

L2 Psychology Constructs and L2 Willingness to Communicate of L2 Learners in a Context of Low Exposure to English

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Article information	Abstract
<p>Article history: Received: 14 Sep 2024 Accepted: 24 Mar 2025 Available online: 28 Mar 2025</p> <p>Keywords: Low exposure L2 emotions Psychology constructs Willingness to communicate English as a foreign language</p>	<p><i>Recently, there has been a rapid growth in the number of studies related to emotions and positive psychology constructs in language teaching and learning. However, there is scant research in the context of low exposure to English. Thus, the present study aimed to examine the relationship between Thai EFL secondary school learners' L2 positive and negative psychology constructs and their L2 Willingness to Communicate (WTC) in the context of low exposure to English. A total of 1,601 Thai EFL secondary school learners completed the questionnaire. The results of several statistical analyses (i.e., path analysis, hierarchical multiple regression, and correlation) indicated that there was a significant inter-correlation among all variables. The findings revealed that the amount of exposure to Extramural English (EE) had the strongest positive correlation with L2 grit and the strongest negative correlation with L2 anxiety. In addition, L2 attention, L2 anxiety, L2 enjoyment, and L2 grit exhibited statistical significance as predictors of L2 WTC when considering limited exposure to English, with intended effort and positive views failing to reach significance. Pedagogically, the findings suggest a shift in instructional approaches to focus on a psychologically informed approach, highlighting the important influence of positive psychology on language learning.</i></p>

INTRODUCTION

Effective communication serves as a crucial tool for language instructors to enhance the effectiveness of their lessons. It is not only the ultimate objective of language learning for learners but also involves effectively communicating with them. This claim is consistent with the focus on communication in instructional communication theories and approaches to second language (L2) communication (Lee & Lee, 2020b; MacIntyre & Charos, 1996). For many Asian secondary school learners learning English as a Foreign Language (EFL), however, opportunities to use the language are often limited, with an emphasis largely on exam preparation and written exercises. Furthermore, learners in EFL contexts have limited exposure to English beyond the classroom setting. Consequently, their out-of-class English activities, also referred to as Extramural English (EE), are greatly constrained, where L2 learners' weekly participation in EE activities falls below 10 hours (Sundqvist, 2009). In Thailand, the English language learning context is defined by exam-focused instruction (Imsa-ard, 2021; Padermprach, 2017), and limited authentic language exposure. With this, the educational system prioritizes grammar

and reading comprehension for standardized assessments over oral communication skills, while teacher-centered methodologies potentially reduce learner engagement. Moreover, social pressures and high-stakes testing may heighten anxiety about language production (Imsa-ard, 2020), and minimal exposure to English outside classrooms further constrains practical language development. Moreover, in the contexts where English is not used regularly, such as Thailand, language learners face unique challenges due to limited exposure outside the classroom. In these environments, English is rarely encountered in everyday communication, media, or social interactions, resulting in fewer opportunities to practice and apply language skills in meaningful ways. Research (e.g., Dörnyei & Ryan, 2015; Ushioda, 2016) indicates that this lack of exposure can hinder language acquisition, as learners are unable to reinforce and expand their language abilities beyond structured classroom settings. This limitation leads to a lack of motivation to engage with the language, heightened anxiety when attempting to apply it in practical contexts, and the manifestation of below-average language skills (Lee, 2022a; Tsang & Lee, 2023). Furthermore, in low-exposure contexts, psychological factors such as anxiety, enjoyment, and L2 grit play an especially influential role. Without frequent real-world opportunities to communicate in English, learners may experience heightened anxiety and reduced motivation, impacting their willingness to communicate (Shirvan et al., 2019). This issue is particularly relevant in Thailand, where English education is predominantly exam-oriented, focusing on grammar and reading skills over communicative competence. Although the significance of communication in the acquisition of a foreign or second language has been recognized, MacIntyre and Charos (1996) contend that facilitating language use for effective communication should be the primary objective of language learning, irrespective of the intended purpose.

It is not unexpected that L2 learners in Asian contexts have the lowest levels of Foreign Language (FL) Enjoyment (FLE; originally coined by Dewaele & MacIntyre, 2014) and the highest levels of Foreign Language Anxiety (FLA) in the entire globe (Dewaele & MacIntyre, 2014). Those who experience decreased pleasure and increased worry are less motivated or hesitant to participate in learning or communicating in English, which may explain for lower skill levels (Lee & Taylor, 2024; Lin, 2022). A total of 93% of participants in Li et al. (2023) reported tedium with English learning, which they attributed to teacher-centred approaches and repetitive grammatical tasks. This monotony may hinder the learners' motivation to speak English and hinder their progress in English proficiency (Kruk, 2022; Li et al., 2023). During the past few decades, willingness to communicate in a second language (L2 WTC) has received vast attention as a critical factor influencing L2 communication behaviour (Yashima et al., 2018). According to current research, learners' L2 WTC is influenced by both external (state-like, e.g., group dynamics and social encouragement) and internal (trait-like, e.g., L2 motivation and attitude) factors (Zhang et al., 2018). The concept has garnered considerable interest in EFL classrooms, where learners generally enhance their English communication abilities through interactions with instructors and peers who possess the same native language and culture (Peng, 2019). However, there remains a dearth of knowledge regarding the interplay between external factors (e.g., teaching styles) and internal factors (e.g., intended effort, grit, anxiety, enjoyment, and attention) and L2 WTC. To elaborate, *intended effort* refers to the amount of energy and determination learners are willing to invest in language learning tasks, reflecting their commitment to their learning progress. *Willingness to Communicate (WTC)* is defined as a

learner's predisposition to initiate communication in a foreign language, which is influenced by both situational and personal factors (MacIntyre et al., 1998). Moreover, *attention* in the language learning context pertains to the focus and cognitive engagement learners maintain during learning activities, which can significantly impact their acquisition and retention of language skills. Lastly, *L2 grit*—derived from the concept of grit by Duckworth et al. (2007)—captures the perseverance and sustained passion for long-term language learning goals, highlighting the learner's resilience in facing language learning challenges.

Empirical research emphasizes the substantial influence of tenacity in attaining exceptional performance and dedication to objectives across different areas. Grit has received recent scholarly interest in second language acquisition (SLA), although it is still in its early stages (Demir, 2024; Keegan, 2017; Wei et al., 2019; Zhou & Wang, 2023). To explain, L2 grit refers to a language learner's sustained passion and perseverance toward long-term language learning goals, emphasizing the importance of consistent effort over time (Duckworth et al., 2011). This construct is emerging as a vital factor in understanding why some learners achieve higher proficiency levels despite facing challenges such as limited practice opportunities or high levels of Foreign Language Anxiety. Previous research (e.g., Keegan, 2017; Wei et al., 2019) suggests that learners with higher levels of L2 grit are more likely to engage in sustained practice, utilize effective learning strategies, and exhibit resilience against setbacks. Introducing L2 grit into the discussion, we can better understand the motivational dynamics that contribute to language learning success in challenging contexts. Moreover, initial attempts (i.e., Lee & Drajeti, 2019; Lee & Hsieh, 2019) to establish a connection between fortitude and L2 WTC among subsets of learners have revealed a positive correlation. Additionally, an increasing number of studies have established a substantial correlation between a positive classroom atmosphere and L2 WTC in EFL settings globally, which is consistent with the trend toward positive psychology in SLA (Dewaele, 2019; Joe et al., 2017; Peng, 2019). However, there is still a lack of clarity about how much FL enjoyment or psychology constructs influence EFL learners' WTC across different socio-educational levels or low exposure contexts, particularly in Asian contexts where EFL learners at different study levels may experience different effects from high-stakes exams (like university entrance exams) on these variables (Lee & Lee, 2020a; Peng, 2012, 2015). Understanding the extent to which FL enjoyment and psychology factors influence EFL learners' L2 WTC is crucial because it can inform the development of targeted educational strategies that enhance communicative competence. In contexts like Asia, where high-stakes exams exert considerable pressure on learners, clarifying these relationships is especially important. This knowledge can help educators mitigate the negative impacts of exam-oriented education on learners' psychological well-being and communicative behaviours, which ultimately leads to more effective language acquisition (Lee & Lee, 2020a; Peng, 2012, 2015).

In order to fill in such knowledge gaps, this study seeks to examine the complex relationship between L2 psychology constructs and L2 WTC, in the context of limited English exposure. This objective is to fill these knowledge gaps in order to enhance the overall comprehension of the elements that impact the propensity of L2 learners to engage in communication. This is especially true in regions where the interplay between language exposure and examination pressures may uniquely mold the attitudes and behaviors of learners. This research offers significant pedagogical implications for English language instruction in Thailand and comparable contexts.

The findings on psychology factors affecting WTC inform strategies to enhance classroom engagement and learnersupport. Understanding the interplay of anxiety, enjoyment, and L2 grit enables evidence-based interventions to reduce stress while promoting positive engagement and persistence. These insights can guide policy shifts from exam-focused instruction toward communicative competence, inform teacher training on creating supportive learning environments, and establish foundations for future research on effective language education practices in low-exposure contexts.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Positive psychology constructs in L2 learning

Historically, SLA has prioritized cognitive ability (Ellis, 2021). According to Lee and Jin (2023), cognitive ability, as measured by academic success and language proficiency, is not sufficient to explain the outstanding levels of L2 communicative competence achieved by learners. As a result, SLA scholars (e.g., Dewaele & Li, 2020) have started to focus on individual non-cognitive traits, for instance L2 emotions. MacIntyre and Gregersen (2012) were the pioneers who first introduced the concept of “positive psychology” into the domain of applied linguistics. This advancement led to a reassessment of the traditional deficit viewpoint in language teaching and learning, as well as a fresh focus on the emotional encounters of L2 learners. According to Dewaele and MacIntyre (2014), it is crucial for learners to promptly embrace a more inclusive perspective and encounter a wider range of emotions.

Positive psychology in SLA suggests, based on Fredrickson’s (2001) broaden-and-build hypothesis, that positive emotions related to learning a second language (e.g., pleasure) increase the variety of possible future actions of L2 learners and make them more open and responsive to new ideas and experiences (Onodera, 2023). Applied to SLA, this suggests that positive emotions, such as pleasure, may enhance learners’ receptivity to new linguistic concepts and make them more open to engaging with the language, thereby facilitating language learning processes. L2 learners improve their personal and social skills, determination, and ability as their positive belief systems develop and accumulate (Lou & Noels, 2019). In contrast, adverse L2 emotions, such as worry, limit the attention of language learners, narrow down their options for activities, and create a reluctance to try new ideas or experiences. Modern academic discussions recognize the same importance of positive and negative emotions, dismissing the idea of an emotional division (Dewaele & MacIntyre, 2014).

English communication in test-oriented socio-educational contexts, such as Thailand, is mostly limited to repetitive exercises conducted in the classroom, as shown in studies by Imsa-ard (2020) and Peng (2014). Hence, the insufficiency of both the volume and quality of communication among EFL learners results in a lack of opportunities for learners to engage in English-speaking interactions, both in academic and non-academic settings (Lee et al., 2022). Also, EFL scholars explored the role of psychology constructs in the L2 WTC of EFL learners. While positive psychology originates in Western contexts, its core principles—such as fostering resilience, enjoyment, and motivation—are adaptable and can be integrated within the cultural

framework of Thai education. In Thailand, where collectivist values and respect for authority are central, positive psychology constructs like L2 enjoyment and grit can be effectively applied when aligned with culturally relevant practices. For example, promoting enjoyment in the language learning process can be achieved through collaborative group work, which not only enhances engagement but also reinforces the cultural emphasis on group harmony and collective success (Ushioda, 2016). Furthermore, studies have shown that constructs like WTC and grit, when culturally adapted, are beneficial for supporting learners' communicative confidence and perseverance (Dörnyei & Ryan, 2015). Therefore, this study employs a culturally sensitive application of positive psychology principles, recognizing that while the framework may originate outside of Thailand, its constructs can complement Thai educational practices to help EFL learners overcome challenges and engage more fully in language acquisition.

L2 Willingness to Communicate (WTC)

Throughout its historical development, Willingness to Communicate (WTC) has been initially characterized as a trait-like inclination marked by stability, as observed by McCroskey and Baer (1985). One of the earliest definitions of WTC, as articulated by MacIntyre et al. (1998, p. 547), defines it as “a readiness to enter into discourse at a specific time with a specific person or persons,” establishing WTC as a psychological, linguistic, and social variable. Nematizadeh and Wood (2021), in their recent formulation, emphasize the dynamic and complex nature of WTC, asserting that it is influenced by specific situations and individual personalities, building upon the foundations laid by MacIntyre et al. (1998) and Kang (2005). The assertion by Nematizadeh and Wood (2021) highlights the intricate interplay of various factors that push L2 learners beyond their comfort zones, guiding them towards their growth zones, ultimately reflecting the complexity inherent in this subject matter. Furthermore, the dynamic nature of L2 WTC is evident in the factors influencing learner engagement in the classroom. In this study, L2 WTC is operationalized as the learners' self-reported likelihood of initiating and participating in English communication within the classroom context, where they have limited exposure to English outside of structured learning environments.

Using the pyramid-type heuristic L2 WTC model that MacIntyre et al. (1998) developed, the initial trait-like perspective has been broadened. Consequently, individuals' L2 WTC is influenced by an interplay of numerous transient state-like (learner-external) and stable trait-like (learner-internal) factors, which may operate singly or collectively to motivate L2 communication (Henry et al., 2024). Multiple variables have been identified as having an impact on the WTC construct (Dewaele & Pavelescu, 2021; Pawlak et al., 2016). Psychology constructs (e.g., Arabai, 2024; Zhang et al., 2024) and EE (e.g., Lee & Taylor, 2024) are among the variables that have been previously investigated and serve as the primary determinants of WTC in the current investigation. In summary, a cursory examination of scholarly databases exposes the breadth of the literature concerning L2 WTC. WTC is a central construct in this research framework, serving as the primary outcome variable influenced by various psychology factors, including foreign language anxiety, L2 enjoyment, grit, and attention. This study specifically examines how these factors affect learners' WTC, aiming to identify the psychological conditions that enhance or inhibit their willingness to actively use English. Given the low-exposure context of Thailand, WTC is particularly relevant as it reflects learners' communicative engagement in a setting where

language practice opportunities are scarce. Although brief, a portion of this literature addresses the connections between the influential variables of this research, which are elaborated upon in the sections that follow.

Extramural English

The concept of Extramural English (EE henceforth), initially introduced by Sundqvist (2009), has broadened the domain of language acquisition to encompass settings beyond academia. As a result of the accelerated development of technology, learning a language is now possible outside of the classroom. There has been a growing interest among L2 researchers in EE, which Sundqvist (2009, 2019) defines as “any type of contact that learners have with English outside the walls of the classroom” (p. 107). The fact that such activities can occur both online and offline in English expands the educational implications of the concept. Positive results in language education can still result from activities initiated by learners outside of academic institutions that are not explicitly designed to facilitate language acquisition (Sundqvist & Sylvén, 2016). Psychology constructs (e.g., emotions and grit), L2 learning outcomes (e.g., vocabulary), and L2 WTC have all been associated with EE (see Lee et al., 2022). There is a notable disparity in the amount of time allocated by children (7–11 years old) and adolescents (14–16 years old) to consuming foreign language media, with significant variance observed across age groups (Hannibal Jensen & Lauridsen, 2023; Sundqvist, 2019; Sundqvist & Wikström, 2015; Sylvén & Sundqvist, 2012). Additionally, older adolescents (16–19 years old) dedicate an average of 38 hours per week to engaging with such content (Olsson & Sylvén, 2015). The age distribution of the research participants spanned from 13 to 18 years. As a result, individuals whose weekly participation in EE activities is below 10 hours are classified as having restricted exposure to the language, a conclusion that is consistent with the research conducted by Sundqvist (2009). In courses taught in English, high-exposure learners utilized the language more frequently than their low-exposure counterparts, according to Llinares and Evnitskaya (2021).

In Thailand, like most countries, EE includes interactions with English media, such as movies, music, social media, and online gaming, as well as limited encounters with English-speaking tourists, signage, or internet resources. In urban areas, learners may encounter English more frequently through international businesses, tourist areas, and readily accessible online platforms. However, in less urban or rural areas, exposure to English is often minimal, with learners rarely encountering English in daily life. This disparity means that EE is far more restricted in these regions, making school-based learning and limited digital resources some of the few avenues for exposure. This low extramural exposure in less urban settings can impact learners’ motivation, familiarity with spoken English, and L2 WTC, which are critical factors in EFL contexts. Moreover, English language instruction in Thailand has traditionally emphasized rote learning and teacher-centered methods (Graham, 2021; Manosuthikit, 2025), which align with cultural values such as respect for authority and structured learning. These approaches offer a solid foundation in grammar, vocabulary, and reading skills, which are essential components of language proficiency (Kirkpatrick, 2017). However, in low-exposure contexts like Thailand, where learners rarely encounter English in daily life, these methods may fall short in providing the communicative practice necessary for fluency and confidence. Literature

(e.g., Richards, 2015) suggests that communicative language practice, such as speaking and listening exercises, plays a critical role in developing practical language skills. This does not imply that traditional methods are ineffective but rather that a balance between rote and communicative approaches could better support learners in achieving communicative competence. For example, culturally adapted communicative activities, such as structured group discussions or role-plays, can be introduced to provide learners with opportunities to use English meaningfully within a familiar classroom setting. Such an approach respects the local cultural context while addressing the need for practical language use, which is particularly valuable in settings where English is not commonly spoken outside the classroom.

The present study

Drawing upon the Positive Psychology framework within SLA, scholars and educators in EFL contexts have increasingly focused on exploring positive emotional aspects of language learning, such as enjoyment and motivation (Dewaele & MacIntyre, 2014). Positive emotions are believed to broaden learners' thought-action repertoires and build enduring personal resources (Fredrickson, 2001). However, negative emotions like anxiety and boredom continue to be significant areas of study due to their potential to hinder language acquisition (Pekrun et al., 2010). Understanding both positive and negative emotions provides a more comprehensive picture of the emotional experiences that affect EFL learners' L2 WTC and overall proficiency. The surge in FL-emotion research is attributed not only to the contemporary emphasis on learner-centred education and the resulting concern for learners' emotional well-being but also to the significance of understanding the potential connections between emotions and language proficiency development. While existing research generally indicates a positive association between enjoyment and proficiency, with boredom and anxiety having negative effects (see, for instance, Botes et al., 2020; Li & Wei, 2023), it is crucial from a theoretical standpoint to investigate whether emotions directly correlate with proficiency or if there are overlooked mediators or confounding variables. This necessitates delving into the intricate relationships among a more extensive set of variables within a single study, a gap that is presently evident in the literature (Tsang, 2022). Also, this study was inspired by an outstanding work of Tsang and Lee (2023) whose work focuses on the making of proficient young foreign language speakers through the role of emotions, speaking motivation, and spoken input beyond the classroom. However, this study focused on the levels of L2 psychology constructs, amount of exposure to EE, and the levels of L2 WTC of Thai EFL secondary school learners, particularly in the context of low exposure to English. Furthermore, the context of low exposure to English poses an inadequately addressed area in L2 research, especially concerning L2 WTC. Given its significance as a key component of communicative competence, WTC warrants specific attention in FL research, teaching, and learning. The primary aim of the present investigation was to address these identified gaps in the current literature.

This research was the first phase of a larger project that investigated psychology constructs and L2 WTC among learners with limited exposure to English. By understanding these relationships, the larger project seeks to design effective pedagogical interventions that can enhance learners' communicative abilities and overall language proficiency in low-exposure settings. The study was conducted voluntarily by all participants and their parents or custodians,

following the acquisition of ethical approval. In light of the preceding discourse, the present study aimed to enhance a comprehension of diverse subjects of significant importance through the investigation of the research questions:

1. What are the levels of L2 psychology constructs, amount of exposure to Extramural English, and the levels of L2 Willingness to Communicate (WTC) of Thai EFL secondary school learners in the context of low exposure to English?
2. What are the interrelationships among the variables (L2 psychology constructs, amount of exposure to Extramural English, and the levels of WTC)?

METHODOLOGY

Participants

The population of this research comprised Thai EFL secondary school learners. A widespread invitation was distributed to Thai secondary schools. To achieve a broad and diverse sample, the researcher coordinated with regional educational offices to disseminate the questionnaire link and invitation materials to public and private secondary schools in various provinces. The invitation included a clear explanation of the purpose of the study, eligibility/inclusion criteria (e.g., secondary school learners currently enrolled in EFL classes), and instructions for completing the questionnaire. School administrators and English language teachers were encouraged to share the invitation with eligible learners. This approach enabled the researcher to reach learners from different regions, ensuring representation from a variety of socio-educational backgrounds and minimizing regional bias in the data. After screening, some responses were excluded because they were incomplete, contained missing data, or did not meet the inclusion criteria. To this end, this research involved the participation of 1,601 Thai EFL secondary school learners hailing from five distinct regions: North, Central, South, East and Northeast, and West. The participants' ages varied from 13 to 18 years ($M = 16.086$, $SD = 1.534$). Significantly, all of them were exposed to each learner-initiated English activity outside of educational institutions for less than 10 hours per week. Learners who spent less than 10 hours per week being exposed to English were recruited because they were considered to have low exposure to the language, which aligns with the focus of this study. At this juncture, an average EFL learner in Thailand has accumulated approximately nine years of language learning experience (three years in kindergartens and six years in primary institutions) and are expected to have attained upper A2 to B1 levels of the CEFR (see Council of Europe, 2020).

Research instrument

Following pilot studies by secondary school learners and validation by experienced secondary EFL instructors and language education experts, a questionnaire qualified for this quantitative study. Regarding the target demographic and the purposes of the research, it was deemed suitable. Demographic information (e.g., school locations and gender), emotional scales (anxiety and enjoyment in language acquisition), intended effort, L2 WTC, attention, and L2 grit made up of the 32 items in the questionnaire. Each item was rated on a five-point Likert scale, which

offers sufficient variance to capture the attitudinal and emotional dispositions of Thai EFL secondary school learners in a low-exposure environment. It should be noted that each scale was selected based on theoretical relevance and empirical suitability for the target population and research objectives.

Intended effort

The notion of *intended effort* pertains to the assessment of learners' intention and desire to invest their time and exertion in their development of the English language (Taguchi et al., 2009). Numerous studies on L2 motivation have utilized this notion as a substantial predictor of learners' overall motivation (e.g., Dörnyei, 2009; Taguchi et al., 2009). From Taguchi et al. (2009), four items rated on a five-point Likert scale were adapted to assess learners' intended effort in learning English (e.g., *I have a strong desire to dedicate a significant amount of time to studying English*). This scale was chosen over others due to its concise and validated items, which were found appropriate for secondary school learners and consistent with the operational definition of effort in the current study. Taguchi et al.'s (2009) items emphasize both time investment and desire, which makes them well suited for capturing the proactive dimension of motivation in a low-exposure EFL context.

L2 WTC

L2 WTC denotes the ability of learners to actively participate in L2 discourse with a specific individual in the present (MacIntyre et al., 1998). The notion pertains to the will of learners to employ the target language autonomously in the classroom and has been employed as a substantial criterion in studies concerning SLA (see Khajavy et al., 2018). In Yashima's (2002) research, four items rated on a five-point Likert scale were utilized to assess the L2 learners' L2 WTC. For example, one item of the survey sought responses regarding the degree to which learners, if permitted to choose, would prefer to communicate in English within the classroom. This specific scale was selected because it has been widely used and validated in Asian secondary educational settings, including EFL classrooms with similar sociocultural characteristics to Thailand. Compared to other WTC measures that focus on hypothetical or situational scenarios, Yashima's (2002) scale emphasizes classroom-based communicative intent, which aligns directly with the scope of this study.

L2 attention

The attention scale measures the motivation of learners by assessing their current level of cognitive attentiveness during learning a language (Tremblay & Gardner, 1995). This is an assessment of how much they concentrate on teachers, peers, and instructional tasks. The attention levels of learners during language acquisition were assessed using three questions adapted from Teimouri's (2018) study. The degree of attention given to the lecturer during the L2 lesson was rated using a five-point Likert scale. This scale was chosen over earlier attention measures because it reflects more current understandings of cognitive engagement and is better aligned with classroom learning processes in secondary EFL settings. Teimouri's (2018) adaptation offers a concise yet reliable tool appropriate for younger learners, capturing how attentional focus mediates motivational outcomes.

FL anxiety

The detrimental effects of language anxiety on L2 learners have been well-documented and extensively researched in the field of SLA (see, for instance, Teimouri et al., 2019). Anxiety, for instance, impedes both L2 WTC (Hashimoto, 2002; Khajavy et al., 2018) and language achievement (Teimouri et al., 2019). The apprehension levels of the learners were evaluated in this research using a set of four questions adapted from Taguchi et al. (2009) and rated on a five-point Likert scale. For example, these items were designed to assess the degree of anxiety and perplexity that learners encountered in response to a question posed by their instructor. While earlier-mentioned instruments related to FL anxiety are widely known, Taguchi et al.'s (2019) items were preferred because they are validated in large-scale studies across Asian EFL learners. Their item design reflects typical classroom anxiety triggers, such as responding to teacher questions, which are highly relevant for the secondary-level population in Thailand.

FL enjoyment

Recent years have seen a substantial shift in the focus of research on FL enjoyment in SLA, from negative to positive emotions. Motivated by positive psychology, a new surge of research has emerged to examine the effects of positive emotions on second language acquisition. The study conducted by Teimouri (2017) employed four items, each of which was rated on a five-point Likert scale, to assess the degree of satisfaction that learners encountered while learning English. For example, one of the things is “*I enjoy learning English.*” This scale was chosen because it captures the emotional rewards of L2 learning in a way that is accessible for secondary learners while maintaining theoretical alignment with positive affective dimensions relevant to the current study.

Positive views towards L2 learning

The motivation of learners may be influenced by the dynamics of instruction and learning during the language learning process. To ascertain the viewpoints of learners regarding teaching and learning, the study utilized a set of four inquiries evaluated on a five-point Likert scale adapted from Imsa-ard's (2020) research. For example, one of the items assessed the extent to which the English instructor was perceived to possess an engaging and dynamic teaching style. This local adaptation was chosen specifically because it reflects the Thai educational context and incorporates culturally relevant elements of student-teacher interaction. Compared to generic attitude scales, Imsa-ard's (2020) items offer more contextual sensitivity and were empirically validated with secondary school learners, which makes them particularly suitable for this national-level Thai participants.

L2 grit

By utilizing a language-specific grit scale, the degree of determination and resilience demonstrated by learners in L2 settings can be precisely measured. The consistency of interest (CI) and persistence of effort (PE) in language acquisition are the components of this instrument. Twelve items were employed in the study, each constructed using a five-point Likert scale. These

questions were sourced from the research of Teimouri et al. (2022). The purpose of these items was to evaluate the persistence and level of interest that learners possess in attaining their L2 learning objectives. One item assessed the temporal variability of learners' enthusiasm for English language learning. This scale was chosen over the original general grit scale by Duckworth et al. (2007) because it directly addresses language-specific goals and challenges. Teimouri et al.'s (2022) 12-item scale offers a more targeted assessment of persistence and sustained interest within the L2 domain, which is especially valuable in a low-exposure setting where long-term commitment is essential.

Data collection

As a result of the participants' low exposure of English, the survey was written in their native language (i.e., Thai). The items underwent translation and scrutiny by two proficient bilingual individuals, with any discrepancies resolved through discussion before compiling the final version. To gauge the effectiveness of the instruments, a pilot test was conducted involving ten Grade 9 learners, representing varying proficiency levels (three high, three mid, and three low). In a pilot study, these learners were instructed to complete the research instruments, mirroring the procedures of the actual study, to identify any potential misunderstandings or ambiguities. Informal feedback from these learners was sought after they completed the questionnaire. Additionally, three secondary EFL teachers and three language education experts were invited to provide comments on the survey. The selected teachers each have over five years of experience teaching EFL at the secondary level, with demonstrated success in fostering communicative skills among learners. The language education experts included two university professors specializing in SLA and assessment, and one TESOL educator with extensive experience in designing EFL materials for Thai learners. This combination of practical teaching experience and academic expertise ensured that the survey items were pedagogically relevant, accurately aligned with the study's constructs, and appropriate for the target learner population. Following the pilot sessions and incorporating feedback from teachers and experts, it was determined that the instruments were suitable and pitched at levels ranging from appropriate to slightly difficult. The reliability of the instruments was found to be very high, with a coefficient alpha (α) of 0.807. After validation, the questionnaire was distributed to secondary schools nationwide through a mass invitation. Participants were facilitated with the convenience of completing the questionnaire via Google Form.

Data analysis

For data analysis, the collected data underwent a thorough examination, including checks for conscientious completion and alignment with the study's scope regarding exposure levels. Initially, there were 1,933 responses, but 332 were excluded due to discrepancies between the obtained data and the focus of this study. Consequently, the validity of the data from the remaining 1,601 participants was confirmed.

All data exhibited skewness and kurtosis well within ± 2 , indicating a normal distribution (refer to Table 2) in line with the work of Roever and Phakiti (2017). Utilizing SPSS, descriptive statistics were employed to address Research Question 1 (RQ1) regarding the participants'

levels of L2 psychology constructs, EE exposure, and L2 WTC. To address Research Question 2 (RQ2), Pearson’s correlation analysis explored associations between variables, while (hierarchical) multiple regression analysis explored how L2 psychology constructs and EE exposure (predictors) related to L2 WTC (variable). The hypothesized path model (Figure 1) underwent scrutiny using *MPlus*. Lastly, to evaluate the hypothesized structural model, the study applied Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM). PLS-SEM, an alternative to covariance-based SEM (CB-SEM), focuses on explaining variance in outcome variables rather than confirming a theory, making it suitable for research aiming to explain and predict outcomes (Chin et al., 2020; Hair Jr et al., 2021; Sarstedt et al., 2022). Effect size (ES) in the model was measured using Cohen et al.’s (2018) equation for effect size based on beta (β) values: $\beta = .0$ to $.1$ indicated a weak effect, $\beta = .1$ to $.3$ a modest effect, $\beta = .3$ to $.5$ a moderate effect, and $\beta > .5$ a strong effect.

RESULTS

Table 1 presents the descriptive statistics for the eight variables under consideration. The skewness and kurtosis values for all data were found to be within the range of ± 2 , signifying a normal distribution as per the criteria outlined by George and Mallery (2019). Notably, all variables exhibited a diverse range of scores. While it may seem expected that participants in a low-exposure context such as Thailand would report limited EE experience, quantifying this level of exposure is important for several reasons. First, the mean scores suggest that participants reported a low level of EE experience ($M = 13.654$, $SD = 9.660$). This finding establishes a baseline, emphasizing the unique challenges these learners face in developing communicative competence without real-life English exposure. Additionally, understanding this low level of extramural experience is critical for interpreting the relationships between EE and other psychological constructs, such as L2 WTC and L2 enjoyment, which may be influenced by this limited exposure. In terms of intended effort, there was a rather high level of intended effort ($M = 4.065/5.00$, $SD = 0.863$). In similar vein, learners exhibited positive views towards learning English ($M = 4.038/5.00$, $SD = 0.718$). Moreover, learners reported having high levels of FL enjoyment ($M = 3.762/5.00$, $SD = 0.898$). In addition, learners had high levels of L2 grit ($M = 3.675/5.00$, $SD = 0.699$) and L2 attention ($M = 3.663/5.00$, $SD = 0.797$) respectively, while their L2 anxiety yielded the least value ($M = 2.752/5.00$, $SD = 0.834$). Interestingly, learners revealed quite a low level of L2 WTC ($M = 2.841/5.00$, $SD = 1.058$).

Table 1
Descriptive statistics ($N = 1601$)

	<i>M (SD)</i>	α	Range	Skewness	Kurtosis
EE (hrs)	13.654 (9.660)	.756	0.00 – 51.00	.718	.214
Intended Effort	4.065 (0.863)	.896	1.00 – 5.00	-1.213	1.592
L2 WTC	2.841 (1.058)	.849	1.00 – 5.00	.090	-.683
L2 Attention	3.663 (0.797)	.770	1.00 – 5.00	1.362	-.104
L2 Anxiety	2.752 (0.834)	.755	1.00 – 4.75	-.103	-.539
L2 Enjoyment	3.762 (0.898)	.819	1.00 – 5.00	-.548	.002
Positive Views	4.038 (0.718)	.723	1.75 – 5.00	-.665	-.010
L2 Grit	3.675 (0.699)	.843	1.56 – 5.00	-.238	-.483

The Bartlett's test of the entirety of correlations within the correlate matrix was significant ($\chi^2(496) = 25561.902, p < 0.001$), which means that the factor analysis used in the present study was appropriate. A further analysis using the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy revealed the high strength of the relationship among variables ($KMO = 0.929$), which means that the sampling in the present study was highly acceptable for further analysis (Tabachnick & Fedell, 2019).

As presented in Table 2, the amount of exposure to EE and L2 WTC correlated significantly with all aspects of L2 positive psychology constructs and learner emotions. To present a picture of the interrelationships between the variables investigated, Fig. 1 shows a correlation map detailing the significant relationships that are presented in Table 2. Expanding on this, the level of exposure to EE and L2 WTC demonstrated positive associations with intended effort, L2 attention, L2 enjoyment, positive views, and L2 grit, while exhibiting negative correlations with L2 anxiety. Specifically, the extent of EE exposure displayed the most robust positive correlation with L2 grit ($r = 0.439, p < 0.001$) and the most pronounced negative correlation with L2 anxiety ($r = -0.382, p < 0.001$). On the other hand, L2 WTC revealed the most substantial positive correlation with FL enjoyment ($r = 0.671, p < 0.001$) and the most significant negative correlation with L2 anxiety ($r = -0.275, p < 0.001$). Notably, the most potent negative correlation emerged between L2 WTC and L2 anxiety ($r = -0.610, p < 0.001$), elucidating that an increase in L2 learners' L2 WTC is associated with a decrease in L2 anxiety. Furthermore, the most robust positive correlation was observed between L2 WTC and L2 grit ($r = 0.506, p < 0.001$). That is, the grittier L2 learners are, the more willing to communicate L2 learners will be. While it may appear predictable that EE exposure and WTC would positively correlate with constructs such as intended effort, attention, enjoyment, positive views, and grit—while negatively correlating with anxiety—these findings provide important empirical validation in a low-exposure context. In settings like Thailand, where learners have limited real-life opportunities to engage with English outside the classroom, the positive association between extramural exposure and these psychological constructs highlights the potential impact even minimal EE exposure can have on learners' motivation and engagement. Moreover, the findings highlight that the degree of EE exposure, though generally low, still plays a significant role in influencing learners' attitudes and willingness to engage with the language. This emphasizes the need for educational strategies that increase meaningful English exposure both inside and outside the classroom, particularly in low-exposure environments. By confirming these associations within a low-exposure context, the findings contribute to understanding how extramural experiences can be leveraged to support language learning in similar settings.

Table 2
Correlations matrix (N = 1601)

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. Extramural Input	-							
2. Intended Effort	.351**	-						
3. L2 WTC	.411**	.355**	-					
4. L2 Attention	.299**	.490**	.389**	-				
5. L2 Anxiety	.382**	.275**	.610**	.338**	-			
6. L2 Enjoyment	.350**	.671**	.500**	.569**	.459**	-		

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
7. Positive Views	.280**	.463**	.305**	.462**	.254**	.594**	-	
8. L2 Grit	.439**	.627**	.506**	.612**	.454**	.703**	.552**	-

**p < .001

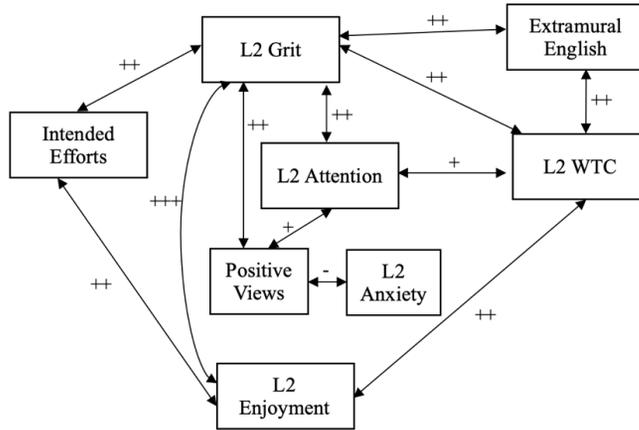


Figure 1 A path model of all significant correlations (Note: +/- small effect of around ± 0.3 ; --/++ medium effect of ± 0.5 ; ---/+++ large effect of ± 0.7)

As outlined in the provided Table 3, in the contexts of limited exposure to English, L2 attention ($\beta = .053$), L2 anxiety ($\beta = -.448$), FL enjoyment ($\beta = .153$), and L2 grit ($\beta = .170$) emerge as statistically significant predictors of L2 WTC, while intended effort and positive views do not achieve significance. The data also illustrates that these identified variables collectively account for 40% of the overall variance observed in L2 WTC ($F[6, 1594] = 219.834, p < .05, R^2 = .453$). Moreover, the tolerance values (exceeding 0.1) and Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) values (below 10) for all variables indicate that multicollinearity does not pose a substantial concern (Field, 2024).

Table 3
Hierarchical multiple regression analysis of positive and negative psychology constructs, extramural English, and L2 WTC

Predictors	L2 WTC (N = 1601)	
	Model 1 β	Model 2 β
Intended effort	.006	-.013
L2 attention	.053*	.052*
L2 anxiety	-.448*	-.416*
L2 enjoyment	.153*	.163*
Positive views	-.022	-.028
L2 grit	.170*	.136*
Amount of EE		.131*
R^2	.453	.466
Change of R^2	.453, $p < 0.001$	.013, $p < 0.001$
$F(df_{\text{regression}}, df_{\text{residual}})$	219.834(6, 1594)	198.434(7, 1593)

Note: β = Beta (standardised regression coefficient); *p < .05.

To confirm such relationships of predictors, the path estimates of all factor loadings were checked. Based on the Table 4, path estimates of $L2\ WTC \leftarrow L2\ Attention$, $L2\ WTC \leftarrow L2\ Anxiety$, $L2\ WTC \leftarrow L2\ Enjoyment$, $L2\ WTC \leftarrow L2\ Grit$, $Intended\ Effort \leftarrow L2\ Grit$, $Intended\ Effort \leftarrow L2\ Enjoyment$, $L2\ Attention \leftarrow Positive\ views$, $L2\ Attention \leftarrow L2\ Grit$, $L2\ Attention \leftarrow L2\ Enjoyment$, $L2\ Attention \leftarrow Intended\ Effort$, and $L2\ Anxiety \leftarrow Positive\ views$ were high and significant as C.R. was higher than 1.96, except for $L2\ WTC \leftarrow Intended\ Effort$ and $L2\ WTC \leftarrow Positive\ views$. Therefore, it could be concluded that the overall fit of the hypothesized model was satisfactory at a significance level of .05.

Table 4
Path Estimates of the measurement model (N = 1601)

Indicators	Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	p
$L2\ WTC \leftarrow Intended\ Effort$	.008	.032	.238	
$L2\ WTC \leftarrow L2\ Attention$	.070	.032	2.174	*
$L2\ WTC \leftarrow L2\ Anxiety$	-.568	.027	-20.835	*
$L2\ WTC \leftarrow L2\ Enjoyment$	.181	.037	4.894	*
$L2\ WTC \leftarrow Positive\ views$	-.032	.035	-.903	
$L2\ WTC \leftarrow L2\ Grit$	.258	.045	5.683	*
$Intended\ Effort \leftarrow L2\ Grit$	.368	.032	11.643	*
$Intended\ Effort \leftarrow L2\ Enjoyment$	.423	.025	16.577	*
$L2\ Attention \leftarrow Positive\ views$	.119	.027	4.420	*
$L2\ Attention \leftarrow L2\ Grit$	.417	.033	12.816	*
$L2\ Attention \leftarrow L2\ Enjoyment$	.173	.027	6.339	*
$L2\ Attention \leftarrow Intended\ Effort$	.073	.025	2.968	*
$L2\ Anxiety \leftarrow Positive\ views$	.103	.032	3.201	*

DISCUSSION

This study set out to explore the relationship between L2 psychology constructs and L2 WTC of EFL learners in a context of low exposure to English. It should be noted that the findings of this study reflect learners' self-reported perceptions of their English exposure, enjoyment, anxiety, and L2 WTC, rather than direct measures of their actual language use. This distinction is important, as the survey captures learners' subjective experiences with English, which can still offer valuable insights into their motivational and emotional orientations toward language learning. In this discussion, two research questions are now answered and discussed as follows.

The first question dealt with the levels of L2 psychology constructs, amount of exposure to extramural English, and the levels of L2 WTC of Thai EFL secondary school learners in the context of low exposure to English. In this study, it turned out that they experienced moderate to high levels of L2 positive psychology constructs (namely L2 enjoyment, positive views, L2 grit, L2 attention, and intended effort) while experiencing low levels of a negative psychology construct (namely L2 anxiety). This appears to corroborate the findings of previous studies (Arabai, 2024; Cao, 2022; Li & Dewaele, 2021; Sadoughi & Hejazi, 2024) which indicated high level of positive constructs and low level of negative constructs. Moreover, it should be noted that EFL learners in a context of low exposure to English appeared to experience low levels of L2 WTC.

Moreover, the second research question addressed interrelationships between the variables. The amount of exposure to EE and L2 WTC correlated significantly with all aspects of L2 positive psychology constructs and learner emotions. These findings align with the results of Uztosun and Kk (2023), which indicate that frequent engagement in EE decreases negative emotional states and enhances positive emotional states. Also, this finding supports previous studies that EE could have an effect on L2 WTC (Bengtsson, 2020; Hannibal Jensen, 2017). In addition, the amount of exposure to EE had the strongest positive correlation with L2 grit and the strongest negative correlation with L2 anxiety. Simply put, L2 grit (perseverance of effort) could be predictive of psychology constructs, amount of EE, and levels of L2 WTC. This is also in line with Lee and Sylvn (2021) and Lee and Dressman (2018) indicating that out-of-class activities are positively associated with affective factors (e.g., motivation, enjoyment and grit). This implies that EFL learners characterized by higher levels of grit, displaying persistent effort in enhancing their English skills, are more inclined to engage in English communication and L2 learning. This discovery can be understood through the lenses of grit and socio-educational perspectives. From a grit perspective, EFL learners with heightened perseverance are likely to embody individuals who diligently tackle demanding tasks, such as L2 performance and speaking, consequently taking a more active role in initiating English communication in the classroom and actively participating in EE activities. This interpretation finds partial support in prior research that has linked an elevated grit score to increased effort and commitment in pursuing challenging long-term goals in the face of obstacles or setbacks (Aparicio et al., 2017; Duckworth et al., 2011). Furthermore, the findings suggest that L2 WTC had the strongest positive correlation with FL enjoyment and the strongest negative correlation with L2 anxiety. That is to say, another significant finding is that L2 psychology constructs could be predictive of L2 WTC. The present data can be understood within the framework of Fredrickson's (2001, 2003) broad-and-build theory, suggesting that EFL learners exposed to a positive EFL classroom environment, characterized by a friendly and supportive English teacher, may exhibit a heightened interest in exploring opportunities for learning English. Such learners may also become more attuned to actively seek out these opportunities. This interpretation aligns with prior research that has established a connection between a positive classroom environment, optimistic perspectives, and increased L2 WTC in EFL classrooms (Alrabai, 2024; Dewaele & Pavelescu, 2021; Khajavy et al., 2018; Lee & Taylor, 2024; Peng, 2019). Finally, EFL learners in a context of low exposure to English exhibit positive and significant connections between the duration of EE engagement, L2 psychology constructs, and L2 WTC. This implies that the more time these learners spend engaging with English outside the classroom, coupled with their positive perspectives, the greater their inclination to communicate in English within the classroom setting. Notably, to the best of the researcher's knowledge, this study represents the initial exploration of relationships between L2 psychology constructs, EE exposure, and L2 WTC among secondary school EFL learners confronting limited exposure to English. Consequently, this research expands an understanding of the pivotal roles played by these variables in the L2 learning of EFL learners, especially within the constraints of their restricted exposure to English. According to MacIntyre and Gregersen (2012), the notion that positive emotions contributing to increased resilience in L2 learners suggests a plausible connection between a positive classroom atmosphere and positive attitudes toward L2 learning, potentially leading EFL learners to demonstrate greater perseverance in their efforts. This, in turn, could positively impact L2 WTC. Essentially, by fostering a positive learning environment, teachers

may aid EFL learners in alleviating psychological challenges, such as L2 anxiety, and motivate them to actively engage in producing the target language in class, thereby enhancing their language skills. The observed trend aligns with earlier research findings (for instance, Alrabai, 2024; Dewaele et al., 2022; Li & Wei, 2022), suggesting a similarity in the profiles of EFL learners across different contexts.

Although EE exposure is low among these participants, the results suggest that optimizing positive emotional constructs—such as increasing enjoyment and reducing anxiety—in classroom settings can still impact learners' WTC. In low-exposure contexts like Thailand, where opportunities to use English outside the classroom are limited, fostering positive attitudes and minimizing anxiety in structured learning environments may help learners engage more actively with the language. This classroom engagement can enhance their communicative confidence, which may contribute to gradual improvements in both WTC and proficiency over time, even in a setting with minimal EE exposure. Building upon prior research, which predominantly focused on university learners and often neglected variables such as motivation and EE engagement (Bielak, 2022; Li, 2022), the current study provides a more insightful perspective on the interconnections among L2 learners' psychology constructs and the extent of EE in relation to L2 WTC. The overall findings imply that mitigating negative emotional experiences, such as anxiety and boredom, is likely to be associated with increased positive emotions, particularly enjoyment, which, in turn, correlates with elevated levels of L2 WTC. Furthermore, this study reveals a positive correlation between L2 grit and positive psychology constructs, indicating that learners with greater grit in L2 learning tend to exhibit more positive psychology constructs, especially in terms of L2 enjoyment, during the process of learning English. Consistent with prior research findings (e.g., Lee, 2022b; Tsang & Dewaele, 2024), individuals studying a foreign language who experienced lower levels of boredom or higher levels of enjoyment demonstrated heightened motivation and a greater inclination to initiate English speaking. Moreover, the strong predictive power of L2 grit in relation to L2 WTC highlights its critical role in sustaining learners' motivation and perseverance in low-exposure contexts. With this, grit, defined as sustained passion and perseverance toward long-term goals (Duckworth et al., 2007), may be particularly vital in EFL contexts like Thailand, where learners must maintain engagement in the absence of regular real-life English communication opportunities. That is to say, EFL learners with higher levels of grit are more likely to persist in their efforts, even when immediate rewards or communicative opportunities are limited. This persistence not only supports ongoing skill development but also contributes to greater confidence and willingness to communicate in English when opportunities arise. In addition, the correlation between L2 grit and both L2 attention and intended effort also suggests that gritty learners are more capable of maintaining cognitive focus and behavioral commitment during English learning tasks. This aligns with Lee and Drajeti (2019), who noted that grit promotes task engagement and resilience, especially when learners face difficulties. In practical terms, promoting L2 grit in classrooms might involve fostering a growth mindset, encouraging long-term goal setting, and helping learners reflect on their learning progress and efforts, rather than only outcomes. These practices can be especially powerful in shaping learners' self-regulation, autonomy, and long-term engagement with the language. Importantly, it should be noted that L2 grit does not operate in isolation; its positive effects are amplified when combined with a supportive classroom climate and emotionally enriching experiences.

This relationship of grit with enjoyment and attention, as revealed in the current study, highlights the value of cultivating not just emotional positivity but also character strengths that sustain learning over time.

Concerning pedagogical implications, the findings of this study carry significant implications for the practical aspects of foreign language instruction, particularly in the context of EFL learners with limited exposure to English. The core recommendation arising from this research is a strategic focus on enhancing positive psychology constructs, particularly the enjoyment of L2 learning, to bring about substantial improvements in English language instruction. This study highlights the transformative potential of prioritizing positive psychology constructs (e.g., L2 enjoyment), showcasing how the introduction of such elements can effectively counteract the negative emotions (e.g., L2 anxiety) experienced by learners with minimal exposure to English. This insight holds even in scenarios where anxiety or other challenges are inherent in the process of acquiring a second language (Alrabai, 2024). In essence, the study portrays anxiety as a temporary hurdle, akin to minor superficial marks, while positive psychology factors emerge as the driving forces propelling learners forward in terms of sustained dedication to English language learning outside the classrooms, second language acquisition, and L2 WTC.

While traditional practices like memorization play an important role in Thai EFL classrooms, they can be complemented with strategies grounded in positive psychology to support learners' emotional and communicative engagement. Rather than abandoning memorization, teachers can integrate interactive and collaborative activities that make memorization more enjoyable and engaging, such as group recall games or peer-based vocabulary challenges. Additionally, incorporating small-scale speaking tasks within the classroom, like structured role-plays or pair interviews using familiar vocabulary, can allow learners to apply memorized language meaningfully in a supportive environment. Given that grit was found to be a significant predictor of L2 WTC in this study, in addition, EFL teachers can play a pivotal role in cultivating this trait. EFL teachers can encourage learners to set personally meaningful, long-term goals for their English learning and help them break these goals into achievable steps to sustain motivation. Pedagogically, EFL teachers may consider incorporating reflective activities, such as learning journals or progress check-ins, which can help learners recognize their own persistence and growth. Furthermore, creating classroom tasks that require sustained effort, such as language projects or goal-oriented speaking tasks, can strengthen learners' resilience. Praise that emphasizes effort, strategy, and progress—rather than just correctness or outcomes—can also reinforce the value of perseverance. Importantly, a supportive classroom climate where challenges are framed as opportunities for growth can help learners maintain commitment even when faced with difficulties. By building a positive classroom atmosphere through praise and encouragement, teachers can help reduce anxiety and foster enjoyment, which are aligned with positive psychology principles. Although learners may have limited opportunities to use English outside of school, these practices can still increase their willingness to engage with English in the classroom, supporting the development of communicative confidence that may be useful if they encounter English in extramural contexts in the future.

Significantly, educators and instructors are urged to hone in on specific characteristics associated with positive psychology factors among learners. Noteworthy aspects include the friendliness of instructors, the level of encouragement and support provided, and the incorporation of humor in teaching and learning (Bolkan et al., 2018; Dewaele et al., 2022; Li, 2022; Shirvan et al., 2024; Talebzadeh et al., 2020). In the context of Thailand, incorporating positive psychology constructs such as friendliness, encouragement, and humor requires sensitivity to cultural norms surrounding teacher-student relationships and classroom dynamics. Teachers can foster a friendly environment by starting each class with a warm greeting or brief check-in, demonstrating care and interest in learners' well-being while maintaining professional boundaries. Encouragement and support can be provided through structured, positive feedback that acknowledges learner progress and effort, thereby building confidence in a culturally respectful manner. Humor can be introduced subtly, using relatable examples or light-hearted visuals that create a relaxed atmosphere without detracting from the teacher's authority. These strategies, adapted to fit the Thai educational context, can support a positive classroom climate, helping to reduce anxiety and enhance learners' enjoyment and engagement in English learning. Recognizing that the presence of positive psychology constructs in EFL learners not only associates with their WTC in the classroom but might also impact their future language proficiency, it is advisable for educators to incorporate these findings into both pre-service teacher training and in-service teacher professional development programs. In essence, this study advocates for a pedagogical shift towards a more holistic and psychologically informed approach, emphasizing the pivotal role of positive psychology in shaping the language learning experience. By placing emphasis on enjoyment and fostering positive interactions within the learning environment, educators can potentially transform the landscape of English language instruction, fostering not only increased motivation, self-learning, and L2 WTC but also laying the groundwork for enhanced language proficiency in the future. This shift should be considered a critical and practical imperative for educators seeking to navigate the complexities of language learning in environments marked by low exposure to English.

Beyond the individual-level findings, it should be noted that one of the strengths of this study could be lie in its large-scale, nationally representative design, which addresses a significant gap in existing research on L2 psychology and willingness to communicate in low-exposure contexts, particularly in a Thai context. With data drawn from over 1,600 secondary school learners across all five major regions of Thailand, this study moves beyond small-scale or localized investigations and offers a more comprehensive understanding of how EE exposure and psychological factors interact in shaping L2 learners' communicative behaviors. The national scope of the study also provides compelling evidence that the observed patterns are not isolated or context-specific, but instead reflect systemic trends across the Thai EFL context. That is to say, this scale of investigation allows for stronger generalizability and contributes to the empirical foundation upon which educational reforms and interventions can be based. Moreover, the consistency of findings across diverse socio-educational backgrounds reinforces the theoretical argument that constructs like L2 grit and enjoyment are not only individual traits but are also shaped by broader learning environments. In this way, the study does not merely report correlations, but it also offers large-scale, contextually grounded insights that can inform national language education policies, teacher training, and classroom practices in Thailand and in comparable EFL settings globally.

CONCLUSION

This research offers empirical confirmation into the relationship between psychology constructs in second language acquisition, EE activities, and L2 WTC in EFL learners with limited exposure to English. Positive psychology constructs such as enjoyment, grit, attention, and intended effort were found to be significant, while negative constructs, notably L2 anxiety, were minimal. However, despite these positive constructs, learners face challenges in initiating and maintaining L2 communication. The study reveals correlations between EE activities and L2 WTC, particularly highlighting the role of grit in encouraging communication initiation. Additionally, it emphasizes the importance of joyful classroom environments in fostering L2 WTC. The research sheds light on the complex relationship between L2 psychology constructs and L2 WTC in secondary school EFL learners with limited English exposure, emphasizing the potential influence of positive emotions like enjoyment. It suggests the adoption of teaching methods focusing on positive psychology constructs to enhance L2 WTC and increase exposure to EE among EFL learners.

The present study has certain limitations. By adopting a purely quantitative design for this phase of the research, the researcher did not incorporate the qualitative perspectives of the participants regarding their feelings about their EFL classes or their progress and performance due to space constraints in this article. Additionally, a valuable avenue for further exploration could involve delving into this domain through longitudinal research, encompassing intervention studies. Such an approach could provide insights into learners' emotional profile trajectories, the modulation of their positive psychology constructs, and strategies for enhancing both positive psychology constructs and EE engagement time. This, in turn, would contribute to fostering L2 WTC and enhancing language proficiency gains.

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