., 2019). Teimouri et al. (2022) introduced the L2-grit construct to measure grit specific to language learning. Their study with Persian university students studying English Translation demonstrated strong correlations between grit and key language outcomes, including willingness to communicate and speaking performance, while showing grit's negative association with language anxiety and fixed mindset. These findings suggest grit's potential to mitigate anxiety and performance in language tasks. However, grit's predictive validity has been questioned in recent meta-analytic reviews. For example, Credé et al. (2017) found that grit may overlap substantially with conscientiousness and that its effects on academic performance are weaker than originally claimed.

Despite these promising insights, research on L2-grit presents mixed results. while some studies have highlighted the predictive value of L2 grit for language learning success (Botes et al., 2025; Li, 2024; Liu & Wang, 2021; Sudina & Plonsky, 2021; Teimouri et al., 2022), others have reported more moderate correlations (Credé et al., 2017; Wei et al., 2019), or even no significant effects (Bazelais et al., 2016; Usher et al., 2019). Khajavy et al. (2021), for instance, found inconclusive evidence regarding its impact on academic performance. These inconsistencies likely stem from variations in study designs, participant characteristics, and contextual factors (Zhao & Wang, 2023b). This lack of consensus underscores the need for further research to clarify L2-grit's role in influencing language learners' outcomes in higher education, particularly in high-stakes tasks like oral presentations, which demand sustained motivation and resilience.

2.4. Foreign Language Classroom Enjoyment

FLCE has emerged as a critical construct in mitigating anxiety and fostering success in language learning, particularly in anxiety-inducing tasks like oral presentations. While earlier research predominantly emphasized negative emotions like second language anxiety, recent studies have shifted attention to positive emotions such as pride (Ross & Stracke, 2016), hope (Ross & Rivers, 2018), and enjoyment (Dewaele & MacIntyre, 2014). FLCE, specifically, has been linked to

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reduced anxiety and increased engagement, suggesting its mediating role in creating an emotionally supportive learning environment (Botes et al., 2022; Dewaele & MacIntyre, 2014).

Enjoyment in language learning is defined as a state reaction to a task, characterized by satisfaction and a sense of accomplishment (Ainley & Hidi, 2014; Goetz et al., 2006). This construct is influenced by positive classroom dynamics, including peer support, favorable environments, and teacher encouragement (Dewaele & MacIntyre, 2014; Pavelescu & Petric, 2018). Research also highlights its relationship with resilience and motivation, factors essential for self-efficacy and anxiety reduction (Dewaele & MacIntyre, 2016).

Measurement tools for FLCE, such as the FLE scale introduced by Dewaele and MacIntyre (2014), have undergone several refinements. Their initial 21-item scale, based on an extensive sample (N = 1746), evolved into a 14-item two-factor model (FLE-Social and FLE-Private) and later a 10-item version (Dewaele & Dewaele, 2017). These adaptations highlight the complexity and multidimensionality of FLCE in language learning contexts.

Critically, FLCE is not merely the inverse of anxiety. Dewaele and MacIntyre (2014) reported only a moderate negative correlation (r = -.36), indicating these constructs are relatively independent. This challenges the assumption of a seesaw relationship, where reducing one automatically increases the other. Understanding FLCE's distinct role in influencing OPA is essential for addressing the nuanced interplay between enjoyment and anxiety in language learning. This study builds on these insights to explore FLCE's potential to alleviate OPA in educational settings.

2.5. Hypothesized Conceptual Model

Theoretical links have been established between grit, self-efficacy, and foreign language classroom enjoyment (FLCE) in second language (L2) learning. Grit, particularly its components of perseverance of effort (PE) and consistency of interest (CI), has been shown to enhance engagement, resilience, and enjoyment in learning contexts (Duckworth et al., 2007; Teimouri et al., 2022; Wei et al., 2019). FLCE, as a positive affective factor, has been found to promote learner engagement and mitigate negative emotions such as anxiety, which impair performance (Dewaele & MacIntyre, 2014; Li et al., 2020). Self-efficacy, reflecting learners' belief in their ability to succeed, has been identified as a key predictor of reduced oral presentation anxiety (OPA) by fostering confidence and persistence (Usher et al., 2019).

The hypothesized model examines the relationships among L2-grit, FLCE, self-efficacy, and OPA. Higher levels of L2-grit are expected to predict increased FLCE, which in turn enhances self-efficacy and reduces OPA. Research suggests that positive emotions like FLCE mediate the link between grit and self-efficacy while also acting as a buffer against anxiety (MacIntyre & Gregersen, 2012; Pavelescu & Petric, 2018). Similarly, learners with higher self-efficacy are likely

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to view oral presentations as opportunities for success, leading to reduced anxiety (Alhadabi & Karpinski, 2020; Usher et al., 2019).

The model also anticipates indirect pathways. FLCE is hypothesized to mediate the relationships between L2-grit and self-efficacy and between L2-grit and OPA. Additionally, FLCE and self-efficacy are expected to jointly influence OPA, reflecting the interplay of affective and cognitive factors in language learning within higher education. This conceptual framework builds on positive psychology in L2 research, offering insights into how grit, FLCE, and self-efficacy shape OPA in educational contexts, and informing interventions to enhance learner enjoyment, motivation, and performance.

RQ: To what extend can self-efficacy, L2-grit and FLCE directly or indirectly predict OPA of university students?

RQ: To what extent does FLCE mediate the relationship between self-efficacy and L2-grit with OPA?

3. Method

3.1. Participants

A total of 123 Iranian EFL students from various universities across Iran participated in this study. These participants were enrolled in English-related majors, including English Translation (n = 79), English Teaching (n = 39), English Literature (n = 2), and Linguistics (n = 7). All students had been studying English as a foreign language (EFL) for at least six years, including three years in junior high school and six years in high school. At the time of the study, participants were in their first or second year of tertiary education and had completed at least one semester, providing them with experience in delivering oral presentations in English. Participants were selected from an initial pool of 137 volunteers who completed a recruitment questionnaire, which gathered demographic information such as age, gender, level of education, and field of study. Outliers were removed based on specific screening criteria, resulting in the final sample of 123 students. The age range of participants was 18 to 27 years. All participants were native Iranian speakers with over ten years of EFL learning experience, and none had studied or worked abroad.

Prior to participation, all students provided informed consent, acknowledging their voluntary participation and understanding of the study's purpose. They were assured of confidentiality and anonymity, and they were informed that their professors would not have access to their responses.

3.2. Instruments

3.2.1. Oral Presentation Anxiety Scale

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The 12-item Personal Report of Confidence as a Speaker (PRCS) scale (Gilkinson, 1942; Hook et al., 2008) was used to measure Oral Presentation Anxiety (OPA). Known for its reliability in assessing public speaking anxiety (Hook et al., 2008), the PRCS was reformatted into a five-point Likert scale ranging from "never (0%)" to "always (100%)" (Tsang, 2022). In this study, the Cronbach's alpha reliability was 0.92.

3.2.2. Self-efficacy Scale

A domain-specific self-efficacy scale, adapted from Zhang et al. (2019), was employed for its succinctness and high reliability (α = 0.86). The 12-item scale uses a 5-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree) to measure self-efficacy (e.g., "When giving an English speech in public, I can speak with accuracy"). Psychometric validation of the scale included exploratory and confirmatory factor analyses. In this study, the scale demonstrated strong internal consistency (α = 0.94)

3.2.3. Language Domain-Specific Grit Scale (L2-Grit)

L2-Grit, proposed and validated by Teimouri et al. (2022), was applied to measure the CI and PE in learning a language. This scale involves 12 items in a five-point Likert scale (ranging from 1 ‘not at all like me’ to 5 ‘very much like me’). On two factors: consistency of interest (e.g., “My interests in learning English change from year to year.”), and perseverance of effort (e.g., “I am a diligent English language learner.”). The internal consistency of the scale was within the acceptable range (Cronbach’s α = .76).

3.2.4. Classroom Enjoyment Scale

The FLCE Scale, adapted from Dewaele and MacIntyre’s (2014) original FLE Scale and modified by Lee (2022), includes six items measuring class enjoyment. Participants rated each item on a five-point Likert scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree) (e.g., "The teacher is encouraging"). The scale demonstrated a Cronbach’s alpha reliability of 0.75 in this study.

3.3. Data Collection Procedures

From early December 2022, a composite questionnaire was used to collect data from participants’ demographic information, self-efficacy, L2-grit, FLCE, and OPA. Data were collected on the Google Forms platform to include participants from various parts of the country. This approach facilitated a more diverse sample, ensuring that the findings were reflective of the broader student population in Iran. All scales employed a 5-point Likert-type response format ranging from 1 to 5. Participants completed the survey individually online, taking approximately 20 minutes to finish. Participation was voluntary, and students were assured of anonymity and the right to withdraw at any time without penalty. Data were automatically recorded and exported for statistical analysis.

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The careful design of the survey and clear instructions ensured high-quality responses suitable for path analysis to examine the proposed relationships among self-efficacy, L2 grit, FLCE, and OPA.

3.4. Data Analysis

The data analysis procedures were conducted systematically to ensure the reliability and validity of the findings. Data cleaning included checking for missing values, identifying outliers, and conducting normality tests using SPSS 26.0. Preliminary analysis revealed 13 univariate and multivariate outliers, which were removed, leaving a final sample of 123 students. These outliers were removed because they showed extreme values on key variables, which would have disproportionately influenced parametric analyses and model fit. Following data cleaning, we conducted correlation analyses to explore relationships between variables, and the steps involved in this process included calculating Pearson correlation coefficients and assessing significance levels. To explore the impact of self-efficacy, grit, and FLCE on OPA, path analyses with observed variables were conducted using AMOS 24. The path analysis involved testing various models, evaluating model fit indices (e.g., Chi-square, RMSEA, GFI), and interpreting the structural regression coefficients to identify direct and indirect effects of the independent variables on OPA. The final model was selected based on theoretical alignment and statistical viability, aiming to elucidate the relationships among the constructs under investigation.

4. Results

In the first step, to check the collected data's normality the Shapiro–Wilk test and Q–Q plot visual inspections were employed. The Shapiro–Wilk test results indicated no significant deviations from normality for the main variables ($p > .05$), and Q–Q plots revealed approximately linear distributions. These results support the assumption of normality, justifying the use of parametric tests in subsequent analyses. Table 1 presents a summary of descriptive statistics on OPA, L2-grit, self-efficacy and FLCE for 123 participants. In the first step, to assess the normality of the data, the Shapiro–Wilk test and Q–Q plot visual inspections were employed. The Shapiro–Wilk test results indicated no significant deviations from normality for the main variables ($p > .05$), and Q–Q plots revealed approximately linear distributions. These results support the assumption of normality, justifying the use of parametric tests in subsequent analyses.

Table 1. Descriptive statistics for FLCE, L2-grit, OPA, and self-efficacy

	N	Range	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
FLCE	123	20	25	45	36.38	4.112
L2-grit	123	28	10	38	28.02	4.483
OPA	123	43	12	55	28.38	9.575

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self-efficacy	123	44	14	58	38.44	8.871
Valid N (listwise)	123					

Pearson correlation analyses were conducted among all these variables after normal distribution test. As presented in Table 2, self-efficacy and FLCE were positively inter-correlated ($r = .219$, $p < .001$), with the strongest association between self-efficacy and L2-grit ($r = .338$, $p < .001$), indicating that students who have more self-efficacy tend to exhibit higher levels of L2-grit, supporting the theoretical assumption of the link between the two variables. However, no significant relationship was observed between FLCE and L2-grit.

Additionally, students' OPA was in a significant negative relation to self-efficacy, L2-grit and FLCE ($r =. -.527$, $p < .001$; $r = -.182$, $p < .001$; $r = -.189$, $p < .001$ respectively). This suggests that students who were less anxious during oral presentation possessed higher level of self-efficacy and L2-grit; moreover, they experienced more enjoyment in their English learning.

Table 2. Correlations among the variables

		OPA	*self-efficacy*	L2-grit	FLCE
OPA	Pearson Correlation	1			
	Sig. (2-tailed)				
	N	123			
self-efficacy	Pearson Correlation	-.527**	1		
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000			
	N	123	123		
L2-grit	Pearson Correlation	-.182*	.338**	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.044	.000		
	N	123	123	123	
FLCE	Pearson Correlation	-.189*	.219*	.123	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.036	.015	.174	
	N	123	123	123	123

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$.

In order to obtain higher fit indices, we have included different paths between variables. The final mode, shown in Figure 1, represents the path selected based on model fit. The fit indices of the final model are presented in Table 3. To check whether the model fits the data adequately,

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various goodness-of-fit indices were used. There are different indices used for fit of the model. To have a fit model, χ 2 /df is less than 3; GFI and CFI exceed .95; and RMSEA is less than .06 (Hu & Bentler, 1999). In this study, the final model demonstrated exceptional fit indices, including a GFI of .99, a CFI of 1.00, and an RMSEA of .000. These values indicate excellent model fit, suggesting that the proposed model aligns well with the collected data.

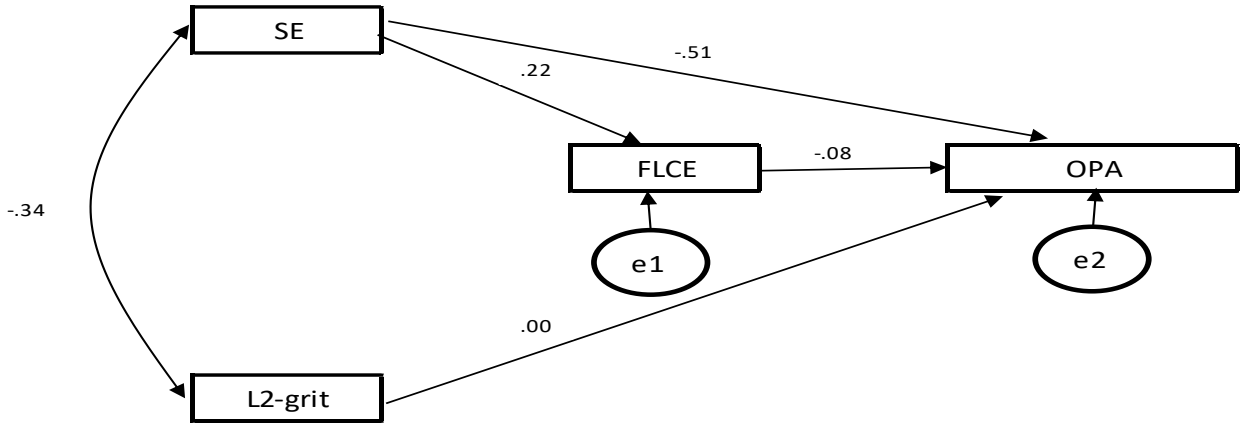


Figure 1. Path Analysis Result (standardized path coefficient). *p < 0.05, ** p < 0.01.

Thus, all indices demonstrated good model fit. a closer analysis of the path coefficients, or the "structural regression coefficients" that reflect the anticipated change in the outcome variables for every change in the associated predictor variables (Byrne, 2010, p. 10), suggests that, in reference to Keith's (2006) interpretation guidelines, The largest negative standardized path coefficients (see Figure 1) were between self-efficacy and OPA (β = -.51, p<.05). Therefore, self-efficacy was a better predictor of OPA. Moreover, self-efficacy exerted a moderate, positive effect on FLCE (β = 0.22, p < .05), and FLCE had a very small and statistically nonsignificant effect on OPA (β = – 0.03, p < .05). This suggests that while FLCE may conceptually relate to OPA, its predictive power in this model is minimal. The model did not show that l2-grit predicted OPA significantly (β = .00, p > .01)

Table 3. Fit indices of the tested model

Fit measure	Good fit	Model value
χ2/df	0≤χ2 /df≤ 2	.354
RMSEA	0≤RMSEA≤.05	.000

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CFI	.97≤CFI≤1.00	1.000
GFI	.95≤GFI≤1.00	.999
AGFI	.90≤AGFI≤1.00	.986
NFI	.95≤NFI≤1.00	.994

To assess the indirect effect of self-efficacy on OPA, bootstrapping (with 5000 samples) was employed to estimate mediation effects. The results indicated that the indirect relationship between self-efficacy and OPA mediated by FLCE was not significant (β = -.018, 95% CI [-.07, .01], p = .24). However, the direct effect of self-efficacy on OPA in the presence of the mediator FLCE remained significant (β = -.55, p = .000), suggesting that self-efficacy still predicts OPA even when FLCE is included as a mediator (see Table 4).

Table 4. Mediation analysis summary

Relationship	Direct Effect	Indirect Effect	Confidence Interval		P-value
			Lower Bound	Upper Bound	
self-efficacy → FLC → OPA	-.55 (0.000)	-.018	.07	.01	.24

5. Discussion

This study investigated the predictive role of self-efficacy, L2-grit, and FLCE in OPA within an EFL context, revealing negative associations with OPA. Together, these variables explained over 23% of OPA's variance, indicating good internal consistency and discriminant validity. Additionally, significant associations were observed among self-efficacy, grit, and FLCE. self-efficacy correlated positively with grit, aligning with previous research (Alhadabi & Karpinski, 2020; Fathi et al., 2024; Muenks et al., 2017), suggesting that learners with perseverance tended to have higher self-efficacy. Moreover, a positive relationship emerged between self-efficacy and FLCE, indicating that students with high self-efficacy were more likely to enjoy English learning, consistent with findings from Malanchini et al. (2017) and An et al. (2021). These results echo the work of Pan (2022) and Zhao (2023), lending further support. Wei et al. (2019) demonstrated parallel growth between FLCE and L2-grit, with a significant correlation over time, emphasizing the interplay between enjoyment and grit in language learning.

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The estimated path model in Figure 1 revealed a significant impact of self-efficacy on Iranian EFL students' levels of OPA. This finding is theoretically grounded in Bandura's (1986) social cognitive theory, which posits that individuals' beliefs in their abilities and confidence in performing specific tasks significantly influence their motivation and effort. In the context of oral presentation anxiety, fostering these beliefs can reduce anxiety levels, enabling individuals to engage more effectively in their presentations. Furthermore, the path model confirms that self-efficacy significantly reduces OPA. Consistent with previous research, individuals with higher self-efficacy are more likely to set challenging goals, exert effort, and maintain focus despite obstacles (Bai & Wang, 2020; Graham, 2022). As a result, students with higher self-efficacy are better equipped to manage the stress of oral presentations by viewing them as achievable tasks and persisting despite any associated anxiety.

This result is comparable to that in Lucchetti et al. (2003). They found that significant inverse correlation existed between self-efficacy expectations and public speaking anxiety scores. In a similar vein, according to Bandura (1997), individuals characterized by low self-efficacy experienced a perception of inadequacy to accomplish their goals. Consequently, this sense of ineffectiveness leads to feelings of anxiety and depression during speaking. As such, it can be deduced that anxiety is 'best reduced not by anxiety palliatives but by building a strong sense of efficacy' (Bandura, 1993).

According to Sternberg and Williams (2012), individuals who possess a belief in their own competence to successfully complete a given task are more inclined to invest their efforts and allocate necessary resources towards its accomplishment. Conversely, the opposite holds true as well, whereby the absence of such self-belief diminishes the likelihood of expending significant effort or resources in pursuit of the task. Moreover, these findings are consistent with a study conducted by Anyadubalu (2010), which explored the correlation between self-efficacy and foreign language anxiety among secondary school students' speaking abilities in Bangkok. Given these findings, it is crucial for educators to prioritize the cultivation of students' self-efficacy, particularly among those experiencing OPA. Providing feedback following presentations is important, but equally vital is fostering students' belief in their own abilities.

The path model presented in Figure 1 revealed that L2 grit had no significant predictive power for OPA. This null finding challenges the assumption that persistence and long-term interest necessarily reduce anxiety in short-term, high-stakes oral presentations. This study is among the first to examine the relationship between grit and OPA among EFL university students. Most studies on grit have primarily focused on its role as a predictor of language success (Liu & Wang, 2021; Sudina & Plonsky, 2021; Teimouri et al., 2022). However, emerging evidence overall indicated no correlation between grit and OPA. These findings contrast with research conducted in

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the field of psychology, such as studies by Datu et al. (2018) and Zhang et al. (2018), which reported a negative relationship between grit and depression, anxiety, and stress.

Nevertheless, the current study's findings are consistent with those of Karlen et al. (2019) in the field of language learning, who found no significant association between grit (specifically, CI) and completing an academic paper. This discrepancy may be attributed to the considerable difficulty encountered by EFL learners during English communication within classroom environments, particularly for those lacking exposure to real-life English interactions. Fostering and sustaining motivation to learn English over an extended period may not necessarily enhance oral presentation skills. In this context, Lee (2022) suggests that PE might be more relevant and effective in an EFL classroom setting than CI, especially when students are faced with challenging tasks such as OPs or performance-based activities in second language.

Another likely justification for such contradictions could be due to the multifaceted nature of OPA. Baharuddin and Rashid (2014) suggest that OPA is influenced by a variety of factors, including fear of judgment, self-consciousness, situational factors, the importance of presentation, and fear of failure. While grit encompasses characteristics such as perseverance and resilience, it does not directly address the cognitive and emotional aspects of anxiety experienced during oral presentation. Notably, the last potential explanation may be accounted for by the fact that grit does not work for short-term goals (Duckworth & Gross, 2014). They suggest that other factors, such as natural talent, experience, and self-confidence, may overshadow the influence of grit when it comes to short-term goals like an oral presentation.

Surprisingly, the path analysis showed that FLCE did not significantly reduce OPA. This null result suggests that general classroom enjoyment may not buffer students from anxiety in formal, evaluative speaking situations like oral presentations. This finding somewhat aligns with a previous study on the relationship between FLE and Public Speaking Class Anxiety (PSCA) conducted by Nemati et al. (2020). Their study suggested that FLE and PSCA represented distinct dimensions of a single classroom emotion continuum, where students experienced both enjoyment and anxiety in the classroom setting. Although previous studies have shown those students who enjoy more in the classroom, they are less anxious and suffer less from the negative academic, and behavioral effects of foreign language anxiety on learning (Dewaele et al., 2017; MacIntyre, 2017), we did not find such a relationship concerning OPA. It seems plausible to consider that a positive classroom setting may not necessarily help EFL university learners to show greater grit which may subsequently result in overcoming anxiety in oral presentation. In that regard, the mediating role of grit in the relationship between classroom enjoyment and OPA merits further research.

Finally, the observed mediation effect of FLCE underscores the nuanced relationship between learners' perceptions of their capabilities, their enjoyment of the classroom environment, and the anxiety they experience during oral presentation. While the direct influence of FLCE on OPA was

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not statistically significant, the mediation analysis revealed a significant indirect effect. This highlights the intricate nature of the psychological factors at play, suggesting that the impact of self-efficacy on presentation anxiety is, in part, channeled through the avenue of classroom enjoyment. These findings underscore the need for a holistic approach to understanding and addressing presentation anxiety among language learners, one that takes into account both their beliefs in their own abilities and the enjoyment they derive from the learning environment.

6. Conclusion

Speaking in English is a challenging task for EFL learners in. OPs, a widely practiced assessment method and common activity in the global context, often elicit high levels of anxiety, particularly when conducted in the English language (Tsang, 2022). This study contributes to the growing understanding of the complex interplay between self-efficacy, L2-grit, FLCE, and OPA among EFL learners. The data analyzed in the present study reveal a strong negative correlation between self-efficacy beliefs and OPA. Learners with higher self-efficacy beliefs show less anxiety in their oral presentation and learners with lower self-efficacy ratings show more oral anxiety. The study underscores the importance of self-efficacy in OPA in EFL curricula. While the findings may not be directly generalizable to all contexts, they highlight the need to focus on learners' self-efficacy and opinions when designing and delivering language lessons.

Additionally, the result of the study can encourage teachers to provide positive encouragement and feedback to increase students' confidence in learning, which may be positively related to their classroom context. In order to increase students' self-efficacy, teachers should give specific appraisals of students' learning because self-efficacy is a domain-specific construct (Bandura,1997). Additionally, although previous research has shown a positive association between FLCE and reduced anxiety, the current study did not find a significant impact of FLCE on OPA. These findings suggest that while self-efficacy is important in reducing anxiety, grit and classroom enjoyment may have limited direct influence on OPA among EFL university students.

While this investigation offers fresh insights into the predictors of OPA, it also points to avenues for future research. To enhance the generalizability of findings, future studies could consider broadening participant demographics beyond English-major university students to encompass diverse contexts Additionally, given the cross-sectional nature of the study, future research could benefit from longitudinal studies that track individuals from beginner to advanced levels in language learning, to better demonstrate the evolving dynamics among L2-grit, self-efficacy, classroom enjoyment, and OPA. Furthermore, while this study focused on self-efficacy, L2-grit, and classroom enjoyment as predictors of OPA, other variables such as language proficiency, teaching methods, and other elements of positive psychology could be explored in future research to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the factors at play.

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Author Contributions

All authors contributed equally to the conceptualization of the article and writing of the original and subsequent drafts.

Declarations

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare no competing interests.

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