Dear Zhaoguo Wang,

We would like to thank you for the thoughtful and valuable comments and suggestions on our manuscript entitled “Excess radiation exacerbates drought stress impacts on stomatal conductance along aridity gradients” (bg-2022-50). We have carefully revised our manuscript to take account of your comments and suggestions. Meanwhile, we have rephrased our manuscript title as “Excess radiation exacerbates drought stress impacts on canopy conductance along aridity gradients”. Here are the point-to-point responses (responses in upright Roman in black front) to the comments (original queries in Italic in blue front). The changed figures and tables are presented in the Appendix 1 and Appendix 2 (listed at the end of the “Response to community comment #2”).

Specific comments:

1) There are expressions like “drought”, “dryness”, “low soil moisture” and “soil moisture stress” in this manuscript. I don’t think these have the same meaning. Please check and use it properly. Similarly, this manuscript focused on gs, but sometimes there are expressions like “canopy gs”.
Response: Thank you very much for your comment. We have replaced “dryness” with “drought”, and “soil moisture stress” with “low soil moisture” throughout the manuscript. Meanwhile, we used gs to present stomatal conductance at leaf level, and Gs to present canopy conductance.

2) I think hypothesis should be based on the information provided in the introduction. In terms of the hypothesis 2 “excess solar radiation and low temperatures will result in differences in gs among transects”, I don’t understand how low temperatures will affect gs according to the information in introduction.

Response: Thank you very much for your comment. We respond to this comment from three aspects.

(1) We clarified that “However, previous studies showed that the direction and intensity of solar radiation and temperature on gs strongly depend on their distribution range and the relationship with aridity. For example, the response of gs to solar radiation and temperature generally shows an increasing trend up to optimum values (Xu et al. 2021), while excess radiation (Costa et al. 2015; Doupis et al. 2020; Zeuthen et al. 1997) and high temperature associated high VPD or low SM (Seneviratne et al. 2010) would suppress gs.”

(2) We added the basic climatic context for the three grassland transect in the last paragraph of “1 Instruction” section: “The grassland transect span gradients of precipitation, SM, VPD, solar radiation, and temperature, provide an ideal platform for exploration of interactive effects of multiple stressors and biotic factors on Gs (Table S1). In addition, the three grassland transects experienced with different soil radiation and temperature conditions at a given aridity, due to the difference in the geographical location of the three plateaus. The order of mean annual temperature and solar radiation is LP>MP>TP and LP<MP<TP, respectively.”

(3) We rephrased the second hypothesis as: “high solar radiation and low temperatures will jointly suppress Gs at a given aridity among transects.”.

3) The last paragraph should be the last but one paragraph or in the methods.

Response: This paragraph has been revised and removed to section “2.2.3 Stable isotope analysis”: “Given that leaf δ⁸⁰O at species level was affected by the leaf water evaporation process, variability in gs should show up in leaf δ⁸⁰O (Barbour 2007; Barbour & Farquhar 2000; Farquhar et al. 1998). Negative relationship between △¹⁸⁰ and gs has been observed at species (Barbour & Farquhar 2000; Cabrera-Bosquet et al. 2011; Grams et al.
and among communities along soil (Ramirez et al. 2009) and climatic (Keitel et al. 2006) gradients. Consequently, we selected 1/□18O was used as a proxy for gₘ in this study."

4) There may be interspecific difference in gs, so information on plant species and species composition of the three study sites should be provided.

The species, genera and families of species occurred in each community have been listed in "Supplementary 2" (Please see Appendix 2).

5) The headline of the first part in the discussion should be changed, because the patterns of gs among the tree transects are similar, but differ in magnitude. In addition, the authors attribute this difference to the temperature-induced changes in photosynthesis, which I don’t agree. Indeed, gs and photosynthesis are closely correlated, for example, to maximize carbon gain and minimize water loss according to the optimal stomatal behaviour. However, in my opinion, the correlation between gs and photosynthesis is regulated by stomatal behaviour.

Response: Thank you very much for your comment. We respond this comment from two aspects.

(1) The headline has been change as: “4.3 Differences in canopy conductance among transects”.

(2) The effects of VPD, solar radiation and temperature on the differences in canopy conductance among transects have been rephrased as: "

Significant differences in community 1/□18O were found among transects, and the order of Gₘ at a given aridity value was LP > MP > TP (Fig.2a). Among transects, only differences in VPD, solar radiation and temperature were significant (P>0.05) (Fig.1 and Fig.S1). In general, plants decrease their gₛ to respond to increasing VPD (Grossiord et al. 2020). While, intercept of linear regression between aridity and community 1/□18O decreased with decreasing VPD among transects (P>0.05) (Fig.3a). It indicated that the difference in VPD was not a contributor to the difference in Gₘ among transects.

We attribute the differences in Gₘ among transects to the direct effects of solar radiation and temperature on Gₘ and photosynthesis (Yu et al. 2002). This is inconsistent with the results within transect. High solar radiation exhibited negative effect on intercept of linear regression between aridity and community 1/□18O among transects (P<0.05) (Fig.3b).
Excess ultraviolet-B radiation (Duan et al. 2008), insufficient thermal dissipation, and enhanced photorespiration under high solar radiation (Cui et al. 2003) can decrease photosynthesis, ultimately reducing \( g_s \). For example, Yu et al. (2012) observed that photosynthesis of wheat at leaf level on the TP was lower than that on North China Plain due to the high solar radiation.

Transect with low temperature exhibited low intercept of linear regression between aridity and community \( 1/\delta^{18}O \) (Fig. 3c), it indicated that \( G_s \) among transects also inhibited by low temperature. Generally, photosynthesis and \( G_s \) increased with temperature below optimum temperature (Xu et al. 2021). For example, photosynthesis of wheat was lower in a cold than in a warm environment (Yu et al. 2002).

6) line 25 delete "at leaf level".

Response: Change has been done.

7) line 24 change "in one” and “in the other” into (1) and (2), respectively.

Response: Change has been made.

8) I suggest that “interaction effects” may be changed into “interactive effects”.

Response: Change has been made.
Appendix 1

Figure 1. Comparison of aridity (a), growing season precipitation (b), soil moisture (SM) (c), vapor pressure deficit (VPD) (d), solar radiation (SR) (e), temperature (f), maximum temperature (Temp_{max}) (g), and community leaf area (h) and specific leaf area (SLA) (i) among transects. LP: Loess Plateau; MP, Inner Mongolia Plateau; TP, Tibet Plateau. Lowercase letters indicate significant differences among transects (P<0.05). Error bars indicate standard error of the mean.

Figure 2. Patterns of 1/\text{\text_o^{18}}O (a) along aridity gradient within transects, and among (b) transects. Different letters indicate significant differences (P < 0.001) among transects and grassland types. \text{\text_o^{18}}O, 18O enrichment of leaf organic matter above source water; LP, Loess Plateau; MP, Inner Mongolia Plateau; TP, Tibet Plateau.
Figure 3. Patterns of the intercept obtained from standardized major axis analysis (SMA) among transects. VPD, vapor pressure deficit; SR, solar radiation; Temp_max, maximum temperature. LP, Loess Plateau; MP, Inner Mongolia Plateau; TP, Tibet Plateau. Shaded area represents the 95% confidence interval of the SMA intercept.

Figure 4. Structural equation models of abiotic factors explaining 1/\(\Delta^{18}O\) in Loess Plateau (LP) (a), Inner Mongolia Plateau (MP) (b) and Tibet Plateau (TP) (c). \(\Delta^{18}O\), \(^{18}O\) enrichment of leaf organic matter above source water; Temp_max: maximum temperature; SR, solar radiation; SM, soil moisture; VPD, vapor pressure deficit. Solid and dashed arrows represent significant and non-significant relationships in a fitted SEM, respectively. ***, P<0.001; **, P<0.01; *, P<0.05.

Figure 5. Structural equation models of abiotic and biotic factors explaining 1/\(\Delta^{18}O\) in Loess Plateau (LP) (a), Inner Mongolia Plateau (MP) (b) and Tibet Plateau (TP) (c). \(\Delta^{18}O\), \(^{18}O\) enrichment of leaf organic matter above source water; Temp_max: maximum temperature; SR, solar radiation; SM, soil moisture; VPD, vapor pressure deficit. LA, log-transformed leaf area; SLA, log-transformed specific leaf area. Solid and dashed arrows represent significant and non-significant relationships in a fitted SEM, respectively. ***, P<0.001; **, P<0.01; *, P<0.05.

**Table 1** Pearson’s coefficients among community 1/\(\Delta^{18}O\) and environmental factors and plant properties.
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<th>Tibet Plateau</th>
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**, P<0.01; *, P<0.05. SM, soil moisture; VPD, vapor pressure deficit; SR, total solar radiation; Temp<sub>mean</sub>, mean temperature; Temp<sub>max</sub>, maximum temperature; LA, log-transformed leaf area; SLA, log-transformed specific leaf area.
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**Table S1** Geographic and climatic information, δ¹⁸O of precipitation, and community Δ¹⁸O for sampling sites in Loess (LP), Inner Mongolia (MP), and Tibetan (TP), Plateau.
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Trend

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0.356 & 0.360 & 0.006 & <0.00 & <0.00 & <0.00 & 0.069 \\
                        & 1          & 1     & 1     & 1     &       &       \\
\end{tabular}

Temp_{max}, maximum temperature; VPD, vapor deficit pressure; SM, soil moisture; δ^{18}O, the δ^{18}O of precipitation; GSW, growing season. Trend indicates variation in variables along the aridity gradient.

\textbf{Table S2} Differences in climatic variables among three transects.

\begin{tabular}{cccccc}
Transect & Period & Mean & Standard deviation & Minimum & Maximum & P value \\
Aridity   & LP     & 0.71 & 0.12               & 0.57     & 0.87     & 0.693 \\
MP        & 0.76   & 0.07 & 0.68               & 0.88     &           &       \\
TP        & 0.72   & 0.21 & 0.37               & 0.94     &           &       \\
Precipitation & LP  & Year & 405 & 157 & 189 & 599 & 0.329 \\
            & MP    & 308 & 84 & 183 & 425 &       &       \\
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LP: Loess Plateau; MP, Inner Mongolia Plateau; TP, Tibet Plateau. Lowercase letters indicate significant differences among transects (P<0.05).

**Table S3** Characteristics of leaf δ\(^{18}\)O and △\(^{18}\)O at species level for sampling sites in Loess (LP), Inner Mongolia (MP), and Tibetan (TP) Plateau.

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Table S4 Results of standardized major axis (SMA) line-fitting for the relationship between canopy stomatal conductance (using $1/\Delta^{18}$O as proxy) and aridity.

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Different letters indicate significant differences ($P < 0.001$) among transects in intercepts and slopes.

**Table S5** Pearson coefficients for correlations among canopy stomatal conductance (Gs) and environmental factors and plant properties.
Loess Gs 1 Plateau

Aridity - 0.848**

Precipitation 0.856** -.997** 1

SM 0.719* -.781** .795** 1

VPD -0.554 0.616 -0.563 -0.251 1

SR -0.639* 0.810** -.827** -.851** 0.217 1

T temp mean 0.641* -0.665*.710* .766** 0.074 -.849** 1

T temp max 0.678* -0.698*.737* .751* -0.026 -.795** .980** 1

LA .757* -.881** .863** 0.567 -.751* -.637* 0.425 0.481 1

SLA -0.519 0.460 -0.454 -0.499 0.356 0.422 -0.433 -0.483 -0.533 1
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<td>SM</td>
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| Variable | Pearson's R  
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***, P<0.01; *, P<0.05. gs, stomatal conductance; SM, soil moisture; VPD, vapor pressure deficit; SR, total solar radiation; Temp_{mean}, mean temperature; Temp_{max}, maximum temperature; LA, log-transformed leaf area; SLA, log-transformed specific leaf area.

Figure S1. Comparison of annual mean precipitation (mm) (a), vapor pressure deficit (VPD) (b), total solar radiation (TSR) (c), and air temperature (℃) (d) among three transects. LP: Loess Plateau; MP, Inner Mongolia Plateau; TP, Tibet Plateau. Lowercase letters indicate significant differences among transects (P<0.05). Error bars indicate standard error of the mean.

Figure S2. Patterns of leaf δ^{18}O and △^{18}O at species level along aridity gradient in Loess (LP), Inner Mongolia (MP), and Tibetan (TP), Plateau. m, slope of the linear regression; b, intercept of the linear regression.

Figure S3. Hypothetical structural equation models of abiotic factors explaining 1/△^{18}O in Loess Plateau (LP) (a), Inner Mongolia Plateau (MP) (b) and Tibet Plateau (TP) (c). △^{18}O, δ^{18}O enrichment of leaf organic matter above source water; Temp_{max}, maximum temperature; SR, solar radiation; SM, soil moisture; VPD, vapor pressure deficit.

Figure S4. Hypothetical structural equation models of abiotic and biotic factors explaining 1/△^{18}O in Loess Plateau (LP) (a), Inner Mongolia Plateau (MP) (b) and Tibet Plateau (TP) (c). △^{18}O, δ^{18}O enrichment of leaf organic matter above source water; Temp_{max}, maximum temperature; SR, solar radiation; SM, soil moisture; VPD, vapor pressure deficit. LA, log-transformed leaf area; SLA, log-transformed specific leaf area.

Figure S5. Relationship between community 1/△^{18}O and log-transformed leaf area (LA) (a) and specific leaf area (SLA) (b).

Appendix 2 Information of coexisting species in each community in Loess Plateau (LP), Inner Mongolia Plateau (MP), and Tibet Plateau (TP).

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| LP | 1 | Artemisia scoparia | Artemisia | Compositae |
| LP | 1 | Bothriochloa ischaemum | Bothriochloa | Poaceae |
| LP | 1 | Carex korshinskyi | Carex | Cyperaceae |
| LP | 1 | Cirsium arvense | Cirsium | Compositae |
| LP | 1 | Cleistogenes hackelii | Cleistogenes | Poaceae |
| LP | 1 | Cynanchum thesioides | Cynanchum | Apocynaceae |
| LP | 1 | Erigeron canadensis | Erigeron | Compositae |
| LP | 1 | Heteropappus altaicus | Heteropappus | Compositae |
| LP | 1 | Lespedeza bicolor Lespedeza | Fabaceae |
| LP | 1 | Leymus chinensis Leymus | Poaceae |
| LP | 1 | Medicago ruthenica Medicago | Fabaceae |
| LP | 1 | Polygala tenuifoliaPolygala | Polygalaceae |
| LP | 1 | Rubia cordifolia Rubia | Rubiaceae |
| LP | 1 | Salix gordejevii Salix | Salicaceae |
| LP | 1 | Ulmus pumila Ulmus | Ulmaceae |
| LP | 1 | Vicia amoena Vicia | Fabaceae |
| LP | 1 | Viola philippica Viola | Violaceae |
| LP | 1 | Youngia japonica Youngia | Compositae |
| LP | 1 | Ziziphus jujuba Ziziphus | Rhamnaceae |
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| LP  | 2          | Agropyron cristatum    | Agropyron     | Poaceae    |
| LP  | 2          | Anemone chinensis      | Anemone       | Ranunculaceae |
| LP  | 2          | Artemisia lavandulifolia | Artemisia   | Asteraceae |
| LP  | 2          | Astragalus scaberrimus  | Astragalus    | Fabaceae   |
| LP  | 2          | Bothriochloa ischaemum  | Bothriochloa  | Poaceae    |
| LP  | 2          | Caragana sinica        | Caragana      | Fabaceae   |
| LP  | 2          | Carex korshinskyi      | Carex         | Cyperaceae |
| LP  | 2          | Cleistogenes hackelii  | Cleistogenes  | Poaceae    |
| LP | 2 | Cleistogenes songorica | Cleistogenes | Poaceae |
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| LP | 2 | Incarvillea sinensis | Incarvillea | Bignoniaceae |
| LP | 2 | Lespedeza davurica | Lespedeza | Fabaceae |
| LP | 2 | Lespedeza juncea | Lespedeza | Fabaceae |
| LP | 2 | Patrinia scabiosifolia | Patrinia | Caprifoliaceae |
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LP 6 Leontopodium leontopodinum Leontopodium Compositae

LP 6 Lespedeza bicolor Lespedeza Fabaceae

LP 6 Linum usitatissimum Linum Linaceae

LP 6 Medicago ruthenica Medicago Fabaceae

LP 6 Patrinia heterophylla Patrinia Caprifoliaceae

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Medicago ruthenica
Medicago
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Medicago sativa
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Melilotus albus
Melilotus
Leguminosae

Polygonum sibiricum
Polygonum
Polygonaceae

Scorzonera sinensis
Scorzonera
Compositae

Setaria viridis
Setaria
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Sibbaldianthe bifurca
Sibbaldianthe
Rosaceae

Sonchus arvensis
Sonchus
Compositae

Stipa capillata
Stipa
Poaceae
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<td>Poaceae</td>
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<tr>
<td>TP</td>
<td>10</td>
<td><strong>Ajania fruticulosa</strong></td>
<td>Compositae</td>
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<tr>
<td>TP</td>
<td>10</td>
<td><strong>Oxytropis microphylla</strong></td>
<td>Fabaceae</td>
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