VNU Journal of Foreign Studies

Journal homepage: https://jfs.ulis.vnu.edu.vn/

MEASURING ACADEMIC RESILIENCE IN EFL CONTEXTS: A CRITICAL REVIEW OF EXISTING SCALES AND A DECISION-MAKING FRAMEWORK FOR RESEARCHERS

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Received 11 December 2025
Revised 23 May 2026; Accepted 24 August 2026

Abstract: Academic resilience has gained increasing attention in second language (L2) education as learners face growing academic pressures and increasingly complex learning environments that demand sustained coping capacity. Yet existing measurement instruments remain conceptually varied and uneven in quality. This review synthesizes current L2 academic resilience scales and proposes a decision-making framework to support scale selection in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) research. Guided by four research questions, the review first identifies five major instruments used across secondary and tertiary EFL contexts. A comparative analysis of their theoretical foundations shows three dominant conceptualizations: trait-like personal qualities, dynamic adaptive processes, and ecological interactions between learners and their environments. The evaluation of psychometric evidence further reveals disparities in reliability, validity, and transparency of scale development, with some instruments demonstrating strong model fit and theoretical grounding while others offer limited methodological details. The contextual relevance of each scale is also examined, highlighting how factors such as learner proficiency, educational culture, and instructional setting influence applicability in diverse EFL ecologies. Building on these findings, a four-level decision-making framework is introduced to guide researchers in selecting instruments that are theoretically aligned, contextually appropriate, psychometrically sound, and practically feasible. The review concludes by calling for more cross-cultural validation, longitudinal designs, and development of resilience measures for underrepresented contexts to advance L2 resilience research.

Keywords: academic resilience, EFL learners, measurement scales, psychometric evaluation, decision-making framework

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https://doi.org/10.63023/2525-2445/jfs.ulis.5686

ĐO LƯỜNG NĂNG LỰC HỒI PHỤC HỌC THUẬT TRONG BỐI CẢNH HỌC TIẾNG ANH NHƯ MỘT NGOẠI NGỮ: TỔNG QUAN PHÊ BÌNH CÁC THANG ĐO HIỆN CÓ VÀ KHUNG RA QUYẾT ĐỊNH CHO CÁC NHÀ NGHIÊN CỨU

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Nhận bài ngày 11 tháng 12 năm 2025
Chỉnh sửa ngày 23 tháng 5 năm 2026; Chấp nhận đăng ngày 24 tháng 8 năm 2026

Tóm tắt: Năng lực hồi phục học thuật ngày càng thu hút sự quan tâm trong lĩnh vực giáo dục ngôn ngữ thứ hai (L2), trong bối cảnh người học phải đối mặt với áp lực học tập gia tăng và môi trường học tập ngày càng phức tạp đòi hỏi khả năng thích ứng bền bỉ. Tuy nhiên, các công cụ đo lường hiện có vẫn còn đa dạng về mặt khái niệm và không đồng đều về chất lượng. Bài tổng quan này tổng hợp các thang đo năng lực hồi phục học thuật trong bối cảnh ngôn ngữ thứ hai và đề xuất một khung ra quyết định nhằm hỗ trợ lựa chọn công cụ đo lường trong nghiên cứu EFL. Dựa trên bốn câu hỏi nghiên cứu, bài viết trước hết xác định năm thang đo chính được sử dụng trong bối cảnh EFL ở bậc phổ thông và đại học. Phân tích so sánh nền tảng lý thuyết của các thang đo này cho thấy ba hướng tiếp cận nổi bật: (1) năng lực cá nhân mang tính bền vững, (2) quá trình thích ứng mang tính động, và (3) tương tác sinh thái giữa người học và môi trường. Đánh giá bằng chứng tâm trắc học cho thấy sự khác biệt đáng kể về độ tin cậy, giá trị đo lường và mức độ minh bạch trong quy trình phát triển thang đo; một số thang đo có độ phù hợp mô hình tốt và cơ sở lý thuyết vững chắc, trong khi các thang khác còn hạn chế về phương pháp. Bối cảnh áp dụng cũng được xem xét, nhấn mạnh ảnh hưởng của trình độ ngôn ngữ, văn hoá giáo dục và điều kiện dạy học đến mức độ phù hợp của từng thang đo trong các hệ sinh thái EFL khác nhau. Trên cơ sở đó, bài viết đề xuất một khung ra quyết định gồm bốn cấp độ nhằm giúp nhà nghiên cứu lựa chọn công cụ đo lường phù hợp về mặt lý thuyết, bối cảnh, độ tin cậy đo lường và tính khả thi triển khai. Bài tổng quan kết luận bằng lời kêu gọi tăng cường nghiên cứu đối sánh liên văn hoá, thiết kế nghiên cứu theo chiều dọc, và phát triển thêm các thang đo năng lực hồi phục trong những bối cảnh ngôn ngữ thứ hai chưa được nghiên cứu đầy đủ.

Từ khóa: năng lực hồi phục học thuật, người học tiếng Anh như một ngoại ngữ, thang đo, đánh giá tâm lý học đo lường, khung ra quyết định

1. Introduction

Academic resilience (AR) is broadly defined as learners' capacity and tendency to withstand, adapt to, and recover from academic challenges, stressors, or setbacks, reflected in both relatively stable personal characteristics and dynamic processes of positive adjustment that support effective learning and performance (Luthar et al., 2000; Mansfield et al., 2016; Martin & Marsh, 2006). This dual nature aligns with broader resilience theory, which views resilience as involving both individual attributes and context-dependent adaptive processes (Masten, 2014; Ungar, 2006).

In the context of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) education, AR assumes additional importance. Learning a foreign language involves cognitive, affective, and social challenges, including language anxiety, demotivation, and frequent setbacks, which can hinder

learners' progress and persistence (Wicaksono et al., 2023). Empirical studies show that resilient EFL learners are better able to maintain motivation, cope with challenges, and engage in sustained language learning despite limited opportunities for authentic language use or immediate feedback (Bui & Duong, 2026; Chu et al., 2024; Trinh et al., 2025).

In Vietnam, the role of AR may be particularly significant due to contextual and cultural factors. First, EFL instruction in Vietnamese schools and universities is predominantly formal, grammar-focused, and exam-driven, offering limited authentic language practice (Phuong et al., 2025; Vu & Peters, 2021). Second, cultural norms and hierarchical teacher-student relationships encourage students to maintain "face" and harmony, often making them hesitant to openly discuss difficulties or seek support from teachers (Dang & Norris, 2024; Nguyen & Khau, 2022). Third, top-down educational policies frequently marginalize learners' perspectives, leaving them to navigate challenges largely independently (Ngo & Tran, 2023). In such a context, fostering and measuring learners' resilience is critical to supporting their engagement, self-regulation, and academic persistence. Lately, recent governmental directives and national language education reforms outline plan to introduce English as a Second Language in Vietnam (Government of Vietnam, 2025), heightening societal expectations and intensifying the academic demands placed on learners.

Despite the proliferation of AR scales internationally, the field faces persistent challenges regarding conceptual diversity and theoretical inconsistency across instruments. Existing scales draw on different assumptions about whether AR is a trait, a process, or an interactional capacity, resulting in varied operationalizations and factor structures. Moreover, the abundance of available scales makes it difficult for researchers to justify which instrument is most appropriate for specific cultural and educational contexts, including Vietnam. To address this issue, the present study conducts a critical review of AR scales used in EFL contexts between 2015 and 2025, examining their conceptual foundations, theoretical orientations, measurement structures, and adaptability to the Vietnamese context. Specifically, the study seeks to answer the following research questions:

RQ1. Which academic resilience scales are currently used in EFL contexts?

RQ2. How valid and reliable are these scales?

RQ3. To what extent are they relevant or adaptable to the Vietnamese EFL context?

RQ4. What conceptual and practical criteria can be synthesized to develop a decision-making framework for selecting appropriate academic resilience scales in EFL contexts?

By critically evaluating existing measures and synthesizing their conceptual, psychometric, and contextual strengths and limitations, this study potentially provides an evidence-informed basis for selecting, adapting, and validating AR scales for Vietnamese EFL learners. More broadly, the proposed decision-making framework offers practical guidance not only for researchers, but also for language educators, assessment developers, and educational institutions seeking to identify contextually appropriate measures, interpret resilience data more meaningfully, and use such evidence to inform learner support and pedagogical interventions. In doing so, the study contributes to more theoretically coherent, culturally responsive, and methodologically rigorous measurement of academic resilience in Vietnamese and comparable EFL contexts.

2. Literature Review

AR has long been an important construct in educational and developmental psychology, with early approaches placing considerable emphasis on the personal attributes and protective

factors that enable individuals to function successfully despite adversity (Garmezy, 1985; Luthar et al., 2000). Within educational research, this individual-focused perspective was reflected in conceptualizations of AR that emphasized learners' cognitive, emotional, and motivational resources, including self-efficacy, control, planning, emotional regulation, and persistence, as important predictors of their capacity to overcome academic setbacks and sustain positive educational outcomes (Martin & Marsh, 2006; Shin et al., 2009). From this perspective, resilience was understood primarily in terms of learner-level resources, although subsequent scholarship increasingly challenged purely individualistic interpretations and emphasized resilience as a dynamic process shaped by interactions between individuals and their environments (Luthar et al., 2000; Masten, 2014).

Over time, the conceptualization of AR has shifted toward a dynamic, process-oriented perspective, emphasizing its context-dependent and malleable nature (Luthar et al., 2000; Masten, 2014; Cassidy, 2016). This perspective highlights that AR is not solely an inherent trait but can develop through experiences, social interactions, and supportive learning environments (Luthar et al., 2000; Masten, 2014). A process-oriented view acknowledges the interplay between personal, relational, and contextual factors, recognizing that students' ability to adapt, regulate motivation, and maintain engagement evolves in response to changing academic challenges (Cassidy, 2016; Luthar et al., 2000; Masten, 2014). This reconceptualization has important implications for both research and practice, particularly regarding the measurement and development of AR in diverse educational contexts (Cassidy, 2016).

In addition to the trait-based and process-oriented perspectives, recent scholarship has increasingly adopted an ecological view of AR, emphasizing the multilayered interaction between learners and their surrounding systems (Masten, 2014; Sadownik, 2023). Drawing on Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological systems theory and subsequent applications in educational resilience research, this perspective posits that AR emerges from the dynamic interplay of individual factors (e.g., motivation, self-regulation), immediate social environments (e.g., teachers, peers, family), and broader institutional and sociocultural structures (e.g., school climate, educational policies, cultural expectations) (Ungar, 2012). From this standpoint, resilience is co-constructed through access to protective resources and opportunities for positive adaptation rather than residing solely within the learner.

Corresponding to these conceptual developments, several foundational scales of AR have been developed. The AR scale by Martin and Marsh (2006) operationalized AR as a multidimensional construct, capturing cognitive, affective, and motivational components contributing to students' persistence. Similarly, Cassidy's (2016) scale emphasized both protective factors and adaptive responses, reflecting a more process-oriented understanding of AR. These instruments provide essential tools for assessing AR in general educational contexts and represent robust foundations for subsequent research.

Building on these foundations, EFL researchers have developed context-specific AR scales that align with the unique challenges of language learning. Ecological approaches highlight how language learning resilience is shaped by culturally situated expectations, teacher–student relationships, classroom affordances, and broader societal discourses surrounding English learning (Kim & Kim, 2016; Guo & Li, 2022). As a result, several specialized instruments have emerged - for example, Kim and Kim's (2016) L2 resilience scale for Korean secondary learners, Guo and Li's (2022) multidimensional scale for Chinese EFL students, and more recent adaptations such as Sriwichai's (2025) English Learning Resilience Scale. While each of these scales reflects valuable theoretical and contextual insights, their

diverse conceptual foundations, factor structures, and measurement assumptions create substantial challenges for researchers seeking to select a scale that is theoretically coherent and culturally appropriate for Vietnamese EFL contexts.

3. Methodology

3.1. Review Design

This study adopts a critical review design to evaluate existing AR scales used in EFL contexts and to assess their conceptual foundations, psychometric rigor, and contextual relevance for Vietnamese learners. A critical review offers a flexible yet analytical framework that allows researchers to interrogate underlying assumptions, theories, and methodological strengths and weaknesses, rather than merely summarizing previous work (Paré et al., 2015). Such evaluative depth is necessary for examining measurement tools that vary widely in construct definitions, validation procedures, and cultural adaptability. A systematic review, while characterized by protocol-driven search procedures, exhaustive coverage, and replicable reporting standards (Petticrew & Roberts, 2006), is not selected because the aim of this study is not to aggregate empirical findings but to critically appraise the conceptual and methodological robustness of existing AR scales. Likewise, a narrative review does not provide the level of analytical scrutiny required to compare theoretical models, measurement structures, and cross-cultural applicability (Snyder, 2019). Given these aims, the critical review approach is the most appropriate method, allowing for interpretive synthesis, theory–measurement alignment, and context-sensitive evaluation of scale relevance in the Vietnamese EFL setting.

3.2. Scope and Timeframe

The scope of this review is delineated to ensure a focused and coherent evaluation of AR scales used within EFL contexts. Topically, the review centers on measurement instruments explicitly designed, validated, adapted, or employed to assess AR among EFL learners. Studies that develop or validate general psychological resilience scales without an EFL orientation are excluded to maintain construct relevance.

The population scope includes EFL learners across educational levels and geographical regions, reflecting the global diversity of English-learning environments. This broad population frame allows for a comprehensive examination of how AR constructs have been operationalized across varied EFL settings. Conceptually, the review focuses on key dimensions relevant to a critical appraisal of measurement tools: theoretical grounding, construct definition, item domains, factor structure, reliability evidence, validity evidence, and cultural or linguistic adaptability. Particular emphasis is placed on evaluating the contextual suitability of these scales for potential application in Vietnamese EFL settings.

Regarding document types, the review includes four categories of empirical studies: (1) scale development papers, (2) validation studies, (3) adapted or translated versions of AR scales within EFL contexts, and (4) EFL-specific empirical studies that apply AR scales as outcome or predictor variables. Conceptual discussions without an accompanying instrument and clinical or psychology-only resilience measures are excluded. Additionally, gray literature, including unpublished theses, institutional reports, and non-peer-reviewed conference papers, is omitted to ensure that all included sources meet consistent standards of methodological rigor, peer review, and psychometric transparency. This set of inclusion and exclusion boundaries was designed to enhance the overall quality, interpretability, and contextual relevance of the review's findings. The timeframe covers publications from 2015 to 2025, capturing a decade of intensified research

activity on AR and its measurement in second language learning contexts. Only peer-reviewed studies published in English are considered to ensure quality and consistency.

3.3. Data Sources and Search Strategy

The search strategy was designed to ensure a comprehensive and transparent identification of studies examining AR scales in EFL contexts. Four major academic databases were consulted, including Scopus, Web of Science, ERIC, and PsycINFO. These databases were selected as they collectively covered research in applied linguistics, education, and psychological measurement. Google Scholar was used as a supplementary source to capture additional relevant or recently indexed studies. To enhance coverage, backward reference searching of included articles and forward citation tracking (via Google Scholar's "Cited by" function) were conducted. Manual searches were also performed in key journals in language education and educational psychology to ensure that no relevant measurement studies were missed. Search strings combined terms related to the construct (e.g., "academic resilience," "resilience"), the context ("EFL," "English as a foreign language," "second language learning"), and measurement terminology ("scale," "instrument," "questionnaire," "validation") using Boolean operators (AND/OR). Searches were limited to peer-reviewed studies published in English between 2015 and 2025. These criteria were chosen to guarantee that only studies offering solid methodological quality and contemporary conceptual value were included in the review.

Screening proceeded in three stages: removal of duplicates, title and abstract screening, and full-text assessment. Inclusion and exclusion criteria were applied consistently to determine eligibility. To ensure search reliability, all database searches were repeated at two-week intervals to verify completeness and detect newly indexed records. The final selection comprised studies representing four categories: scale development, validation, adaptation/translation, and empirical EFL studies employing AR scales.

3.4. Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

Table 1 presents a consolidated summary of the inclusion and exclusion criteria that guided study selection in this review, ensuring consistency, transparency, and methodological rigor.

Table 1

Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria of the Review

Category	Inclusion Criteria	Exclusion Criteria
Population	EFL learners across educational levels (school, university, adult learners)	Clinical populations; general psychology samples; non-English L2 learners; bilingual/immersion contexts unrelated to EFL
Construct	Studies examining AR as a measurable construct	Studies on general/psychological resilience without an AR component; wellbeing-only constructs; conceptual AR papers without measurement
Study Type	(a) Scale development studies; (b) Validation studies; (c) Adapted/translated AR scales; (d) Empirical EFL studies using AR scales	Conceptual/theoretical papers; reviews; measurement-free studies; mixed-construct scales without a distinct AR dimension; clinical-only scales
Measurement Requirements	Must report a specific AR scale; Includes some psychometric	No instrument provided; No psychometric evidence; Ambiguous or undeveloped

	results (reliability, validity, factor structure); Clear theoretical or conceptual grounding	measurement tools
Publication Type	Peer-reviewed journal articles; Published in English	Dissertations, theses, conference papers without peer review, institutional reports, gray literature
Timeframe	2015–2025	Studies published before 2015
Context	EFL or second-language learning settings involving English	ESL immigrant contexts (if EFL-only scope); multilingual education unrelated to English; general education unrelated to language learning

3.5. Data Extraction and Analysis

Data from the included sources were charted using a structured and pre-calibrated data extraction form developed specifically for this review. To ensure clarity and applicability, the form was pilot-tested on five peer-reviewed studies from related domains in education and psychology that utilize multi-dimensional self-report instruments. These studies were selected because they encompass a range of learner-related constructs (e.g., motivation, affective factors, dispositions), enabling evaluation of the form's comprehensiveness and flexibility. Minor refinements were made following pilot testing to enhance clarity and alignment with the review's objectives.

The extraction process captured key information regarding publication details, instrument characteristics (purpose, target population, theoretical foundation, number of items and dimensions), psychometric evidence (reliability, validity, factor structure), and indicators of cross-cultural or contextual applicability. To ensure systematic organization and comparability, all extracted data were managed using Microsoft Excel. A narrative synthesis was subsequently conducted to interpret the charted data, with the analysis structured around thematic dimensions such as conceptual grounding, measurement structure, psychometric rigor, and contextual relevance. This analytical approach enables a critical appraisal of the suitability, strengths, and limitations of each AR scale, offering guidance for researchers and practitioners seeking to select or adapt instruments for EFL contexts, including Vietnam.

3.6. Quality Appraisal

To enhance the methodological rigor and credibility of the review, a quality appraisal process was conducted for all included studies. Rather than applying a rigid scoring system, the appraisal adopted a criteria-based evaluative approach consistent with critical review methodology (Paré et al., 2015; Snyder, 2019), allowing the studies to be assessed in relation to their conceptual clarity, methodological transparency, and psychometric robustness.

The appraisal focused on four major dimensions. First, conceptual quality was examined by evaluating whether the studies clearly defined academic resilience and articulated an explicit theoretical foundation guiding scale development or adaptation. Second, methodological quality was assessed through consideration of sample adequacy, participant description, scale development procedures, and the transparency of data collection and analytical methods. Third, psychometric quality was evaluated based on reported reliability indices (e.g., Cronbach's alpha, composite reliability), construct validity evidence (e.g., exploratory factor analysis (EFA), confirmatory factor analysis (CFA), average variance extracted (AVE), and discriminant validity), and model fit indicators where available. Finally, contextual quality was considered by examining the extent to which the scales demonstrated cultural or contextual appropriateness for EFL learning environments.

Each included study was reviewed independently against these dimensions, and the

appraisal findings were incorporated narratively into the comparative analysis rather than used to exclude studies. This approach aligns with the interpretive and evaluative nature of critical reviews, which prioritize analytical synthesis over quantitative aggregation. The quality appraisal process therefore strengthened the trustworthiness of the review by ensuring that interpretations and recommendations were grounded not only in the presence of resilience scales but also in the methodological rigor and contextual relevance of the supporting studies.

4. Results

To improve transparency and facilitate verification of the reviewed literature, a systematic summary table is included to present the key characteristics of all included studies. The table synthesizes essential information, including author(s), publication year, country/context, participant characteristics, sample size, instrument type, theoretical foundation, dimensions of academic resilience, and major psychometric evidence (e.g., reliability and validity indicators). This structured overview enables clearer cross-study comparison and enhances the traceability and interpretability of the review findings.

Table 2

Summary of Included Studies on Academic Resilience Scales in EFL Contexts

Author(s)	Context/ Country	Participants	Sample Size	Scale	Dimensions	Reliability	Validity Evidence
Kim & Kim (2016)	Korea	Secondary EFL learners	1,620	Korean L2 Learner Resilience Scale	5	α = .652–.858	CFA fit indices reported
Guo & Li (2022)	China	University EFL learners	313	FLLRS	3	α = .81–.93	EFA, CFA, AVE
Duan et al. (2024)	China	Secondary EFL learners	1,653	SARLLS	4	CR > .70	CFA, invariance
Hedeshi & Ghanizadeh (2025)	Iran	University EFL learners	321	LRS	3	α = .88–.93	CFA, criterion validity
Sriwichai (2025)	Thailand	ESP learners	300	ELRS	7	α ≈ .90	CFA, SEM

Which academic resilience scales are currently used in EFL contexts? (RQ1)

A total of five scales measuring L2/English learning resilience are identified in this review (as shown in Table 2). These instruments met the inclusion criteria of being specifically developed or validated for L2 learners and published in peer-reviewed sources. The scales are presented in chronological order of publication to illustrate how research on L2 AR has evolved over time:

1. Korean L2 Learner Resilience Scale (Kim & Kim, 2016)
2. Chinese Foreign Language Learning Resilience Scale (Guo & Li, 2022)
3. Chinese Academic Resilience in English Learning Scale (Duan et al., 2024)
4. Iranian L2 Resilience Scale (Hedeshi & Ghanizadeh, 2025)
5. Thailand English Learning Resilience Scale (Sriwichai, 2025)

The following subsection provides a concise synthesis of the dimensions underlying each scale, outlining how resilience was conceptualized and operationalized by the respective authors. For each instrument, key information is summarized, including the original learner population, the instructional context, the factor structure, and core psychometric properties

(e.g., reliability and validity evidence). This overview offers a clear comparative foundation for evaluating the theoretical coherence, measurement rigor, and contextual suitability of existing L2/English learning resilience instruments, particularly regarding their adaptability to Vietnamese EFL settings.

4.1. Korean L2 Learner Resilience Scale by Kim and Kim (2016)

Kim and Kim (2016) investigated resilience as an individual difference factor that supported L2 learners in overcoming challenges and sustaining motivated learning behavior. The study surveyed 1,620 Korean secondary school students using a questionnaire adapted from Shin et al. (2009), grounded in resilience theory from developmental and educational psychology (e.g., Reivich & Shatté, 2002; Masten, 2001).

EFA identified five dimensions of resilience: (1) Perceived Happiness (i.e., life satisfaction and positive self-perception); (2) Empathy (i.e., understanding others' emotions); (3) Sociability (i.e., quality of social relations and acceptance); (4) Persistence (i.e., maintaining effort in the face of difficulty); and (5) Self-Regulation (i.e., managing emotions and impulses in academic stress). CFA validated the five-factor model with excellent fit indices (CMIN/DF = 2.557; CFI = 0.973; GFI = 0.976; AGFI = 0.964; RMSEA = 0.037; SRMR = 0.038). Reliability was acceptable, with Cronbach's alpha values ranging from .652 to .858 across factors. Factors were subsequently refined to three items each for CFA, maintaining adequate internal consistency.

4.2. Chinese Foreign Language Learning Resilience Scale by Guo and Li (2022)

The Foreign Language Learning Resilience Scale (FLLRS) was developed to measure resilience specifically among Chinese university EFL learners, focusing on how students cope with learning difficulties, emotional setbacks, low confidence, and the mobilization of cognitive and social resources (Guo & Li, 2022). The scale was administered to 420 undergraduates from four "Double First-Class" universities, with 313 valid responses retained.

FLLRS comprises three dimensions: (1) Ego Resilience (i.e., personal attributes such as perseverance, adaptability, curiosity, and emotional recovery); (2) Metacognitive Resilience (i.e., strategic behaviors including planning, goal setting, self-monitoring, help-seeking, and self-control in response to learning adversity); (3) Social Resilience (i.e., the tendency to seek and receive support from peers, teachers, and family). EFA supported the three-factor solution, explaining 64.99% variance (KMO = 0.925; Bartlett's test $p < .001$), CFA confirmed good model fit. Internal consistency was high across subscales ($\alpha = 0.81–0.93$; total $\alpha = 0.94$), with composite reliability exceeding 0.70. Convergent validity (AVE > threshold) and discriminant validity (square roots of AVE > inter-factor correlations) were satisfactory. Structural modeling showed that all three dimensions significantly predicted overall FL learning resilience, with metacognitive resilience having the strongest effect.

4.3. Chinese Academic Resilience in English Learning Scale by Duan et al. (2024)

The Student AR in Language Learning Scale (SARLLS) was developed to measure AR specifically among Chinese secondary school EFL learners, capturing students' capacity to cope with academic pressure, emotional setbacks, and classroom-related difficulties, while considering social support from family, peers, and teachers (Duan et al., 2024). The scale was administered to 1,653 junior and senior high school students, making it one of the largest empirical studies on EFL-related AR in China.

SARLLS comprises four dimensions: (1) Positive Individual Characteristics (i.e., self-

confidence, optimism, adaptability, and perseverance); (2) Family Support (i.e., emotional, practical, and motivational support from parents/guardians); (3) Teacher Support (i.e., guidance, encouragement, and instructional responsiveness); (4) Peer Support (i.e., cooperation, strategy sharing, and emotional encouragement from classmates). Psychometric analyses confirmed the scale's robustness. EFA and CFA supported the four-factor structure with strong model fit (χ^2/df, RMSEA, CFI, GFI, AGFI, SRMR all within recommended thresholds). Composite reliability exceeded 0.70 for all subscales. Convergent validity (AVE > 0.50) and discriminant validity (square roots of AVE > inter-factor correlations) were satisfactory. Multi-group analyses demonstrated measurement invariance across gender and age groups, confirming consistent scale functioning across demographic categories.

4.4. Iranian L2 Resilience Scale by Hedeshi and Ghanizadeh (2025)

The L2 Resilience Scale (LRS) was developed to assess AR among Iranian EFL learners, focusing on how students cope with challenges in second-language learning (Hedeshi & Ghanizadeh, 2025). The scale was constructed using a mixed-methods design, beginning with a qualitative phase involving interviews, open-ended responses, and researcher journals from 29 learners. Analysis of these data identified three core dimensions: (1) Personal Resilience (i.e., self-efficacy, persistence, confidence, and emotional management); (2) Metacognitive Resilience (i.e., goal setting, self-assessment, emotion regulation, positive reframing, and strategy-seeking); (3) Contextual Resilience (i.e., peer support, teacher rapport, and interpersonal resources). These dimensions reflect a process-oriented, ecological framework, highlighting the interaction between learners' psychological resources and the social–instructional environment. A 21-item questionnaire based on the qualitative model was administered to 321 Iranian EFL learners (aged 18–34). CFA supported the three-factor structure with good model fit (χ^2/df = 2.01; RMSEA = 0.06; CFI = 0.90; NFI = 0.91; GFI = 0.91), and all items showed significant loadings (>0.30). Internal consistency was high across subscales (α = 0.88–0.93; total α = 0.91). Convergent validity was confirmed by strong correlations between each subscale and the total LRS score (0.88–0.91), while criterion-related validity was demonstrated via structural modelling: L2 resilience significantly predicted L2 buoyancy (β = 0.62) and language achievement (β = 0.39).

4.5. Thailand English Learning Resilience Scale by Sriwichai (2025)

The English Language Resilience Scale (ELRS) was developed to assess AR in English learning among Thai EFL learners (Sriwichai, 2025). Initially validated with 150 second-year undergraduates, it was subsequently administered to 300 ESP students. The scale captures learners' capacity to cope with English-learning challenges, including language difficulties, exam stress, and environmental support from peers and instructors. ELRS comprises seven subscales: (1) Planning (i.e., organizing and managing learning); (2) Self-Control (i.e., regulating emotions and behaviors); (3) Persistence and Continuity (i.e., maintaining effort despite challenges); (4) Growth Mindset (i.e., belief in improvement through effort); (5) Flexibility (i.e., adapting learning strategies); (6) Sociability (i.e., seeking and maintaining social support); (7) English Learning Resilience (i.e., encompassing all sub-dimensions).

CFA supported the seven-factor structure with acceptable model fit. Internal consistency was high across subscales (e.g., α = 0.90 for Planning). Convergent validity was demonstrated through significant inter-factor correlations, while predictive validity was supported via SEM, showing that subscales significantly predicted overall English learning resilience, which in turn predicted achievement in ESP courses. The sample size (N = 300)

provided a robust basis for psychometric analyses. Table 3 below provides a comparative overview of the five identified EFL academic resilience scales in terms of their original contexts, dimensions, conceptualizations of resilience, and theoretical foundations.

Table 3

A Comparative Overview of EFL Academic Resilience Scales

Author (s) & Year	Original Context	Dimensions & N of Items	Nature of Resilience	Theoretical Foundation
Kim and Kim (2016)	Secondary school learners of English in Korea	5 dimensions: **Perceived Happiness, Empathy, Sociability, Persistence, and Self-Regulation** 15 items (5-point Likert)	Trait-like factor (serves as an individual difference factor)	Conceptualization was based on Shin et al. (2009), who drew on: **1. Resilience skills theory** (Reivich & Shatté, 2002) **2. Life satisfaction / Positive psychology** (Diener et al., 1985; Seligman, 2002) **3. Communication competence** (Duran, 1983; Wiemann, 1977)
Guo and Li (2022)	EFL college students in China	3 dimensions: **Ego Resilience; Metacognitive Resilience; Social Resilience** 19 items (6-point Likert)	Process-oriented factor (involves positive adaptation and strategy use when facing adversity)	Conceptualization was based on: **1. Stress and Coping theory** (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984) **2. Ego resilience theory** (Block & Kremen, 1996; Connor & Davidson, 2003; Wagnild & Young, 1993) **3. Cognitive/Academic resilience** (Cassidy, 2016; Van Der Meer et al., 2018) **4. Social resilience theory** (Friborg et al., 2003; Ungar, 2006)
Duan et al. (2024)	High school EFL learners in China	4 dimensions: **Positive Individual Characteristics; Teacher Support; Peer Support; Family Support** 21 items (6-point Likert)	Ecological, process-oriented factor (resilience as the outcome of interactions between personal and contextual protective factors)	Conceptualization was based on Lereya et al. (2016), drawing on: **1. Core theoretical definition**: Maintenance of positive adjustment despite adversity (Luthar et al., 2000) **2. Protective factors framework** (Garmezy, 1985; Luthar, 2015) **3. Instruments informing item construction** (Lereya et al., 2016) **4. Perceptions of peer support scale** (Ladd et al., 1996)
Hedeshi and Ghanizadeh (2025)	EFL undergraduate in Iran	3 dimensions: **Personal, Metacognitive, Contextual resilience** 21 items (7-point	Process-oriented (involves the dynamic interaction of internal and external factors when facing L2	Conceptualization was derived from qualitative data. Authors **did not specify** theoretical grounding for interview question design.

		Likert)	learning difficulties)	
Sriwichai (2025)	undergraduate EFL learners; ESP courses in Thailand	7 dimensions: **Planning; Self-control, Persistence & continuity, Growth mindset, Flexibility, Sociability, English learning resilience** 30 items (7-point Likert)	Trait-like factor (multidimensional personal qualities related to coping in English learning)	Conceptualization was based on: **1. Academic resilience theory** (Cassidy, 2016; Martin & Marsh, 2006) **2. EFL-specific resilience scales** (Guo & Li, 2022; Kim & Kim, 2016; Zarrinabadi et al., 2022) **3. General resilience traits framework** (Danes, 2014)

5. Discussion

5.1. How valid and reliable are these scales? (RQ2)

To address RQ2, this section critically evaluates the psychometric rigor of the identified scales, focusing on their dimensional structures, reliability indices, and reported validity evidence. All five identified scales demonstrate robust psychometric properties, including multidimensional factor structures, good model fit in confirmatory factor analyses, and generally high internal consistency. Nevertheless, careful comparison reveals several noteworthy observations. Firstly, the number and focus of dimensions vary across scales. Kim and Kim (2016) and Duan et al. (2024) incorporate social-interpersonal components such as empathy, sociability, and peer or teacher support, whereas Guo and Li (2022) emphasize cognitive and metacognitive strategies. Sriwichai (2025) additionally integrates growth mindset and flexibility, reflecting a motivational-cognitive dimension. Consequently, the scales differ in conceptual emphasis and are not fully comparable in terms of dimensionality, ranging from three to seven factors. Secondly, while internal consistency is generally strong (Cronbach's $\alpha > 0.80$), lower reliability was observed for Kim and Kim's (2016) Persistence ($\alpha = 0.652$) and Self-Regulation ($\alpha = 0.655$) subscales, suggesting that these factors may benefit from further item refinement. Thirdly, evidence of convergent and discriminant validity is robust in most studies (Guo & Li, 2022; Duan et al., 2024; Hedeshi & Ghanizadeh, 2025; Sriwichai, 2025), with average variance extracted (AVE) and inter-factor correlations supporting construct distinctiveness. In contrast, Kim and Kim (2016) did not report AVE or formal discriminant validity indices, limiting direct comparison of construct validity with the other scales. Fourthly, sample size considerations affect generalizability. Duan et al. (2024) and Kim and Kim (2016) surveyed over 1,600 participants, providing a strong empirical basis for cross-group analyses, whereas Guo and Li (2022) and Sriwichai (2025) employed moderate samples (N = 300–420), which are adequate for CFA but may constrain generalizability. Hedeshi and Ghanizadeh (2025) combined qualitative-driven scale development with CFA on N = 321, offering methodological rigor while highlighting the importance of contextual validation in the Iranian EFL context. Finally, all scales adopt a process-oriented perspective of resilience yet differ in emphasis. These conceptual variations, along with differences in factor number and psychometric reporting, underscore both the robustness of these instruments and the need for careful interpretation when comparing resilience across EFL contexts.

In addition to psychometric variability, several scales also exhibit structural and item-level limitations that warrant closer consideration. First, some dimensions appear conceptually overlapping. For example, the distinction between Persistence, Self-Regulation, and Growth

Mindset across several instruments is not always theoretically clear, potentially creating construct redundancy and inflating inter-factor correlations. Second, certain scales rely heavily on positively worded self-report items, which may increase the risk of social desirability bias, particularly in collectivist educational cultures where students tend to present themselves as diligent and compliant learners (Nurumov et al., 2022). Third, several instruments contain broad or abstract items (e.g., items related to "happiness," "adaptability," or "positive thinking") that may lack contextual specificity to actual language-learning adversity, thereby limiting ecological validity in EFL settings (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Ungar, 2012). Fourth, some dimensions are represented by only a small number of items following factor reduction procedures, as observed in Kim and Kim (2016), which may constrain content coverage and weaken construct stability (Worthington & Whittaker, 2006). Finally, while social support dimensions are commonly included, the operationalization of contextual adversity itself remains relatively underdeveloped across existing scales, with limited attention given to digital learning stress, test-driven pressure, fear of losing face, or institutional language requirements that characterize many contemporary Asian EFL contexts.

Collectively, these observations suggest that while existing L2/EFL resilience scales offer strong measurement foundations, variability in conceptualization and psychometric reporting necessitates careful selection and context-sensitive adaptation, particularly for contexts such as Vietnam.

5.2. To what extent are they relevant or adaptable to the Vietnamese EFL context? (RQ3)

The extent to which existing L2/EFL AR scales are applicable to the Vietnamese context depends on their conceptual alignment, contextual compatibility, and practical adaptability. A comparison across the five identified instruments reveals that while each scale offers valuable insights, none fully captures the sociocultural and pedagogical realities of Vietnamese EFL learners. First and foremost, conceptual fit varies considerably across scales. Although all instruments adopt a process-oriented perspective of resilience, their emphases differ. Kim and Kim (2016) and Duan et al. (2024) highlight socio-emotional and interpersonal dimensions such as empathy, sociability, and teacher/peer support, factors that strongly influence learning in collectivist Asian settings and thus hold potential relevance for Vietnam. In contrast, Guo and Li (2022) conceptualize resilience primarily in cognitive-metacognitive terms (e.g., planning, strategy use, monitoring), aligning with the strategy-heavy, exam-driven learning behaviors commonly observed among Vietnamese students. Sriwichai (2025) integrates motivational constructs such as growth mindset and flexibility, which may be valuable given growing expectations for learner autonomy in Vietnamese HEIs (Duong & Nguyen, 2022). These variations underscore that the conceptual underpinnings of resilience differ across contexts, and no single scale fully reflects the multifaceted nature of resilience in Vietnam. Secondly, contextual fit is uneven. Korean and Chinese scales originate from contexts with strong high-stakes examinations, teacher-centered pedagogies, and Confucian heritage culture, conditions broadly similar to Vietnam. This suggests moderate cross-contextual transferability. However, sociocultural nuances matter: the degree of classroom hierarchy, willingness to seek help, and expectations for conformity differ subtly, which may influence item interpretation. Iranian and Thai scales were shaped by local sociopolitical or educational structures that diverge more sharply from the Vietnamese context, limiting direct applicability without cultural adaptation. Thirdly, linguistic and pedagogical relevance raises additional concerns. Many items in existing scales assume learning environments with higher learner autonomy, greater interactional opportunities, or communicative classroom practices, conditions not always typical in Vietnam's grammar-focused, exam-oriented EFL system (Le & Huynh, 2019). Examples

include items referencing collaborative learning, peer negotiation, or flexible participation, which may not be experienced uniformly by Vietnamese learners. Conversely, key sources of adversity in Vietnam, such as test anxiety, fear of losing face, or pressure from institutional English requirements, are not fully represented in existing instruments. Fourthly, the degree of practical adaptability varies. Scales with clearer, culturally neutral wording (e.g., Guo & Li, 2022; Sriwichai, 2025) may be easier to translate and validate. Meanwhile, instruments containing culturally embedded constructs or weaker subscale reliabilities (e.g., the Persistence and Self-Regulation factors in Kim & Kim, 2016) may require item refinement before use in Vietnam. Differences in scale length and factor complexity also influence suitability for classroom or large-scale testing contexts. Finally, at the ecological and policy levels, Vietnamese learners are increasingly exposed to hybrid EFL–ESL learning ecologies due to digital immersion, internationalization policies, and government directives promoting English for communication and integration (The Government of Vietnam, 2025). Technology-mediated learning environments have also created opportunities for Vietnamese EFL learners to exercise greater autonomy, self-regulation, and self-assessment beyond conventional classroom practices (Duong & Nguyen, 2022). Existing scales, largely developed in traditional EFL contexts, rarely capture these emerging realities, particularly learners' resilience across formal, informal, and digital learning spaces.

Taken together, these observations show that while current L2 resilience scales provide important foundations, their applicability to Vietnam is partial and uneven. Each instrument offers relevant components, yet none fully captures the culturally situated, exam-oriented, and increasingly hybrid nature of English learning in Vietnam. This highlights the need for a structured, context-sensitive framework to guide scale selection and adaptation. Accordingly, the next section proposes a Decision-Making Framework for Selecting L2 Resilience Scales tailored to the Vietnamese EFL context.

5.3. What conceptual and practical criteria can be synthesized to develop a decision-making framework? (RQ4)

Drawing on the comparative analysis of five existing L2 AR scales, a decision-making framework is proposed to guide future researchers in EFL contexts in selecting an instrument that is theoretically aligned, contextually appropriate, and methodologically sound (Figure 1 below). The framework integrates conceptual, empirical, and practical considerations and consists of four sequential decision levels.

5.3.1. Level 1: Establish theoretical alignment

The first step in selecting an appropriate resilience scale is to determine which conceptualization of AR aligns most closely with the researcher's aims. The guiding question at this stage is: Which theoretical lens best represents the phenomenon I want to explain or predict? For studies seeking to examine relatively stable personal attributes that enable learners to cope with academic challenges, a trait-like conceptualization is most suitable. Scales developed by Kim and Kim (2016) and Sriwichai (2025) exemplify this perspective, capturing enduring qualities such as persistence, sociability, or growth mindset. If the research objective centers on understanding dynamic adaptive processes, including coping strategies, self-regulation, or behavioral adjustments, then a process-oriented conceptualization is more appropriate. Instruments such as those by Guo and Li (2022) or Hedeshi and Ghanizadeh (2025) reflect this view by operationalizing resilience as an evolving set of responses activated during language learning adversity. Finally, for projects that aim to explore how resilience emerges through the interplay of individual factors and contextual conditions, ecological

conceptualization offers the best theoretical fit. This approach, illustrated by Duan et al. (2024), emphasizes the role of teacher support, peer interactions, and family or school environments in shaping learners' capacity for positive adaptation.

5.3.2. Level 2: Evaluate contextual and population fit

After establishing theoretical alignment, researchers must next consider whether the original development context of a given scale is compatible with the characteristics of their own target learner population. This step requires examining how closely the learner profile, schooling culture, and broader EFL ecology of the original studies match the context in which the new research will be conducted, and whether any degree of adaptation may be necessary. In making this decision, the guiding question becomes: Are the learner characteristics, educational environment, and sociocultural conditions of the original scale comparable to those of my target context? One important consideration is the educational level for which the scale was originally designed. Some measures were developed for secondary school learners, such as those in Kim and Kim (2016) or Duan et al. (2024), while others were validated with university populations, as in Guo and Li (2022) and Sriwichai (2025). This distinction affects not only the appropriateness of scale items but also the developmental relevance of the resilience constructs being measured. Another factor is the type of learning context. Scales may originate from environments that emphasize general EFL instruction, English for Specific Purposes (ESP), exam-oriented learning, communicative approaches, or increasingly, digitally mediated learning settings. Researchers therefore need to assess whether the pedagogical priorities and classroom practices of the original context align with their own. The sociocultural compatibility of the scale also plays a role. Many existing resilience measures were developed in collectivist cultural contexts, such as Korea, China, Thailand, or Iran. While these may transfer relatively smoothly to other collectivist EFL settings, adjustments may be necessary when applying them in more individualistic environments where learners' beliefs, behaviors, and motivational structures differ. Finally, researchers must account for the language proficiency range assumed by the scale. Some tools were designed with intermediate to advanced learners in mind, whereas others are more suitable for mixed-ability groups. Ensuring that item difficulty and language load match the target population is essential for valid measurement.

5.3.3. Level 3: Examine psychometric and methodological quality

A further step in the scale-selection process involves evaluating the methodological rigor reported during the development and validation of each measure. This requires examining the extent to which the scale provides robust and transparent evidence of its psychometric quality. The guiding question for researchers at this stage is: Does the scale demonstrate sufficient reliability and validity to support credible interpretation in my study? One of the first considerations is the reliability evidence. Researchers should look for indicators such as Cronbach's alpha, composite reliability, and, when available, test-retest stability. These metrics help determine whether the scale yields consistent and dependable results across time and items. Equally important is the quality of validity reported. This includes content validity, which may be demonstrated through expert review or explicit theory-to-item mapping, as well as construct validity assessed through factor analyses such as CFA or EFA. Some scales also provide criterion-related validity by correlating resilience scores with outcomes like academic achievement or motivational variables. Another methodological aspect concerns the availability of model fit indicators, such as RMSEA, CFI, TLI, and SRMR. These indices are reported in some scale development studies but remain absent in others, making direct comparison challenging and sometimes limiting the interpretability of the underlying factor structure. Finally, researchers need

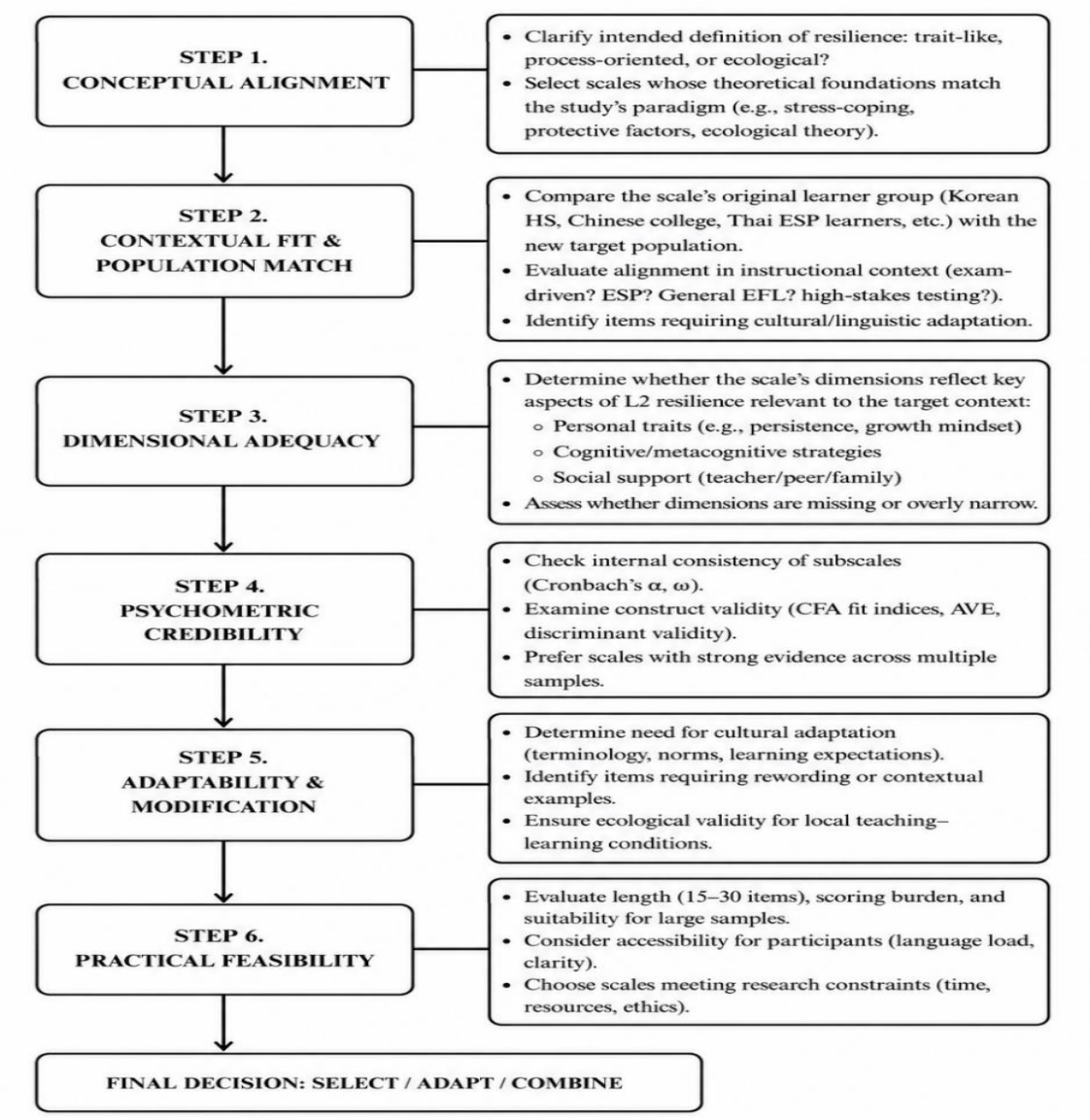
to consider the transparency of the development process. Some scales, like Guo and Li (2022), clearly articulate their theoretical grounding and justify item generation procedures. In contrast, others, such as Hedeshi and Ghanizadeh (2025), provide less explicit conceptual foundations, which may raise concerns about the coherence between theory and measurement.

5.3.4. Level 4: Assess practical usability and adaptation needs

Figure 1 below provides an evidence-informed pathway enabling future researchers in EFL contexts to make principled decisions when selecting AR instruments, ensuring conceptual integrity, contextual relevance, and psychometric adequacy.

Figure 1

A Decision-Making Framework for Selecting L2/English Learning Resilience Scales



Beyond theoretical alignment and methodological rigor, researchers must also assess the practical feasibility of implementing a given scale within their specific research or classroom context. The guiding question at this stage becomes: Is this scale feasible to implement in my context with my resources and learners? A key consideration concerns the

number of items. Shorter instruments, typically ranging from 15 to 19 items, are advantageous when time is limited or when large samples require efficient administration. In contrast, longer scales with 21 to 30 items may provide richer multidimensional profiling but demand more time and cognitive effort from learners. The nature of the Likert scaling used is another practical factor. Different response formats (5-, 6-, or 7-point scales) can influence measurement sensitivity, response distributions, and learners' comfort with expressing nuanced judgments, particularly in EFL contexts. Researchers must also attend to item clarity and linguistic complexity. Some scales include items accessible to lower-proficiency learners, while others are more abstract or discipline-specific, making them suitable for ESP settings or advanced-level students. This dimension directly affects data quality, as misunderstood items can distort the construct being measured. The adaptability of items is an additional concern, particularly when working across sociocultural contexts. Researchers need to judge whether items can be culturally or linguistically adapted without altering the underlying construct or compromising comparability. Finally, administrative constraints must be considered, such as available classroom time, whether anonymity is required, and the feasibility of administering the scale digitally or on paper. These logistical factors may appear minor but often determine whether a scale can be realistically deployed in a given EFL environment.

6. Conclusion

This review systematically examines existing instruments designed to measure AR in L2/EFL learning, addressing four guiding research questions. Initially, the analysis has identified five major resilience scales currently used in EFL contexts, which highlights the growing but still fragmented landscape of L2 AR measurement. Moreover, a comparative synthesis of their conceptual foundations and psychometric properties revealed substantial variation in how resilience is theorized, as a trait, a dynamic process, or an ecological construct, and in the methodological rigor underlying scale development. Thirdly, an evaluation of contextual applicability indicated that while various instruments were developed within Asian EFL settings, their relevance to other educational ecologies depends on factors such as learner proficiency, sociocultural compatibility, and institutional expectations. Finally, drawing on these insights, the review proposed a four-level decision-making framework to guide future researchers in selecting scales that are theoretically aligned, contextually appropriate, psychometrically sound, and practically implementable.

The principal contribution of this review is the proposed decision-making framework, which provides a structured pathway for selecting, adapting, or combining AR measures based on theoretical alignment, contextual fit, psychometric quality, and practical feasibility. Beyond supporting researchers, the framework may assist language educators, assessment developers, and educational institutions in selecting appropriate measures and using resilience data to inform learner support and pedagogical decisions. Nevertheless, as a critical rather than systematic review, the study does not claim exhaustive coverage, and its focus on English-language, peer-reviewed studies published between 2015 and 2025 may have excluded relevant evidence. Moreover, the framework remains conceptually derived and requires empirical validation. Future research should therefore test and refine the framework across diverse EFL populations, conduct cross-cultural and measurement-invariance studies, and employ longitudinal designs to capture the dynamic nature of resilience. Greater attention should also be given to underrepresented contexts, including Vietnam, and emerging challenges associated with digital and increasingly hybrid English-learning environments.

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