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LINGUODIDACTIC INTERPRETATION OF THE DIGITAL RESIDENT LEARNER PROFILE: ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE, VERIFICATION, AND ACADEMIC RESPONSIBILITY

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Abstract. This article examines the linguodidactic limitations of characterising learners who grow up in digital environments solely in terms of the frequency of technology use or generational affiliation. The study aims to conceptually delimit and operationalise the profile of the “digital resident learner” for English language education, particularly in contexts where artificial intelligence is used to support productive language activities such as writing and speaking. Drawing on conceptual analysis, comparative-theoretical synthesis, and functional modelling, the study compares the “digital native” thesis, the Visitors and Residents continuum, digital agency, digital citizenship, AI competency frameworks, and the action-oriented perspective of the CEFR. As a result, six interrelated components of the digital resident learner profile are identified: purposeful digital agency; information and source verification; critical engagement with artificial intelligence; authorship and academic integrity; reflective-communicative self-regulation; and digital citizenship and responsibility. The proposed profile does not equate technological activity with competence. Instead, it foregrounds the learner’s capacity to select digital tools and AI-generated outputs purposefully, verify them, accept or reject recommendations on reasoned grounds, revise their own language products, and preserve authorial agency in the final product. The proposed theoretical model provides a structured set of criteria for task design, reflective assessment, and responsible AI-supported practice in English language teaching.

Keywords: digital resident, linguodidactics, artificial intelligence, digital agency, verification, academic integrity, productive skills, digital citizenship.

INTRODUCTION

The pervasive integration of digital technologies into everyday life and education has necessitated a reconsideration of how contemporary learners are conceptualised. However, being “born into a digital environment” cannot automatically be equated with a high level of digital competence. Although the “digital native” and “digital immigrant” dichotomy popularised by M. Prensky drew attention to generational differences in technological

experience [1], subsequent studies have shown that young people’s experiences of technology are far from homogeneous and that technical familiarity does not, in itself, guarantee critical digital literacy, information literacy, or academic competence [2; 3]. Consequently, contemporary pedagogical analysis increasingly requires learners to be characterised not by the historical period into which they were born, but by their actual behaviour, purposes, and responsibilities in digital environments.

This issue is particularly salient in English language education in the context of the rapid expansion of generative artificial intelligence. In writing and speaking tasks, AI may provide grammatical correction, lexical alternatives, model texts, dialogue scenarios, or immediate feedback. Yet when learners accept such recommendations without understanding or evaluating them, the surface quality of a language product may improve while learning, authorship, and reflective control are weakened. The pedagogical problem therefore shifts from the technical question “Can the learner use an AI tool?” to the linguodidactic question “On what criteria does the learner select, verify, revise, accept, or reject AI-generated output while preserving independent communicative judgement?”

Within the author’s dissertation research, the concept of the “digital resident” is interpreted in response to this need as an active learner capable of engaging with digital resources, online platforms, and artificial intelligence consciously, purposefully, critically, and responsibly. Such a learner does not passively accept a ready-made digital product; rather, the learner analyses and compares it, rejects it when necessary, revises it, and preserves authorial agency in the final written or spoken product. The present article develops this dissertation-based proposition into a distinct theoretical inquiry. Rather than claiming the term “digital resident” itself as a newly coined concept, the study seeks to develop its linguodidactic and operational profile for English language education.

The author’s previous study examined the general methodology of supporting the speaking and writing skills of learners in specialised schools through instructional technology and artificial intelligence [11]. The present article does not reproduce those instructional algorithms; instead, it focuses specifically on the characteristics of the learner as a digital agent. The purpose of the study is to substantiate the conceptual boundaries, structural components, and observable indicators of a digital resident learner profile applicable to English language education, particularly to the productive language activities of learners in Grades 7–9. Three research questions were formulated: (1) How does the digital resident learner profile differ from the concepts of the “digital native,” the Visitors and Residents continuum, digital agency, and digital citizenship? (2) Which competencies are fundamental to AI-supported writing and speaking activities? (3) Through which indicators can these competencies be expressed for pedagogical observation?

LITERATURE REVIEW

The scholarly significance of the “digital native” concept lies in bringing the influence of digital technologies on learner experience into pedagogical debate. Prensky argued that contemporary learners, shaped by technological environments, may process information differently from previous generations [1]. However, Bennett, Maton, and Kervin critically reviewed this position and demonstrated that claims concerning uniformly high technological

proficiency and distinctive learning styles among a “digital generation” are not supported by a sufficiently robust empirical base [2]. Selwyn similarly showed that young people’s digital practices are heterogeneous and often do not correspond to popular assumptions of “natural expertise” [3]. These critiques suggest that the digital resident learner profile should be conceptualised not as a biological or generational characteristic, but as a set of behaviours and competencies that vary across learners and can be developed through education.

White and Le Cornu proposed the “Visitors and Residents” continuum as an alternative to age-based classification. In their framework, an individual’s position in the digital environment is determined not by year of birth but by motivation and context: the same person may display “visitor” behaviour in some activities and “resident” behaviour in others [4]. This framework provides an important methodological shift for the present article because “residency” is understood as a task- and purpose-dependent practice rather than a permanent attribute. Nevertheless, a general model of online participation does not by itself specify the particular linguodidactic requirements of English language education, such as producing written and spoken language with AI support, preserving authorship, verifying sources, and engaging in reflective revision.

The concept of “digital agency,” as elaborated by Passey and colleagues, links the use of digital tools with goal setting, choice, and responsibility for outcomes [5]. This perspective provides a basis for the “purposeful agency” component of the digital resident learner profile. The connected learning approach likewise views the learner as an active agent who builds links between interests, collaboration, and opportunities within networked environments [6]. Within the framework of digital citizenship, Ribble identifies responsibility, rights, safety, and ethical conduct, alongside effective technology use, as important components of educational content [7]. Digital residency should therefore be understood not simply as “continuous online presence,” but as the integration of agency and responsibility.

The emergence of generative AI in education has further expanded this conceptual field. UNESCO’s guidance on generative AI identifies a human-centred approach, data privacy, age appropriateness, and pedagogical-ethical validation as fundamental conditions for its educational use [8]. UNESCO’s AI Competency Framework for Students systematises twelve competencies across the domains of human-centred mindset, AI ethics, AI techniques and applications, and AI system design, and organises them across three developmental levels: understand, apply, and create [9]. From this perspective, the learner should not be a passive consumer of AI-generated output but an agent capable of critically evaluating it and using AI as a responsible partner in learning.

The European Commission’s DigComp 3.0 framework likewise integrates AI competence transversally across the domains of digital competence rather than treating it as an isolated external addition [10]. From the perspective of foreign language education, the CEFR Companion Volume conceptualises language through communicative activity and “can do” descriptors, with particular emphasis on learner agency, online interaction, and the use of language in real tasks [12]. The common principle connecting these sources is that digital competence is not defined by the range of technical operations a learner can perform, but by purposeful choice, critical control, responsibility, and meaningful outcomes. This principle

constitutes the theoretical core of the digital resident learner profile proposed for English language education.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS

As a theoretical study, the article employs conceptual analysis, comparative-theoretical synthesis, and functional modelling. The units of analysis were concepts describing the learner’s position in digital environments and international frameworks defining learner competencies in the age of AI. The sources were classified into four groups: generational-technological interpretations (“digital native”); behaviour- and context-based interpretations (“Visitors and Residents”); approaches centred on agency and digital citizenship; and frameworks for AI competence and action-oriented language education.

The theoretical synthesis was conducted in four stages. First, the categorical boundaries of the concepts and the criteria through which they describe learners were identified. Second, functional features transferable to productive English-language activities were extracted from each concept. Third, conceptual gaps were addressed by incorporating verification, authorship, academic integrity, and reflective control as competencies required in generative-AI-supported learning. Fourth, these components were transformed into indicators that can be identified through pedagogical observation. The principal criteria for component selection were purposefulness, criticality, communicative relevance, authorial agency, observability in pedagogical practice, and ethical-legal responsibility.

This methodology is not intended to demonstrate empirical effectiveness; rather, it seeks to construct a testable framework for subsequent experimental validation. Accordingly, the results do not propose the “digital resident” as a fixed personality type, but as a linguodidactic learner profile that can be developed and assessed within the teaching-learning process.

ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

The analysis indicates that it is methodologically inappropriate to equate the concept of the “digital resident” with the “digital native.” Whereas the principal criterion of the digital-native thesis is growing up in a technological environment and belonging to a particular generational experience, the Visitors and Residents perspective focuses on meaningful presence, participation, and motivation in online spaces. Digital agency emphasises goal setting and tool selection, while digital citizenship strengthens the legal and ethical dimension of responsibility in digital environments. The profile proposed for English language education integrates these perspectives with the specific requirements of creating communicative products, verifying AI-generated output, and preserving authorial decision-making. The conceptual distinctions are summarised in Table 1.

Table 1. Functional comparison of concepts describing the digital learner

Concept	Primary criterion	Pedagogical strength	Limitation in the context of English language education and AI

Digital native	Generational affiliation and early technological experience	Highlights the influence of the digital environment on learner experience	Risk of conflating technological activity with competence
Visitors–Residents	Motivation, context, and online behaviour	Rejects rigid age-based classification and recognises the fluidity of users’ positions	Does not directly provide indicators for language products, AI verification, or academic authorship
Digital agency	Goal setting, tool selection, and responsible action	Views the learner as an active decision-making agent	Broad digital scope; productive language activity requires domain-specific criteria
Digital citizenship	Rights, safety, ethics, and responsibility	Defines the social and legal boundaries of digital activity	Does not fully operationalize the language-learning cycle or the quality of communicative products
Linguodidactic digital resident profile	Purposeful agency + verification + authorship + reflection + responsibility	Links AI-supported writing and speaking with learner agency	Requires empirical validation as a theoretical construct

On the basis of the comparative analysis, the following refined linguodidactic definition is proposed: a digital resident learner is a learner who plans language-learning activities in a digital environment in accordance with a communicative purpose; selects relevant information and tools; verifies outputs generated by artificial intelligence; accepts or rejects recommendations on reasoned grounds; reflectively revises written and spoken products; and retains authorial agency while assuming ethical and legal responsibility for the final outcome.

This definition entails three methodological shifts. First, residency is determined not by the frequency of technology use but by the quality of activity. Second, AI is not treated as an autonomous source of knowledge; it remains a tool that supports learner decision-making, but its outputs require verification. Third, the formal correctness of a language product is not treated as the sole criterion: the learner’s ability to explain choices, revisions, and communicative intentions is also considered an integral indicator of the profile.

The theoretical synthesis resulted in the identification of six interrelated components of the digital resident profile. Each component is expressed not merely as an abstract quality, but through behaviours observable in writing and speaking activities.

Table 2. Structural components and indicators of the linguodidactic digital resident profile

Component	Definition	Observable indicators	Manifestation in productive language activity
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1. Purposeful digital agency	Conscious selection of digital tools and resources in accordance with a communicative purpose	Selects a tool appropriate to the task; explains the reason for the choice; limits tool use in accordance with the task purpose	In writing, purposefully selects planning, dictionary/corpus, or AI-feedback tools; in speaking, appropriately uses model, pronunciation, or dialogue support
2. Information and source verification	Checking the reliability of digital and AI-generated output against criteria and other sources	Checks the origin of a source; compares factual and linguistic alternatives; identifies doubtful output	Rechecks evidence, collocations, style, or content against a dictionary, corpus, textbook, or another reliable source
3. Critical engagement with AI	Managing AI as a tool for analysis and feedback rather than as a generator of ready-made answers	Constructs prompts purposefully; analyses recommendations; justifies decisions to accept or reject them	AI does not produce the entire text or speech product on the learner’s behalf; the learner selects among grammatical, lexical, pronunciation, or structural recommendations
4. Authorship and academic integrity	Maintaining ownership of one’s ideas and voice while retaining responsibility for the final product	Understands the limits of AI assistance; discloses its use where appropriate; avoids plagiarism and false authorship	The substantive decisions in the text remain the learner’s own; AI suggestions are revised; dependence on ready-made scripts in speaking is reduced
5. Reflective-communicative self-regulation	Monitoring and revising the product against criteria and determining subsequent learning steps	Compares initial and final versions; explains the causes of errors; identifies the next learning goal	Works through a plan–draft/perform–feedback–revise–verify cycle; monitors development using CEFR-aligned criteria
6. Digital citizenship and responsibility	Acting within ethical and legal boundaries relating to safety, privacy, copyright, and communicative conduct	Protects personal data; selects safe platforms; observes ethical communication and legal restrictions	Uses age-appropriate AI tools; does not upload or enter another person’s personal data or materials without permission; maintains respectful and responsible online interaction

The components are not hierarchical. For example, if purposeful agency is exercised without verification, the learner may independently select a tool but still be unable to critically evaluate its output. Conversely, if verification is present but responsibility for authorship is insufficiently developed, the learner may identify errors while still transferring responsibility for the final product to AI. The functional core of the profile is therefore represented by the sequence “select - verify - decide - revise - justify.”

This sequence can be expressed as a linguodidactic verification cycle for working with AI: understanding the communicative task → selecting an appropriate digital/AI tool → obtaining an initial draft or AI recommendation → checking the recommendation against

relevant criteria and a reliable source → accepting, partially accepting, or rejecting the recommendation → independently revising the language product → producing a final product accompanied by a brief reflective justification. The accept-or-reject decision is of particular importance because it transforms the learner from a passive consumer of algorithmic recommendations into an evidence-informed decision-maker.

In writing, the observable outcome of the profile is not merely an error-free text. For example, learners should be able to explain why they selected an AI-suggested collocation, why they rejected a particular revision, and which parts of the text represent their own substantive decisions. In speaking, AI-generated model dialogues or AI-supported pronunciation feedback should not replace the learner’s final performance; learners must adapt alternatives to a real communicative situation, respond spontaneously, and reflectively evaluate changes in their own speech.

Thus, the proposed profile distinguishes digital residency from superficial indicators such as “using many devices,” “being constantly online,” or “working quickly with AI.” Its linguodidactic value lies in the learner’s ability to strengthen communicative agency through digital tools, critically verify outputs, and retain responsibility for the final language product.

DISCUSSION

The theoretical findings support a transition from generational determinism in conceptualising digital learners towards competence-based and behavioural interpretations. Consistent with the critical analyses of Bennett and colleagues and Selwyn regarding the “digital native” thesis [2; 3], the proposed profile does not treat technological experience as ready-made competence. The White and Le Cornu continuum [4] is important for explaining the contextual and fluid nature of residency. The additional contribution of the present approach lies in applying this behavioural perspective to specific productive language-learning tasks and to the verification requirements associated with generative AI.

The components “critical engagement with AI” and “digital citizenship” are consistent with UNESCO’s human-centred, ethical, and age-appropriate approach to artificial intelligence [8; 9]. This is particularly important when working with learners in Grades 7–9. The pedagogical convenience of a generative AI tool does not automatically mean that it is safe, unbiased, or age-appropriate. Educational design should therefore clarify data privacy, age restrictions, content safety, academic integrity, and teacher oversight before a platform’s technical affordances are used pedagogically.

The transversal integration of AI competence into digital competence in DigComp 3.0 [10] provides an important external foundation for the proposed profile: AI literacy is not a separate “additional subject,” but is connected with information seeking, content creation, safety, problem solving, and responsible participation. In English language education, this integration acquires a more explicitly communicative dimension. Learners may use AI tools to improve a language product; however, from the perspective of the CEFR action-oriented approach, the ultimate goal is the learner’s ability to perform a real task using their own linguistic resources and strategies [12]. Therefore, a linguistically flawless AI-generated text cannot, in itself, be considered evidence of the learner’s language competence.

A practical advantage of the proposed profile is its applicability to assessment. For example, a writing task may include a reflective requirement such as: “Record at least two AI suggestions and explain why you accepted or rejected them.” In a speaking activity, learners may repeat a performance after receiving AI-supported pronunciation feedback and identify which changes they implemented consciously. Such tasks direct assessment not only towards the final product but also towards the process and the learner’s decision-making. In this way, academic integrity can be cultivated not merely as a system of prohibitions, but as a learning competence that protects and strengthens the learner’s authorial agency.

At the same time, the findings have limitations. The profile was developed through theoretical synthesis and has not yet been validated as an independent psychometric construct. Future studies should develop observation rubrics for each component, establish content validity through expert review and interpretability for learners and teachers, and assess the discriminative power of the indicators across different grade levels and levels of language proficiency. Moreover, because AI platforms change rapidly, the profile should continue to be anchored in stable pedagogical functions and principles of responsibility rather than in the names of specific services.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The theoretical analysis leads to the following conclusions. First, characterising contemporary learners solely through the generational label of “digital native” is insufficient for determining their actual digital competence. From a linguodidactic perspective, it is more appropriate to conceptualise digital residency as a variable profile shaped by motivation, context, purposeful choice, and responsibility.

Second, in the context of generative AI, the profile of a digital resident learner of English should include, in addition to basic technological literacy, verification, critical engagement with AI, authorship and academic integrity, reflective-communicative self-regulation, and digital citizenship. These components can be expressed through concrete indicators observable in writing and speaking activities.

Third, the pedagogical value of working with AI should be determined not by the speed with which a ready-made output is obtained, but by the learner’s activity of selecting, verifying, accepting or rejecting, revising, and justifying decisions. Teachers should therefore integrate AI-generated output not as a final norm, but as material for analysis and reflection.

From a practical perspective, English lessons and experimental methodological materials should systematically incorporate the following requirements: define the permitted scope of AI support within the task itself; require learners to justify accepted and rejected AI recommendations; verify important facts and language alternatives against at least one reliable source; compare initial and revised versions of a product; disclose the use of AI where appropriate; and maintain teacher oversight of personal data protection, copyright, academic integrity, and age-appropriateness criteria.

At the next stage, it is advisable to transform the proposed six-component profile into a diagnostic and formative rubric for learners in Grades 7–9, subject it to expert evaluation, and experimentally examine its relationship with productive language outcomes. This would allow

digital residency to move from a general theoretical metaphor towards a pedagogically measurable linguodidactic construct that can be systematically developed through instruction.

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